

# Agenda

## Council

**Thursday, 18 May 2023, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

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

### WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

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

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

### WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

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

### WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

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

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

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

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

### DON'T FORGET

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

**Thursday, 18 May 2023, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester**

## **Agenda and Summons**

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

### **1 Apologies and Declaration of Interests**

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

### **2 Chairman**

To elect a Chairman of the Council to hold office until his or her successor becomes entitled to act.

### **3 Vice-Chairman**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until immediately after the election of a Chairman at the next Annual meeting of the Council.

### **4 Public Participation**

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

*Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case Wednesday, 17 May 2023). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed in this agenda and on the website.*

## **5 Minutes**

To approve as a correct record and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2023 (previously circulated electronically).

## **6 Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements to be made by the Chairman.

## **7 Reports of Cabinet 1 - 4**

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

## **8 Councillor Code of Conduct 5 - 22**

To consider adopting a Councillor Code of Conduct.

## **9 Constitutional Matters**

To consider a report on a) Malvern Chase By-Election and Political Balance; and b) Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Member Bodies. (To follow)

## **10 Notices of Motion 23 - 24**

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

Councillors are asked to note that any Notices of Motion must be received by the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance no later than noon on Tuesday, 9 May.

## **11 Annual Report of the Leader of the Council 25 - 34**

To receive the Leader's report and to receive answers to any questions on it.

## **12 Annual Report of the Chief Executive 35 - 46**

To receive the report of the Chief Executive and any answers to questions on it.

## **13 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board 47 - 68**

To receive the annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board and answers to any questions on it.

## **14 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 69 - 98**

To consider the future work programme recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board.

## **15 Question Time 99 - 100**

To receive answers to any questions asked by Councillors.

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

- *It is delivered in writing to the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance by noon on Tuesday, 9 May or*
- *If it relates to urgent business, the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance is notified at least half an hour before the start of the meeting and the Chairman agrees the matter is urgent'.*)

## **16 Reports of Committees 101 - 110**

To consider the reports of Committees and to receive answers to any questions asked on those reports as follows:

- a) Audit and Governance Committee; and
- b) Pensions Committee.

### **NOTES**

- **Webcasting**

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

- **Catering Arrangements**

Lunch will be available for all councillors at 1.00pm or thereabouts in the Lakeview Room.

- **Council Photograph**

Arrangements are being made for a photograph to be taken of the Council as a group. Details will be included in the Chairman's Announcements circulated in advance of the meeting. It is envisaged that the photograph will be taken during the lunch break.

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

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

Date of Issue: Wednesday, 10 May 2023

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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN**

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**Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Overview and Scrutiny Report**

1. In 2019, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel identified services supporting the mental health of children and adolescents in the County as a priority for scrutiny. In December 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) agreed that a Scrutiny Task Group should be set up to look into this area. Unfortunately, this work was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and was restarted in December 2021.
2. The Terms of Reference for the scrutiny exercise were *'to investigate access to and the availability of appropriate mental health services for children and adolescents'*.
3. The Task Group gathered evidence on mental health services currently available to children and young people in the County, with a focus on how and by whom these services are accessed. The OSPB considered the Scrutiny report on 27 February 2023 and fully endorsed the recommendations.
4. The Scrutiny process provides for the relevant Cabinet Members with Responsibility to submit to the Cabinet a response to the Scrutiny Report's findings and recommendations to be considered alongside the Scrutiny Report. Given the cross-cutting nature of the subject matter and the collaborative way in which services are delivered, a response to the Scrutiny Report was also requested from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board.
5. Cabinet has received the Scrutiny Report about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, together with the responses from the Cabinet Members with Responsibility and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board. Cabinet has noted the Scrutiny Report's findings and recommendations and adopts the response of the Cabinet Members with Responsibility as the way forward.

**Household Support Fund**

6. The Government have released funding to support residents in Worcestershire since 2020, initially through the Winter Grant and Local Support Grant, and subsequently through the Household Support Fund which is now on round four of this specific funding.
7. In the Autumn Statement 2022, the Chancellor confirmed that the Household Support Fund would be extended for a further 12 months starting in April 2023, and this equates to just under £7.9 million for Worcestershire to use to support residents until 31 March 2024. Confirmation and guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions was received in February 2023.

8. The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

9. The Proposed Allocation of Household Support Fund April 2023 – March 2024 will allocate resources to the following funding areas: food, energy, food/energy, district councils, advice services and management costs. District councils will be delivering local support through either direct in-house schemes or through various voluntary and community sector organisations in order to reach the most vulnerable residents in their local communities. Cabinet has endorsed the approach to the use of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in 2023/24 as set out in the report.

10. Cabinet has delegated the implementation of the delivery of the Household Support Fund including the allocation of any extension to the grant within the terms applicable to it, to the Strategic Director of People in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities and in liaison with the Chief Finance Officer.

### **Worcestershire Children First (WCF) Business Plan**

10. WCF continue to meet their agreed contractual outcomes in relation to Children Social Care however, three key performance indicators for the SEND service measuring the timeliness, decision making, and completion of Education Health and Care Plan's (EHCP's) requested have not been fully met but the trajectory is improving alongside the Council's Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). In line with agreed contract monitoring, an action plan has been in place to address challenges faced by WCF in meeting these KPI's. Regular reports are taken through the Board, and WCF continue to update the commissioners. Cabinet has noted the contractual performance update on Worcestershire Children First.

11. The 2023/24 Business Plan maintains the previously agreed aims for WCF which are to improve outcomes for all children and young people (up to the age of 25) in Worcestershire, by addressing their needs holistically through excellent early help and prevention, education provision and social care. Cabinet has approved the Worcestershire Children First Business Plan 2023/24.

12. Cabinet has noted the agreed contract sum for 2023/24 to WCF as set out in the report and noted the indicative contract sum for 2024/25 and 2025/26 included in the Business Plan.

### **Contact Points**

#### Specific Contact Points for this report

Hazel Best, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance

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## **Background Papers**

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

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30 March 2023:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 30th March, 2023, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/Agenda-for-Cabinet-on-Thursday-30th-March-2023-10.00-am-Worcestershire-County-Council)

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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

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**Recommendation**

- 1. The Standards and Ethics Committee recommends that the draft Code of Conduct as set out as an Appendix be adopted by Council.**

**Background**

2. At its meeting on 16 March the Standards and Ethics Committee considered a revised Code of Conduct for Councillors. This has arisen from work done by the Local Government Association.
3. The LGA has developed the Model Code as part of its work in supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. The LGA offered this as a template for councils to adopt as a whole and/or with local amendments.
4. Having participated in consultation about content, the Committee agreed to consider the Code once published. Previously there has been a consistent 'pan Worcestershire' Code adopted by the County, six District Councils and Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority. Each Standards Committee asked Monitoring Officers to work together to consider the LGA Code and whether some elements of the Worcestershire Code should be retained.
5. The Standards and Ethics Committee considered the potential additions to the LGA Code but is not recommending that these are included. The Committee considered that as the LGA Code has been adopted by many Councils across the country, then for consistency and to minimise confusion, the Code should be adopted as written.

**Supporting Information**

Appendix – LGA Model Member Code of Conduct

**Contact Points**Specific Contact Points for this report

Hazel Best, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report as the documents relied on are already published. These documents are:

The report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: [Local government ethical standards: report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Local-government-ethical-standards-report-2019-2020.pdf) .

The Government's response to the report: [Local government ethical standards: government response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Local-government-ethical-standards-report-2019-2020.pdf)



## **Local Government Association**

### **Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

#### **Joint statement**

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

## **Introduction**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

## **General principles of councillor conduct**

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

## **Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring

Officer.

## **Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

### **General Conduct**

#### **1. Respect**

##### **As a councillor:**

**1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.**

**1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

#### **2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

##### **As a councillor:**

**2.1 I do not bully any person.**

**2.2 I do not harass any person.**

**2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.**

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and



contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **3. Impartiality of officers of the council**

**As a councillor:**

#### **3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

### **4. Confidentiality and access to information**

**As a councillor:**

#### **4.1 I do not disclose information:**

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
  - iv. the disclosure is:**
    - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
    - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
    - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

#### **4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.**

#### **4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

## **5. Disrepute**

**As a councillor:**

### **5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

## **6. Use of position**

**As a councillor:**

### **6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **7. Use of local authority resources and facilities**

**As a councillor:**

### **7.1 I do not misuse council resources.**

### **7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport

- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

## **8. Complying with the Code of Conduct**

### **As a Councillor:**

**8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**

**8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**

**8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**

**8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

### **Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority**

## **9. Interests**

### **As a councillor:**

**9.1 I register and disclose my interests.**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

**Appendix B sets** out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

## **10. Gifts and hospitality**

### **As a councillor:**

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
  
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
  
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

#### **Selflessness**

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

#### **Integrity**

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

#### **Objectivity**

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

#### **Accountability**

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

#### **Openness**

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

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it ]

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

## Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
  - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
  - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:
  - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

**Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

| <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Description</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b> | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.  |
| <b>Sponsorship</b>                                       | Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses.<br>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. |
| <b>Contracts</b>   | Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the   |



|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            | <p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>   |
| <b>Land and Property</b>   | <p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>  |
| <b>Licenses</b>            | <p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>   |
| <b>Corporate tenancies</b> | <p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>   |
| <b>Securities</b>          | <p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |
|--|--|

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

**Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

## Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

**Best practice 1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Best practice 2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Best practice 3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Best practice 4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Best practice 6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Best practice 7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Best practice 8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Best practice 9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Best practice 10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Best practice 11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Best practice 12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Best practice 13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Best practice 14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Best practice 15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

***The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.***

**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023**
**NOTICES OF MOTION**


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**Notices of Motion Received**

1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance reports that she has received the following 3 Notices of Motion. The Constitution provides that any submitted motion must be moved and seconded at the meeting. Otherwise, unless postponed with the consent of the Council, it will be treated as withdrawn.
2. If a motion is in relation to the exercise of an executive function it will be referred to the Cabinet for decision (if applicable this will be indicated below). Otherwise the Council may decide itself to determine the Motion, or refer it to the Cabinet or another appropriate Committee for advice before determining it at the next available meeting.

**Notice of Motion 1 – Traveller camps**

3. **This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**
4. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Richard Udall, Cllr Dan Boatright and Cllr Lynn Denham:

“Council is concerned about the increasing number of illegal traveller encampments which occur in the County and the burden on other authorities to deal with them. Council is aware of the critical shortage of transit traveller camps in Worcestershire, sites which would provide quality services at affordable prices for travellers travelling through Worcestershire en route to other destinations. Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider delivering a report to Cabinet to identify possible new locations for transit camps and sources of funding, to enable the council to consider improving the provision of transit camps to reduce the risk of illegal encampment.”

**Notice of Motion 2 – Parental leave policy for council members**

5. **This motion is not in relation to the exercise of an executive function and the Council may decide to determine the Motion.**
6. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Cllr Mel Allcott, Cllr Richard Udall, and Cllr Dan Boatright:

“Council calls for the terms of reference for the Independent Remuneration Panel to include consideration of how to implement a fair and open parental leave policy for council members.”

## **Notice of Motion 3 – Safer streets outside schools**

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

8. Notice of Motion standing in the names of Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr Beverley Nielsen, Cllr Tom Wells, Cllr Natalie McVey, and Cllr Malcolm Victory:

“The safety of children on their journey to school is of paramount importance. There are various ways that the county council can help improve this.

### **School Streets**

“School Street” schemes, which close the roads outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times, have the multiple benefits of improving road safety for pupils, encouraging active travel to school by walking, cycling and public transport, and improving the air quality and environment around schools.

### **Parking restrictions outside schools**

Many roads outside schools have zigzag markings but lack traffic regulation orders that allow enforcement officers to fine those who park on them.

### **Advisory limits outside schools**

Many roads outside schools have flashing 20mph signs that operate at the start and end of the school day. These signs are only advisory.

This notice of motion asks the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport to produce a report to Cabinet:

1. Clarifying the council's school streets policy and publishing this on the county council's website;
2. Indicating the location of parking restrictions outside schools that lack a Traffic Regulation Order; and
3. Investigating the introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders to make speed limits mandatory when the flashing speeding signs are in operation.”

## **Contact Points**

### Contact Points for this report

Simon Lewis, Committee Officer

Tel: 01905 846621

Email: [slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

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

**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

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**Introduction**

1. My annual report is presented at a time when the country faces a different but no less serious set of challenges than those faced throughout the pandemic. High levels of inflation have been a constant backdrop to the last 12 months or so. The tight labour market is impacting recruitment/retention and staffing costs. We have seen the effects in both our services and capital projects. However, despite the challenges caused by the pandemic and war in Ukraine, this Council has continued to perform well, serving and supporting the residents and businesses of Worcestershire.

2. The Council launched a new Corporate Plan in May 2022 - [Our Plan For Worcestershire | Worcestershire County Council](#). The refreshed Corporate Plan sets out the blueprint for the organisation, setting out the Council's key priorities and guiding how the organisation will operate, both internally and with partners across Worcestershire and beyond. The Corporate Plan 2022–2027 retains the four pillars by which the Council does business: Open for Business, Children and Families, The Environment and Health and Wellbeing.

3. I have set out our many achievements in this past year based around these themes, with the report of the Chief Executive covering organisational and operational matters.

**Open for Business**

4. The development of the local economy remains a key priority for the Council within the Council's refreshed Corporate Plan. We have continued to invest in both physical and digital infrastructure and have committed more funding to support local companies to build resilience, invest in new technology and continue to support growth.

5. We continue to work collaboratively with all partners through the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) to deliver the Worcestershire Plan for Growth 2020 - 2040, delivering our joint ambition for 'a connected, creative, dynamic economy for all'. As part of our commitment to WLEP, members of our staff work within the Worcestershire Growth Hub, whose role is to ensure local businesses access support.

6. Our game changer programme: Worcester Six, Redditch Gateway, and Malvern Hills Science Park, continue to attract significant occupiers, creating jobs and investment.

7. Worcester Six provides new floor space for manufacturing, offices, research and development. On site 840,500 sq. ft is now let or under construction, creating circa 500 jobs. Redditch Gateway aims to promote and enhance supply chain links. The main occupier, Amazon, is now on site with the developer seeking occupiers for the remaining plots. Malvern Hills Science Park has to-date been developed over five phases and is currently accommodating over 35 technology-rich companies employing more than 350

people. Work has commenced on the creation of the Malvern Hills Science and Technology Park, following the completion of Phase 5 of Malvern Hills Science Park.

8. We have developed a vision for the Shrub Hill Quarter in Worcester as a vibrant new neighbourhood for Worcester. The strategic location of Shrub Hill Station, connecting the city to the wider county and across Great Britain, alongside our acquisition of Shrub Hill Industrial Estate, places us in the ideal position to lead on the regeneration of the Quarter and its wider role in the city. Supporting the City Council's Town Investment Plan, we will work with the city to bring forward public realm works and an Enterprise Centre within the Quarter alongside residential development, as the first phase.

9. We continue to invest in railway stations, with Cabinet approval for a new station at Redditch. This reflects the commitments made in the Corporate Plan to invest in the Redditch Railway Quarter to unlock growth and support our Open for Business ambitions. The new station will create a modern, attractive gateway to Redditch, with enhanced station amenities and improved integration and accessibility.

10. Throughout the year we have worked with partners from district councils, business membership organisations and government departments to ensure a joined-up approach to supporting our local economy. This will continue with the introduction of a new government funding regime, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will replace previous EU funding streams and be directed through District Councils.

11. We have continued to operate a programme of support for local businesses from start-up, to accelerating those that are growing and expanding being able to access professional advice and grant funding. Since 2019 our programmes have supported over 800 businesses to access more than £10m of EU funding. This year has seen a focus on supporting local companies to realise their sustainability ambitions and the introduction of a series of business focussed conferences, providing the opportunity to hear from experts in innovation, technology, net zero, finance, tax, sales and marketing.

12. Here2Help Business, enacted during COVID, continues to support businesses to build resilience, realise their growth ambitions in the county and employ local graduates. This has processed over 700 enquiries and assisted 180 businesses through 1:1 specialist advice clinics. The project aims to create 550 direct or indirect full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in addition to 55 new graduate placements.

13. The County Council's Open for Business programme has been highly successful, supporting a series of projects to aid the skills agenda, including the Connecting Schools and Business, Inspiring Worcestershire and, more recently, Workforce Resilience which supports young people to make informed decisions on future careers, promoting and supporting apprenticeships locally, and bringing together training providers, schools, employers, and young people. The programme has also supported Visit Worcestershire, the County's tourism Destination Marketing Organisation, which is now operated by Worcestershire County Council, and provided support for the One Worcestershire brand which champions the county as a choice location to live, work, learn, visit, and invest in.

14. Since taking on Visit Worcestershire in April 2020, the County Council has confirmed its commitment to promoting Worcestershire as a visitor destination. We have delivered on our commitment through investment in a new website, which has improved accessibility, delivered fresh relevant content, and had over 40,000 unique visitors in the



first month alone. Visit Worcestershire now has more than 34,000 followers across all social media.

15. In summer 2022 we launched our 'Make Worcestershire part of your Story' campaign which included out-of-County advertising, the use of influencers on social media, digital marketing, and a new Worcestershire tourism brochure (50,000 copies distributed to service stations, TICs etc). It is estimated that over 7 million people saw this campaign.

16. The Superfast Worcestershire Broadband programme has delivered significantly improved connectivity in the county since it commenced in 2013, with 98.3% of Worcestershire premises now able to access 24Mbps+. The infrastructure deployed by the programme has been taken up by over 81% of properties that it has been made available to; clearly illustrating local demand and allowing gainshare on profits to be returned and reinvested by the Council to further improve digital infrastructure.

17. In February 2023 we recommitted funding to support the expansion of 'Gigabit capable' broadband infrastructure and the wider ambitions to improve the coverage and performance of mobile connectivity in the county.

18. To achieve our ambitious target for 90% Gigabit Capable connectivity by 2027, we are reliant on the commercial deployments to deliver as expected; the success of the DCMS led 'Project Gigabit' procurement, with a preferred bidder expected to be announced in the Autumn of 2023, as well as additional local investments. In April 2023, the Gigabit capable coverage had already increased in Worcestershire's to 61.2%.

19. Supported by the Council's Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity team, businesses and communities have been successful in securing over £7m of the national Rural Gigabit Vouchers, with £1m of reinvestment funding committed locally, to bring Gigabit connectivity to their communities. Worcestershire in the top ten counties in terms of value of vouchers secured, representing around 45,200 local premises being delivered.

## **Environment**

20. The Council continues to invest in highways, with further significant additional investment for improving roads and pavements in Worcestershire. Surfacing work on over 400 roads across the county has already been completed, with many more planned for this year and next year. Our extra investment in footways will see over 250 footway schemes completed by the end of the financial year, with a similar number next year.

21. The Council continues to carry out a range of activities to reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding. This has included direct action with regards to surface water and the network of smaller watercourses and through strong support, practical and financial, for the Environment Agency on their 'Main River' flood alleviation schemes at Bewdley, Severn Stoke, Tenbury and Toronto Close in Worcester.

22. Patronage at the Worcestershire Parkway Railway Station has continued to grow ahead of all forecasts. The station has received the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment Award in recognition of its outstanding environmental credentials.

23. We have consulted on a refreshed Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy, reflecting the success of the 2017 strategy and delivery of objectives including the new stations at Worcestershire Parkway and Kidderminster, the impact of Covid-19 on travel

patterns and proposals for the future of the rail industry. Over 200 individual responses have been received and the document will be finalised shortly.

24. The Southern Link Road is now dualled between junction 7 of the M5 and Powick Roundabout. Early data collection suggests that the volume of traffic has reduced on alternative routes such as the City Centre, while average journey times along the length of the Southern Link Road have reduced significantly. Alongside these improvements for motorists has been the provision of new infrastructure for walkers and cyclists including Crookbarrow Way Footbridge, Broomhall Way Footbridge, Hams Way Footbridge, the Ketch Underpass, and a shared-use path along Temeside Way.

25. Phases 1 and 2 of the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme have been completed. The work comprised capacity improvements at Junction 6 of the M5, Junction 1 of the M42 and the junction with Barley Mow Lane, new traffic-free infrastructure for walking and cycling and two new pedestrian crossings. Subject to approval of the Full Business Case submitted to the DfT, Phase 3 will see further capacity enhancements to the A38 and more improvements for walkers and cyclists.

26. A new roundabout has been constructed near Upton-Upon-Severn which will significantly improve the efficiency of this previously congested junction. This builds on the success of a similar scheme at Hoobrook in Kidderminster, which has significantly improved the junction's efficiency.

27. The Pershore Infrastructure Improvement Programme is complete and includes improvements to Pinvin Crossroads, the provision of improved walking and cycling infrastructure on Wyre Road and the Pershore Link Road which includes a new road bridge over the North Cotswolds Railway Line. The Pershore Link Road provides an alternative route to the congested area around Pershore High School.

28. A Strategic Outline Case has been completed for highway improvement schemes on A456/491/450 to support the Wyre Forest Local Plan/Bromsgrove Local Plan and improve journey time reliability. This has now been submitted to Midlands Connect.

29. A further Strategic Outline Case has been completed for a programme of enhancements required to support the growth identified in the South Worcestershire Development Plan review (SWDPr). As these enhancements are directly linked and arising from the SWDPr, the scheme has been included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

30. We have continued to work with our District and City partners on public realm improvement schemes. The first phases of the Future High Street Fund improvements in Worcester have progressed well, with further phases programmed this year. We have also made significant progress with developing a business case for Phase 3 of planned improvements in Redditch Town Centre.

31. We have continued to build on investment in Active Travel, with many schemes progressed, including several new active travel bridges, commencement of Kepax Bridge, refurbishment of Sabrina Bridge and plans for Hampton Bridge. The County are also delivering active travel work on behalf of the City Council secured through the Towns Fund and Wyre Forest District Council, through the Levelling Up Fund. We are developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans to set out our proposed plans for the delivery of active travel routes in the major settlements in the county.

32. The Public Rights of Way Team has been working across the county to improve the network, in particular hundreds of new signs, gates and footbridges have been installed.

33. We have continued to support public transport, and in particular our local bus network, with additional funding to allow further time for bus patronage to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

34. In July 2021 the County Council declared a climate emergency, endorsing the Council's Net Zero Plan and aim for net zero carbon emissions from its own operations by 2050.

35. The Council is a major contributor to the delivery of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's Energy Strategy, launched in 2019. The Council is working closely with the Worcestershire LEP to identify challenges and solutions for businesses and communities which struggle with power, heat, and transport, including grid capacity.

36. In the last five years the Council has secured over £20m of European, Central Government and private sector funding to support businesses and communities across the county to reduce energy use, save money, cut carbon emissions, enhance the natural environment and grow our low carbon economy.

37. The Environment Act achieved Royal Assent in 2021. One of the aims of this is to change how we manage our waste. The County, along with partners in the Borough, City and District councils, are working together to try to ensure that a consistent approach is maintained across the County whilst delivering the changes required.

38. The review of our habitat database (Worcestershire Habitat Inventory) is complete. This will assist in the Council's response to the requirements of the Environment Act, providing evidence for Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Offsetting.

39. We continue to make good progress towards our target to plant 150,000 trees over five years across the county with new woodlands already planted in the county.

### **Children and Families**

40. Our aim remains to ensure children and young people in Worcestershire receive a good quality and inclusive education, with support for children with additional needs, to enable all to achieve their potential. We support vulnerable children and their parents through early help and targeted family support, keeping families together and building on their strengths and resilience to respond to problems they face in their lives and to safeguard children from significant harm.

41. Since I last reported to the Council, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) has continued to make positive improvements in service delivery. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care was published in June 2022 and its findings and recommendations strongly endorse the approach of WCF.

42. WCF's business plan for 2023/24 was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. The plan highlights the aims, objectives, financial and operational context, the continuation of development, innovation and sustained improvement, in conjunction with the priorities within the County Council's Corporate Plan.

43. The strong strategic partnership working of WCF and WCC was positively highlighted in the External Auditor Annual Audit report in March 2022 to the Audit and Governance Committee, stating ‘a real commitment to work together to get the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.’ The report also acknowledged a clear understanding of different roles within the Council and company, that governance is appropriate, and arrangements are in place to analyse business and performance information on a regular basis.

44. 2023/24 will be the fourth year of operation for WCF. WCF values - to “Keep Children at our Heart, Value Family Life, Provide Good Education for All and Protect from Harm” -continue to be the basis for their approach to working with families, in 2022/23 a fifth value of “Embrace Diversity” was developed with staff.

45. WCF’s approach to staffing has been, and continues to be, to develop a culture where employees embrace the vision, mission and values, diversity, and inclusion through everything they do and receive praise, support and challenge to ensure they and the services achieve good outcomes for children and young people.

46. WCF leadership have a visible role within the Children’s Partnership working effectively with all partners, such as Police, Health and Schools to deliver against WCC/WCF priorities and supporting the development of joint strategy and services.

47. Turning to our work on protecting the most vulnerable children, we retain our vital duty to protect children from significant harm and our responsibility as Corporate Parents for children and young people in the care of the Council. The number of our children in care in April 2023 was 1,001, or 84 per 10,000. The number subject to a child protection plan was 565, or 47 per 10,000. Demand at the front door through Contacts and Referrals remain high following COVID, which is consistent across the country. Our average caseloads for social workers have fluctuated through increased demand and workflow pressures during the year, we have been responsive using data and performance information to target support and changes to staff where necessary to ensure workflow and workloads are managed and children and families continue to receive good quality services.

48. The outcome of this work is reflected in our social work stability and permanency data at 86% for all social work posts and 98% for social work managerial posts, and this remains a significant strength in the context of national and regional shortages and challenges. Our statutory KPIs show sustained improvement and progress against our own and regional / national benchmarking.

49. Service user feedback continues to be positive, with outcomes showing children and parents feel WCF is making a difference to their lives. Finally, the company staff health check and indicators on staffing permanence and stability evidence that WCF continues to be an employer of choice.

50. Following a SEND revisit inspection in November 2021 by the Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), it was confirmed that the local area had made sufficient progress in eight of the twelve weaknesses identified at the initial inspection in 2018.

51. As a result, the DfE required an Accelerated Progress Plan for the four areas where sufficient progress was not made. A six-month review of progress against the Plan was undertaken by the DfE and NHS England (NHSE) in September 2022. Their feedback letter stated, “It was clear that the local area is beginning to make sustainable improvements to SEND services and to the lives of children and young people”. The twelve-month review took place on 29 March 2023. Positive feedback was provided,

including recognition of the amount of work that has taken place and a clear commitment of stakeholders to co-production in improvements. Feedback recognised the investment in staff to increase capacity in the workforce and engagement with parents, but there is still more to do and there will be a further review in September 2023.

52. During the last academic year, approximately 14,700 applications were made for school places at the normal point of entry across Worcestershire. For high schools almost 6,200 applications were received, with almost 89% being offered places at their first-choice school. Just over 5% received offers for their second-choice school. For middle schools, of the 2,474 applications received, almost 96% received offers for one of their top 2 choices. For Primary schools almost 6,100 applications were received, with almost 91% being offered places at their first-choice school. Over 96% of children received offers for one of their first 2 choices.

53. We play a vital role in school place planning and provision to ensure sufficient school places are available across the County to meet the needs of a growing County. This includes significant resources for a new secondary school and successful securing of funding for a new autism spectrum disorder school in Malvern, alongside other projects.

54. We continue to be pleased with the progress made by Worcestershire Children First, our wholly owned company, in delivering Children's Services across Worcestershire.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

55. The introduction of the ICS under the Health and Care Act 2022 presents an opportunity to renew the wider system focus on population health. Public Health is playing a key role in local integration of health and care, whilst driving action and commissioning based on evidence, ensuring it is targeted to reduce health disparities.

56. The Annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in November 2022 provides analysis which informs the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and newly developing Integrated Care Strategy.

57. Public Health has led the development of the [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032](#), working with partners, on behalf of the HWB. The public consultation, which received 1,627 responses, and supporting focus groups marked a shift in the Public Health approach to engage differently, already providing a wealth of evidence that will continue to inform decisions. The priority for the strategy, 'good mental health and wellbeing' is supported by action on the wider determinants of health.

58. Public Health has continued to promote community-driven development, working with the voluntary and community sector, health and care partners and enabling community and link workers to help build strong, resilient communities. Public Health has funded 26 community builders, across the six Worcestershire districts, working within communities to develop and build sustainable community led activities.

59. Community Safety has been delivering against new duties; leading partnership activities, commissioning domestic abuse and drug and alcohol services. The requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act have seen the establishment of a new Strategic Board, action plans, and development of safe housing and support for victims. The team is also preparing to meet the new Protect duty, in response to the Manchester Arena bombing Inquiry findings.

60. Trading Standards continues to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties, tackling fraud and scams, illicit and counterfeit cigarettes, illegal sales, removing unsafe products from sale, providing advice to businesses and animal health disease control.

61. Our vision for Adult Social Care is to modernise Council services to best meet peoples' needs; to shape the care market so that services and support maximises the way in which people live their lives; all underpinned with an ethos of a person-centred approach focused on enabling and improving people's health, wellbeing, and independence.

62. We have continued to make progress against these priorities during the past year. The establishment of Integrated Care Systems and the development of the Integrated Care Board on which the Council is represented will embed collaborative working.

63. Following a significant investment from the Better Care Fund, the Council was able to significantly increase its front-line social care workforce which is supporting the reablement and rehabilitation of residents with a focus on enabling them to maintain or regain their independence at home, following a stay in hospital. This work has continued with commissioning of a 24/7 wrap-around care service in the home, which enables patients to leave hospital and receive round-the-clock care to assist them to "get back on their feet" over a four-day period and enhanced the county-wide support to the in-house reablement service that provides up to six weeks of rehabilitation care for people who have received in-patient care at hospital. The success of these services has resulted in very positive outcomes, with minimal numbers requiring a further hospital admission.

64. Our teams have been working with Herefordshire Council and the ICS as part of a project regarding falls prevention funded through a successful bid that brought significant funding to the two counties and NHS of which WCC will receive £382,000, for Assistive Technology Provision. This work supports the established Ageing Well programme and the ICS place-based falls programmes; Herefordshire Falls Predict, Prevent, React and Respond programme and Worcestershire Integrated Care for Older People in Worcestershire (ICOPE) programme. The work will also support the Health and Wellbeing priority to ensure Worcestershire residents are healthier, live longer, have a better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible.

65. It remains the priority of Adult Social Care that vulnerable individuals are protected. The full implementation of the 3 Conversation model has seen significant benefits in relation to promoting self-reliance through reablement, use of technology and direct payments and in turn, supports demand management.

66. Carers form an essential network in delivering care across the county and, following the development of an All-Age Carers Strategy, the County Council has completed a tender for an Adults Carers Hub which will support the management and co-ordination of support for adult carers (including parent carers of adults and young adults) across Worcestershire, providing one point of contact for all adult carers.

67. The Community Reablement Service ensures people are supported and enabled to remain at home, for as long as possible. Further implementation of the national requirements of "Home First" and reablement offer is being provided to everyone at the point of hospital discharge. From 2022 onwards, this in-house service is formally supported by one of our county-wide providers, as well as our newly commissioned reablement focussed domiciliary care service which enables providers to work across "zones" within the County and increases the effectiveness of the service.

68. The focus of our work with communities over the past year has been on recovering from COVID. Library visits and issues continue to rise to almost pre-pandemic levels, whilst those visiting our county museum, country parks and greenspace are higher than they were in March 2020. We also held our first Skills Show since the pandemic and reached over 3000 young people. We continue to build on the success of Here2help and using the network of volunteers and the information, advice and signposting aspects to focus on current challenges residents face, such as support for the cost of living.

### **The Finance Service**

69. The monthly budget monitoring reports to all directorate management teams have been improved to include information on debt outstanding, activity analysis (particularly in the demand related services such as children's, adults and waste), use of reserves, impact of the capital programme, use of grants and other external funding. This supports the Council in being able to demonstrate reliable and consistent financial reporting which supports the external auditor's assessment on value for money.

70. We have a well-established budget monitoring, control and reporting process which identifies risks and issues as well as additional income generation opportunities which not only relate to the current financial year, but looks at the medium term, recurrent issues and their impact on future years budgets. This supports the ongoing cyclical nature of budget setting, reporting, variance analysis and feeds back into the next budget setting process. The Council set a balanced budget for 2023/24, along with a Medium-Term Financial Plan at its meeting in February 2023.

71. We also saw our external auditor commend our approach and completion of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts, and once again we were one of the first Councils to have their annual accounts signed off unqualified. We are now in the final stages of completing the draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.

72. Our focus on income and debt has continued to be strengthened, with more debt recovered than any previous year. There is still more to be done and plans are in place to automate more billing and collection, including innovative use of new banking and smart app technology. I would like to thank the Audit and Governance Committee for all the work they have done in supporting and driving this agenda.

73. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Cabinet Members and the management team, together with the wider workforce and all Members of the Council for the contribution they have made throughout the year to deliver for the residents and businesses of Worcestershire.

**Simon Geraghty**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**May 2023**

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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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1. The following report reviews the work of the Chief Executive over the last year and provides members with an update on key priorities, actions and achievements in that time and also provides members with the opportunity to seek further clarification where required.

2. I would like to start by thanking all staff working for and behalf of Worcestershire County Council, striving to ensure residents, businesses and communities receive the services they deem important within a very tightly defined financial envelope. Containing costs and managing demand remains a significant issue, however I am pleased to report to members that over the last year the new systems and processes introduced have made this more manageable and the Council's finances are in line with the budget and estimates set at the start of the year.

**Public Health**

3. During 2022, as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, Public Health has been able to refocus on its wide-ranging statutory duties, promoting prevention and reducing health inequalities to address poor health outcomes for the residents of Worcestershire. The Interim Director of Public Health has worked to keep Public Health at the heart of the local authority's agenda in support of its Corporate Plan, contribute to the development of wider Integrated System (ICS) and support the team to recover from the intensity of the COVID-19 response.

4. Following a governance review last year, the Health and Wellbeing Board extended its membership to district councils reflecting its role delivering place-based leadership within the ICS. Collectively members aim to ensure aligned and complementary work programmes across the system, driving improvements in health outcomes through local assets and a community-based approach. The HWB provides oversight of the District Collaboratives which are formed of district councils, Primary Care Networks, the Voluntary and Community Sector and other key local partners, to deliver against shared priorities for their communities. This is ensuring local, neighbourhood-level action and engagement.

5. Public Health has delivered the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032. With a new approach to Public Health engagement, the Strategy's public consultation and focus groups provided a wealth of evidence that will continue to inform services. The priority for the strategy, 'good mental health and wellbeing', is supported by action on the wider determinants of health and work is beginning to shape action plans to now deliver on these priorities.

6. In support of the strategy, and as the system continues to address its more challenging public health indicators, Public Health has worked closely with children's

services, health care and other partners to focus on children and families, recognising the impact on lifelong health, happiness and productivity. Public Health is coordinating efforts to optimise health and support before conception, during pregnancy and post birth and to reduce the impacts of smoking, obesity and poor mental health which can contribute to infant mortality. The creation of the 'start for life' offer and 'family hubs' seeks to provide a single access point for family services including health, social care, financial support and emotional wellbeing. Public Health is also co-producing a local 'youth offer' to improve access for young people and supporting those most at risk of poorer outcomes.

7. Regarding Health Protection, Worcestershire's COVID-19 pandemic response has tapered in line with national guidance. The Local Outbreak Response Team has significantly reduced in size, only supporting high risk adult social care settings until March 2023 funded via the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. However, systems and processes remain should they need to be reinstated.

8. Public Health incorporates Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Trading Standards and has oversight of strategic housing partnership activity. Following an independent review, Emergency Planning has been strengthened to meet increasing national and local priorities and to oversee the Council's approach to Business Continuity. It continues to manage the Council's response to potential emergency scenarios, such as severe local flooding or operational delivery of plans such as 'London Bridge' and the response to the death of the Monarch.

## **Financial Management**

### **Worcestershire Pension Fund**

9. The Fund has continued to invest and strengthen its administration, with responsibility now for over 60,000 members and over 185 employers. The Worcestershire Pension Fund (the "Fund") was valued at approx. £3.5bn as at end March 2022 and was 100% funded (based on the preliminary results of the 2022 valuation). This represents significant growth on the previous actuarial valuation at the same period in 2019 of £2.8bn, being 90% funded.

10. The Fund's investment strategy has offered a significant degree of shelter from any global economic volatility. Importantly we continue to see the Strategy shape a strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) focus with new investments in low carbon schemes such as £200 million in forestry and social housing. At the same time the Fund has transitioned out of a very carbon intensive passive fund and invested £200m in a climate multi-factor fund which aims to tilt exposure away from companies that are carbon intensive or own fossil fuel reserves, and towards companies that generate green revenues. Our second Climate Risk Strategy Report saw the Fund continue to exceed that of the benchmarks and an improvement on the previous year seeing the Total Equity carbon footprint being 28.05% more carbon efficient than the blended benchmark.

### **Finance & Accountancy**

11. The Council's 2021/22 Statement of Accounts were again praised by our external auditors and have been signed off, unqualified, ahead of the majority of local authorities and we have recently commenced the process for 2022/23.

12. Finance have been leading a Workforce Development and Succession programme that is growing and developing staff from within the Council, including apprenticeships. By the end of 2022/23 all staff had individual development plans linked to career maps and training programmes that aims to ensure we retain and recruit to maintain the stability and excellence of the team. 2022 also saw all of the 2020 apprentices pass their AAT level 3 qualifications and all bar one secure a job in Finance, with one exception securing a role at Wyre Forest DC. The May 2023 cohort of 4 new apprentices have recently commenced their training with our local FE provider.

13. Finance have continued to strengthen its Financial Awareness training to budget managers and officers across the council, with in excess of 300 delegates attending the programme to date. This has promoted the importance of reliable budget monitoring, forecasting and control and raises awareness relating to where the council gets its money from and where it is spent. Feedback on the course has been hugely positive and has not only improved financial awareness across the council and WCF, but it has also raised the profile of the role finance across the organisations.

14. Monthly budget monitoring continues to be produced for senior management teams within the directorates and to the Chief Officer Group and Strategic Leadership Team. Alongside this, the finance business partners have developed a number of activity-based forecasts within our demand related budgets (predominantly adults and children) so that the reader can see the direct correlation between activity, demand, unit costs and forecast.

15. The budget setting process concluded in February 2023 with the setting of a balanced budget for 2023/24 and was completed in conjunction with the budget holders to ensure that they were involved in the development of future budgets at a time when they can influence future decision making.

### **Financial Transactions**

16. The Council has seen an increase in financial operational contacts and the team have dealt with over 30% more transactions during 2022/23. This has been possible due to the excellent foundations laid to manage process through automated routes, such as our social care client portal that has reduced over 60,000 pieces of post.

17. The Income and Debt team have continued to pursue debt and modernise our billing and collection processes with over £20m collected since the team's formation.

18. Finally, teams supporting the most Adult Social Care clients such as Appointees & Deputies, Court of Protection, Financial Assessments and Brokerage have also dealt with significant rises in cases as we continue to support the most financially vulnerable and seek best value for care placements. Court of Protection has again had a successful Government Inspection, whilst Brokerage have helped ensure hospital patient discharges throughout the County have not been delayed as people move into care, with over 30% more placements made this year.

### **Internal Audit**

19. Internal Audit have continued to ensure all recommendations are agreed and acted on. The team have led the Council's improved approach to risk management, and we are hopeful of recruiting a new Chief Internal Auditor soon.

## Human Resources, Organisational Development and Engagement

20. We remain committed to delivering our ambitious Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2024, which has been developed to ensure we have a workforce with the personal and collective resilience to drive us forward in these challenging times.

21. Our relationships with our recognised Trade Unions continue to be constructive and effective, enabling ongoing dialogue relating to all workforce matters, including change management, pay and reward, employee wellbeing and performance.

22. Our integrated well-being approach focuses on both immediate support for employees and more long term positive and preventative approaches, within a no cost/ low-cost principle. Highlights this year include, two successful wellbeing weeks, each with over 2000 bookings. 97% of employees who fed back, said they would attend a future wellbeing week, and 82% saying it has had a positive impact on their wellbeing, which supports our continued focus on wellbeing as part of our workforce strategy. We have also completed our first ever Big Team Challenge with over 270 participants from across the organisation. This focused on increasing employee activity levels and encouraging team work to reach a million steps per team, over 6 weeks.

23. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and policy maintains statutory compliance in all service areas to meet the duty placed on us under the public sector equality duty. The infrastructure (i.e. governance, equality champions, Directorate Equality and Strategic Equality Groups) ensures we have a future proof proposition which encourages inclusivity for all as part of our workforce strategy.

24. Our Mandatory Learning Programme supports the organisational cultural aims by improving the skills, efficiency, and performance across the organisation across the whole workforce. The programme is also designed to manage organisational risks around statutory areas including cyber security, safeguarding and health and safety amongst others. In April 2022, Mandatory Learning entered its second year with an updated suite of courses. At the end of Q2 2022, the compliance rate had reached 83% (WCC) and 73% (WCF).

25. We have continued to carry out performance reviews maintaining 100% compliance and have developed a refreshed approach to managing performance including reintroduction of our calibration process, quality checks and reporting to our Strategic Leadership Team and Chief Officers. We have also introduced a new executive performance appraisal process for our Strategic Leadership Team and other statutory Chief Officers including publication of the performance accountabilities to be delivered.

26. We have continued to promote and grow our apprenticeship offer across the Council, Worcestershire Children First and Maintained Schools. As of November 2022, we had 164 apprentices, and in the last year we have started over 110 new apprentices across WCC and seen over 85 employees complete their apprenticeships. The levy transfer option has allowed us to continue our support to local businesses in 2022. 53 Worcestershire-based businesses have been funded to employ an apprentice via levy transfer since 2020, with a total levy transfer of £713,000. In addition, this year has seen a zero return on Levy to central government for a sustained period.

27. In April 2022, we launched the new myLearning system, providing a new platform for WCC/WCF staff to access mandatory learning, e-learning content, and training events. This has significantly improved employee experience, increased mandatory learning compliance, and managers visibility of their teams learning journey.

28. We continue to proactively and effectively, communicate and engage with our residents and partners through a wide range of platforms, both digitally and via traditional mediums. Over the last 12 months, the social posts on our channels and been viewed over 25 million times and we have shared over 650 stories with the local media to help keep residents and businesses updated on progress on our priorities.

29. In addition to communicating with residents and businesses, engaging with our diverse workforce is also a priority for the Council, ensuring organisational success and is key to realising our Workforce Strategy. Our Your Voice 2022 Annual Staff Survey saw a record breaking 71.5% of our workforce respond, and we have developed a structure and way of action planning which will mean we can really make a difference this year and in the future. We will continue to build on this approach for Your Voice 2023.

### **Transformation and Change**

30. The last 12 months has seen our focus on delivering major initiatives around core service transformation, including the Customer Experience Programme; Transformation and ensuring Statutory Compliance in Adults Social Care and Communities; Schools Build Programme, Redditch Library, Property Services Redesign etc. Of particular note has been the successful centralisation of many of our back-office functions into our County Hall HQ, allowing closer working between teams and providing welcome income from the leasing of vacated space. In addition, we have successfully completed phase one of the transformation of the Adults Front Door which is supporting improvements for our customers and social work teams.

31. The next 12 months will see us deliver against the agreed priorities for change, including the continuation of the Customer Experience Programme, and expansion across E&I, the home to school transport review programme , and the development of a reform programme, leveraging our Lean6sigma, transformation, commercial and digital capabilities, to help services improve efficiency and effectiveness, and to deliver agreed savings targets.

32. A new commercial strategy has been developed and approved which sets out our aspirations as a council from now until 2026 in respect of commercial and procurement outcomes. We are continuing with the transformation of the services, and will be relaunching revised procurement governance arrangements shortly, allowing engagement at the right levels across our strategic commercial activities. As an organisation, we spend in excess of £0.5bn per annum with third party suppliers, and the newly formed category teams are working in close partnership with the directorate leads to support them in getting get commercial and qualitative outcomes possible from these agreements.

33. During the course of the next 12 months, we will develop new commercial strategies across all core areas of spend that reflect the volatile markets and economic climate in

which we now operate. We will also be reviewing our standing orders, procurement policy, and thresholds to ensure they are fit for purpose and relevant.

34. Property Services continues its transformation, with a number of the legacy service challenges having been identified and addressed during the last 12 months. Work continues to support the schools build programme, as well as the management of our Shrub Hill Industrial Estate. Significant facilities remediation works have been completed, including UPS upgrade and Boiler refurbishments. This year also saw us completed comprehensive energy and sustainability management audits across our entire corporate estate, as well as a majority of schools.

35. In respect of capital assets, the disposals programme has delivered approximately £5.75m in capital receipts during 22/23 across our estate. We continue to look at further opportunities in respect of our non-strategic rural assets, with disposals being progressed where appropriate and in a managed way. Work is also continuing with the One Public Estate programme to optimise utilisation across all public sector partners and identified opportunities to rationalise our portfolio.

36. The Business Intelligence (BI) Team completed its restructure in Summer 2022, having previously been called the Management, Information, Analytics and Research (MIAR) team. All BI activity has been reorganised under three sub-teams and new capacity has been created for BI transformation. Scrutiny and Performance reporting is in the process of moving to Power BI, and a new performance and risk monitoring framework is in development for use from 2023/24. In 2023, we will share the Council's first Business Intelligence Strategy, which will set out how we propose to deliver our vision to provide the right information at the right time, to drive data-driven decisions, facilitate effective commissioning, help deliver services and achieve improved outcomes.

### **ICT and Digital**

37. Over the last 12 months our systems and structures have proved highly resilient, and we have continued to invest to support that resilience and our capability to operate flexibly. Excellent progress has been made with the implementation of the IT Strategy, with the delivery of several key IT & Digital projects.

38. Cyber threats continue to develop in size and sophistication and the fast-paced digital transformation and organisational change within local authorities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has created and exposed new vulnerabilities in technology, processes, skills and training. We have continued to improve and develop our cyber security which is now supported by a Managed Security Operations Centre monitored 24x7x365.

39. IT Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery has progressed significantly. We have gone from effectively a single data centre with no resilience and limited backup capability, to a position where we have performed a full disaster recovery test, failing all services across to a secondary data centre, supported by immutable and offsite backups.

40. Good progress has been made with customer-facing service improvement activities, including chatbot development, customer surveys and a telephony IVR review to ensure a one council approach to customer contact.

41. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are new partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services. Strong and positive relationships have been developed with the Integrated Care System, with whom we have implemented the provision of data into the Shared Care Record.

42. We are continuing to deliver against the digital strategy, and have implemented several new systems some that replace manual existing processes and some to support brand new initiatives e.g. Here to host. The Council's new website was launched in February, providing our residents with a much-improved digital experience. The launch follows a three-month trial launch giving residents the opportunity to have their say. In its first revamp in almost a decade, the County Council's website now has a brand-new look and feel, making it easier to navigate and more mobile-friendly as over 70% of people visiting the website now do so via a mobile device.

43. The corporate information governance Team provides assurance that the Council's arrangements ensure personal data is held securely, information is disseminated effectively and that the Council is compliant with the legal framework - notably the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

44. The service continues to deliver a range of innovative and transformational digital solutions to support new ways of working and efficiencies, while also improving our digital offering to customers, with more services available online 24/7 through end-to-end applications and information available via the web.

45. In recognition of the progress that we have achieved in this area, WCC were finalists for a number of awards this year, including MJ Awards (Digital Transformation Category, Innovation in Building Diversity and Inclusion Category, and Workforce Transformation Category), LGC (Diversity and Inclusion), the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2022 and finalists in the UK National Contact Centre Awards 2023 - Small Contact Centre of the Year category.

### **Worcestershire Children First**

46. 2022 was a positive year in the journey of our Children's Services delivered by Worcestershire Children First, our wholly owned company. Our partnership goes well beyond the contractual arrangements and the model is regarded as good practice by the Department for Education (DfE).

47. Our collective sustained improvement was recognised by the DfE by the lifting of the statutory direction in November 2021 and the early removal of the "Support and Supervision" phase in June 2022. This is a result of significant hard work and improvement since Ofsted's 2016 inspection, evidenced throughout the monitoring and focused visits by Ofsted and our reporting to the DfE.

48. WCF's Chief Executive provides continued stability in leadership in a volatile and demanding sector and is part of my Strategic Leadership Team ensuring the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements are transparent and effective. The company's

Director of Resources is also part of the Council's Chief Officer Group to ensure there is a joined up and consistent approach and that services provide value for money for residents of Worcestershire which is extremely important in these challenging times for local government.

49. WCC provide a range of support services to WCF through service agreements, and we have established some key areas of joint developments such as the All-Age Disability Service to improve the experience for young people and their parents and carers.

50. The Council requires WCF to develop and publish an annual Business Plan. The 2023/24 Business Plan was approved by Cabinet on 30 March 2023. The Plan sets out WCF's vision and strategic goals and outlines how they will deliver services for children, young people and families, on behalf of the Council. The plan describes WCF's staffing and governance structure as well as future forecasts in relation to finances.

51. SEND and High Needs funding and the impact of the deficit is a local and national issue and to address the future sustainability the DfE has invested a one off £85m in the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme. WCF are leading this for the County Council and this programme will support the 55 local authorities with deficits to reform their high needs systems and will try to address the underlying issues that lead to increased pressure. The outcomes from the all the participating authorities will also influence future national policy and funding arrangements for this complex area. The programme is being supported by Newton Europe and CIPFA who we have previously worked alongside in Social Care and through the Society of County Treasurers. For information, authorities with the highest deficits participate in the safety valve intervention programme. We will keep elected members informed of our progress through our usual formal governance arrangements.

52. Further details of the service achievements and outcomes are contained in the Leader's report on this agenda and are therefore not repeated here.

### **People and Communities**

53. This is important in strengthening relationships across Adult Social Care, Worcestershire Children First, Community Services, Public Health and wider partners, including the NHS and voluntary and community sector organisations.

54. Adult Social Care have set up a Mental Health Partnership Board, with commitment from a wide range of stakeholders, experts by experience, providers, and partner agencies to focus on effective ways of developing future services collaboratively. We have set up the Pathway Planning Team, creating a team of skilled workers to proactively review people's needs to step down their care from residential settings to lower-level supported living environments where they can live more independent lives. The Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) Service has had a service re-design and we are moving to 24/7 service with a clear development pathway for WCC staff to ensure we deliver our statutory duties in an effective, sustainable way. A further success is that in bringing Mental Health Social Work back to the Council, we have significantly improved over review performance in the last 12 months, completing 95% in a 12-month timeframe. We continue to work closely with Worcestershire Children First to provide a



joined-up offer for children, young people and young adults with disabilities following the transfer of the young adults' team to a newly developed All Age Disability Service in the summer of 2022.

55. During winter 2022/3, an extra-care step facility was piloted with good success, this pilot now extended for a one-year period, providing short term accommodation with support for those who may not be able to return home from hospital immediately but who do not require residential or nursing care.

56. Nationally and locally, workforce pressures remain challenging in both social work and social care roles, and we continue to implement actions to improve recruitment and retention within these critical roles, with a string emphasis on wellbeing and staff engagement.

57. Nationally, budget pressures remain a concern as demand continues to escalate at pace for care services, and increased levels of additional care needs (complexity) are identified.

58. There are significant market challenges, further impacted by "post-covid" requirements and industrial action across NHS staff groups, the sustained rise in the rising cost of living impact and staff shortages nationally and locally.

59. There was a significant increase in social care contacts during 2021-22 impacted on demand, during 2022-23 so far, this has been followed by a further increase of 4%, suggesting the demand for support from adult social care will continue to rise post Covid.

60. The number of active safeguarding cases has increased by 74% between March 2022 and September 2022, requiring significant resources to manage safely and ensure some of our most vulnerable residents are safeguarded.

61. Overall social work activity remains high in 2022-23, with our Area Social Work Teams alone, completing nearly 4,000 conversations with people who may require care and support per month, on average 10,200 case-note recording and 10,700 telephone conversations with people.

62. In 2021, the Government launched its programme of reform for Adult Social Care, and in particular, how social care is funded and of assessment of care quality. The first phase of this change impacts care services for general residential and nursing residential care for residents aged 65 and older, and for home care services for the 18+ age group. Within the autumn statement, the use of funds for the provision of services was addressed, councils required to use the grants "to make tangible improvements to Adult Social Care and in particular address discharge delays, social care waiting times, low fee rates, workforce pressures and promote technological innovation within the sector". It is widely recognised that the increasing demand and complexity of care needs for an ageing population plus the inflationary challenges seen across all industries presents a significant financial challenge to the County and as a result, the County Council will seek to better match care needs against care provision through the development of services delivered in both home and residential settings. We continue to see an Acute Hospital System under increasing pressure which has had an impact on the level and type of services we provide to support people following a hospital admission. Throughout 2022, we have worked with system partners to maximise

opportunities to actively work with our citizens to avoid hospital admission and promote access to reablement, and we are working closely with the NHS as the threat of strike action draws closer to enable our citizens to be supported through the coming months. This vital work will continue throughout 2023.

63. From April 2023 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will review, assess and report on how effectively Local Authorities carry out their regulated care functions under Part I of the Care Act 2014. We have developed a robust assurance self-assessment tool and a comprehensive self-assessment programme in preparation, and as a council, we are nationally recognised as a leader in preparing for CQC assessment and review. To date over 70% of our adult social care workforce have engaged in a least one CQC self-assessment activity, and workshops and focus groups with carers and providers have also been conducted. Nearly 700 service users, carers, Worcestershire residents and partner agencies responded to our Building Together Survey, with 390 of these respondents indicating they would like to be involved in the development of the Building Together Coproduction Charter and strategy, as well the ongoing review and development of services. These events have not only provided a wealth of information regarding the areas in which adult social care shines, but also the areas in which more development is necessary.

64. Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area. There are 42 ICSs across England, covering populations of around 500,000 to 3 million people.

65. Within each ICS, place-based partnerships will lead the detailed design and delivery of integrated services across their localities and neighbourhoods. The partnerships will involve the NHS, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, local residents, people who use services, their carers and representatives and other community partners with a role in supporting the health and wellbeing of the population. The County Council is represented on the Integrated Care Board by its Chief Executive Officer.

66. Here2Help has been absorbed into the Adult Front Door or wider community development work. The Adult Front Door is responsible for managing demand into adult social care and is proactively focusing on providing more preventative activity to help more people to help themselves, live independently for longer and improve wellbeing. Ultimately the aim is to prevent, reduce or delay the need for adult social care.

## **Economy and Infrastructure**

67. In December 2021, Cabinet authorised officers to negotiate and enter into a Variation with Mercia Waste Management Service to put into effect their proposals for extending the duration of the Waste Management Service Contract for a period of five years until January 2029. Actions to finalise the variation progressed with Herefordshire Council and Mercia Waste Management Services and with the support of technical, financial and legal advisors. The contract extension was successfully completed at the end of 2022.

68. The Sustainability Team are co-ordinating work aimed at achieving this goal, a Sustainability Board is in place and operating. The Council's GHG emissions reduced by

47% between 2009/10 to 2021/22. The Net Zero Carbon Plan is currently being reviewed.

69. The refreshed Member Portal went live on 17th October 2022 and, like all change it will take a while to embed and adapt to a new way of working, but already we are seeing the benefits. Member enquiries are now being logged and tracked on one system and dashboards ensure that these are regularly monitored. The portal will integrate with Highways systems and leading the way was the Highways Report-it System for all highways operational enquiries. The next development phase is underway, and this will integrate with the system for Street Lighting.

70. This year we have seen the introduction of the Customer Experience Programme and development of new technology and systems to transform the way our customers access our services. E&I have worked with the Commercial and Change Directorate to review the way in which customers and stakeholders interact with our services. Our focus has been on improving the end-to-end customer journey and customer experience.

71. Our new Report-it function went live on 8th August 2022 and since then we have received circa 5000 reports, which equates to about 16,000 enquiries each year. That average is down on previous years, but this was in advance of the usual winter season and the severe weather that that brings! 89% of the reports/enquiries since August have been completed. The top four enquiry types are still Roads/footpaths, grass cutting, drainage and potholes.

72. In late September, we introduced our new Call Centre technology within the Highways and Transport Control Centre. This sophisticated dashboard assists in managing calls in line with Service Level Agreements and enables us to prepare reports on what our residents are contacting us about so that we can do further engagement/training exercises.

73. It has been a busy and productive year and the above are only a small fraction of the services and outputs the County Council has achieved. I would like to conclude this report as I started by expressing my thanks to all the staff, managers and Councillors and partners who have made this possible.

**Paul Robinson**  
**Chief Executive**  
**May 2023**

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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE BOARD**

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**Recommendation**

1. **The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the Council receives the annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for 2022.**
2. The Council will be asked to receive this report and to receive answers to any questions on it.

**Supporting Information**

Appendix - Annual report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for 2022.

**Contact Point for this report**

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**Background Papers**

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

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# Overview and Scrutiny **Annual Report 2022**

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Foreword.....  | 1  |
| Introduction.....  | 2  |
| Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board.....   | 2  |
| Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel .....                          | 3  |
| Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel .....                              | 5  |
| Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel .....                          | 7  |
| Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel.....                             | 8  |
| Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.....   | 8  |
| Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel .....  | 10 |
| Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) .....                                  | 11 |
| Scrutiny Task Groups: .....  | 14 |
| • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) .....                          | 14 |
| • Developer-funded Highways Infrastructure & Section 278<br>Technical Approval ..... | 14 |
| Appendix 1 – Governance Model .....  | 15 |



## Foreword

It is a pleasure to present the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the hard work of both Board Members and also our very professional officer team who support our work. I would also wish to thank the Leader and his Cabinet Members for their regular attendance at our meetings.

I firmly believe that the best scrutiny takes place in task and finish groups, and this year has been no exception. Councillor Daisley and, more recently Councillor McKay, did a fine job in producing an excellent report examining the critical area of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Councillor Adams carried out a thorough piece of work examining how we can ensure contractors deliver the local road infrastructure which accompanies new housing development. Many councillors will be all too familiar with such matters in their own Divisions.

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee plays a vital role in holding providers to account and given its workload, now meets monthly.

Unusually, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board made the trip to Redditch to examine proposals to relocate the town's Library. The meeting was very well attended by the public. I believe the Board conducted itself in a very professional and business-like manner and was a credit to the County Council.

Looking ahead, everyone involved in Scrutiny seeks to make a difference and play a positive role in influencing policy development. To that end, we shall begin our scrutiny of next year's emerging budget rather sooner than usual.

Finally, I would like to thank my Vice-Chairman for the very positive and constructive way he has supported our work.



Tom Wells  
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

# Introduction

This Report highlights some of the key pieces of work that Scrutiny has undertaken in the last 16 months (January 2022 – April 2023) as it gets into its stride following the 2021 elections and post the Covid-19 pandemic.

In May last year, in recognition of the Scrutiny Panels workload, Council agreed that the responsibilities covered by the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel were too broad to enable appropriate support and scrutiny of, the key Council priorities in the Corporate Plan (Economy and the Environment). It was therefore agreed that the two elements were split, and a new Panel was formed. Scrutiny now has one Panel covering the Economy, including strategic infrastructure, and the other Panel covering the Environment.

A diagram showing where Scrutiny fits in the governance of the Council is attached at Appendix 1.

Details of the membership of scrutiny bodies and their meetings are on the Council's website.

## Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB)

The primary role of the Board is to co-ordinate the work of the Scrutiny Panels. However, it has also considered a range of issues in 2022/23, generally focusing on strategic Council-wide matters. This has included the Worcestershire Response to the Invasion of Ukraine (subject to ongoing Scrutiny), Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Worcestershire Children & Young People's Plan 2022 – 2024.

In October 2022, the Board took Scrutiny into the community to consider the proposals for the Relocation of Redditch Library – the Board continues to monitor the progress of these proposals.

## Scrutiny Annual Work Programme

The 2022/23 Scrutiny Work Programme was drawn up following consideration by each Panel, so that their individual priorities could be taken into account. The work programme was endorsed by [Council](#) in July 2022. The 2023/24 Programme will be considered at its meeting in May 2023.

## Scrutiny of Other Agencies

The Board met with representatives of the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) to receive an annual update on the achievements of the WLEP over the last 12 months as well as discussing the strategic objectives for 2022/23 and WLEP's Energy Strategy.

## Community Safety

As the Council's designated statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, the Board meets on an annual basis with Crime and Disorder partners, to discuss issues of mutual interest. This year, the Lead Member for Crime and Disorder led the Board in this meeting and in addition to considering the community safety issues affecting Worcestershire Members also heard about work undertaken to relaunch Community Speed Watch in February 2022, and ongoing work since then.

In January of this year, the Board explored the developments relating to local drug and alcohol related outcomes and the development of a Worcestershire Drug and Alcohol Strategy.

## **Budget 2023/24**

The Scrutiny function has maintained its approach to monitoring and challenging service and budget performance this year. Regular updates are included in each Panel's work programme and this has led to some 'deep dive' work being undertaken to follow up queries. This has helped Panel Members to be proactive when scrutinising the budget and to develop a deeper understanding of the services.

Following the approval for the budget consultation by Cabinet on 5 January 2023, the Board collated Scrutiny's views on the draft budget for the February meeting of Cabinet. The comments came from a rigorous scrutiny process, in particular of the revenue budget, and the Board is grateful to the Cabinet Members (CMR's), officers and witnesses who enabled this scrutiny to take place in a tight timescale.

Looking forward to 2024/25 budget scrutiny, Members of the Board are keen to emphasise the policy development role of Scrutiny and would like the opportunity to feed into the Corporate Strategy Planning process in September 2023 and would therefore wish to get involved in the budget setting process earlier in the year in order to have a more meaningful role.

## **Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Throughout the reporting period, the Panel has heard of the significant financial pressures on the Council relating to adult social care, due to cost pressures and service demand from an ageing population. The Panel was pleased to hear that the CMR and Officers took every opportunity to lobby Government for fair funding. Council Tax for 2022-23 and 2023-24 includes an Adult Social Care Levy and for 2022-23, additional grant funding for adult and children's social care totalled £12.6m. The Panel learned that for 2023-24, further additional funding is anticipated, including to support people being discharged from hospital into social care.

Workforce has been a constant theme, with the Council and organisations across the health and social care sector working, often together, to recruit and retain staff. The Panel agreed that care work as a career could make a huge difference to people's lives yet recognised that other sectors could be more attractive due to better rates of pay. The Council and partners are looking at the overall employment offer, which includes flexibility and conditions of service, to attract staff.

Joint working across health and social care is now more formal, with the NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (HWICS) launch in July 2022, replacing the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

In January 2022, the Panel was pleased to learn that the Council and the CCG had worked together to agree new and effective ways of working to ensure there was a fair, equitable and transparent approach to funding of NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC is a package of care for people who are not in hospital and have been assessed as having a primary health need), joint packages and S117 cases (aftercare funding designed to cover the cost of meeting all a person's mental health related support needs). It was reported that as a result, there had been a significant reduction in inter-agency disputes, an increase in numbers eligible for CHC funding and an increase in fast track funding eligibility. The Council's income related to CHC increased by £1.1m and a further £1.6m was received from backdated claims.

In March 2022 and 2023, the Panel welcomed the Independent Chair of Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB). The 2022 discussion highlighted that the County's issues were in line with those experienced nationally – rough sleeping, the role of the lead professional and exploitation. The biggest challenge outlined by the Chair was staffing in the care profession, especially as 'Home First' was advocated as best practice. The Panel's 2023 update included discussion around work being done following a thematic review of deaths of rough sleepers in Worcestershire, which had been very much welcomed, and Panel members who were also district councillors expressed interest in continuing discussions. The new Complex Adult Risk Management (CARM) framework was also cited as a gamechanger especially for rough sleepers and hoarders, who should receive a social care assessment, and many had now gone through this process.

The Panel has been kept updated about the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessments of Local Authorities and has learned that preparation for the new assessments has involved an enormous amount of work. The Council had been fortunate to be able to do a series of dress rehearsals with other local authorities and numerous workshops were taking place to ensure consistency across staff and stakeholders. It was anticipated that inspections would begin from 1 April 2023 under the new framework.

Direct Payments (where people commission their own care) was discussed in May 2022. The Council is fully supportive of this option as it provides choice and control to residents and enhances the strengths-based approach to social care. Work to promote Direct Payments is ongoing, mindful that any services bought need to meet the needs of the individual.

The Health O&S Committee and the Panel have separately discussed aspects of patient flow and discharge from acute hospitals, and attendance by both respective Chairmen and other members has strengthened the knowledge base of both scrutiny bodies. Challenges around the Covid-19 pandemic have been reported throughout.

The Panel when focussing on the Council's role in discharge of complex patients from acute hospitals found out that support was provided through the Intermediate Care Service, with the aim of providing speedier discharge from hospital and helping with admission avoidance. In addition, enhanced domiciliary care was being offered as part of a pilot project. All health and social care partners were working together, with external national support, and there was a stronger partnership now than in previous years. Discharge of complex patients to intermediate care and reablement in their own homes was now very successful. The Reablement Team had earned national recognition for this and other local authorities were keen to learn how it had been achieved, however recruitment remained a challenge so that not all posts were filled, and further challenges related to increased demand, the requirement for additional domiciliary care hours, the need for staff to double up for some patients and the logistics of a large, mainly rural County.

The Panel has been kept updated about the Government's plans for Adult Social Care Reforms which have been delayed until October 2025.

In September, the Panel received its annual update on compliments and complaints for adult services. Complaints had increased from 123 to 233 during 2021-22, although 62 were discontinued. Standards of service was the main area for complaints fully or partially upheld and all reports were a valuable source of information.

In December, Panel members visited social work teams at Bromsgrove and Worcester to see working environments and ways of working, which they found very helpful and staff also appreciated the interaction with elected members.

In January 2023, the Panel was given the opportunity to comment, in advance of a Cabinet decision, on a proposed review of replacement care (previously known as respite), mainly to change the assessment for replacement care to a non-residential service and make it clearer for service users, and also to charge for both carers when two are required to attend a home care visit. The Panel was unanimously supportive of the proposals set out.

Also in January 2023, the Panel received an update on the implementation of the Day Opportunities Review which took place during 2022. Members of the Panel were pleased to hear that the feedback from service users had been mainly positive and unexpected savings were welcomed. Negative comments received had been generally about the process rather than the outcome, with examples given including transportation queries or session times.

In March, the Panel learned more about the Directorate's progress to develop the Learning Disability Service (LDS), following a Peer Challenge Review which had identified several areas for improvement. There were now good joint working arrangements with the Integrated Care Board including work towards a formal agreement for joint funding arrangements. The Vulnerable Adults Team had been reviewed to ensure a robust staff team was in place to deal with anticipated future demand and this would continue to be a priority along with overall LDS recruitment and retention and preparing for CQC inspection.

The Panel continued to monitor performance on a quarterly basis and in the main were pleased with the key performance indicators presented.

## **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

The Panel's work this year has ranged across both the education and social care aspects of its remit. May 2022 saw a number of Membership changes included a new Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Throughout this period, Members were particularly pleased to see an increase in public participation at its meetings covering topics such as the All-Age Disability Service, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services, the Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report and Home to School Transport. In total 19 Members of the public spoke at Panel meetings, including 2 young people.

Members began 2022 with a joint discussion with the Adult Care and Well Being O&S Panel on proposals to restructure services to create an All-Age Disability Service. The proposals were developed jointly by the County Council's People Directorate and Worcester Children First (WCF) and aimed to provide a more coherent and coordinated response to need and deliver better outcomes in the short term and into adulthood. A further joint discussion to evaluate the implementation of the proposals is planned for later this year.

The Assessment Pathway for Children and Young People who may have Autism has been considered regularly in recent years by both the Children and Families O&S Panel and the OSPB. In January 2022, the Panel invited colleagues from WCF and the Health Service to provide a further update on assessments and referrals, waiting times and funding. Members welcomed the improvements that could be seen, including reduced waiting times, and were keen to ensure that the improving trajectory was maintained.

An additional Panel meeting was held in February to hear about the outcomes of two external inspections of WCF services. Firstly, the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities revisit, Members were pleased to learn that sufficient progress had been made in eight of the twelve areas of significant weakness detailed in the previous inspection in 2018 and wished to support the continued focus on the remaining four areas and, in particular, on the rebuilding of relationships with parents and carers (a further update on progress was received in November 2022). Secondly, Members also considered the outcome of the first Ofsted inspection of WCF's Independent Fostering Agency which had taken place in September 2021 and discussed the Improvement Plan that had been drawn up as a result of Ofsted's recommendations.

In March 2022, the Panel considered its annual update of Educational Outcomes and was keen to follow up its previous discussions on the impact of Covid-19 on education and also to hear about how the pandemic had affected apprenticeships. Although school attendance in the County was broadly in line with national averages, issues remained for some children and Members welcomed the continued focus on this area. It was recognised that the pandemic had presented challenges to apprenticeships and the role of individual Councillors in promoting apprenticeships to residents was important. A further update was provided in March 2023, the first since the Covid pandemic to include nationally published data.

In May, the Panel welcomed colleagues from the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and West Mercia Police as part of an update on developments relating to GET SAFE and GET THERE, both were important areas of multi-agency partnership working. At the same meeting, Members considered the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2020-21.

In the second half of the year, the Panel was keen to hear about the support being provided to the children and families living in Worcestershire as part of the Ukraine Settlement Scheme. It also considered the steps that were being taken to review and strengthen the Council's youth offer and inform the recommissioning of the Council's funded youth services.

In September the Panel heard about the Supporting Families First Service, a multi-disciplinary service for families to prevent escalation of risk and the need for child protection. Panel Members were very pleased to hear about the positive difference that the team was making to the lives of children and families in the County.

As part of a full agenda in November, the Panel received an update on developments relating to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and heard about the new duties placed on upper tier authorities and the focus on providing safe accommodation and support services for victims of domestic abuse and their families. Members also discussed WCF's Social Care and Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework, including KPIs, feedback from children, young people and families and audit activity, and were pleased to hear that this was an area that had received positive feedback following a focused Ofsted visit in 2021.

The Panel's agenda in January 2023 included an update on the school nursing service (part of the Starting Well Partnership). Members heard about the impact of the Covid pandemic and the national shortage of School Health Nurses which had resulted in recruitment challenges locally. Possible options to improve the recruitment and retention situation were also explored. The Panel heard that there were similar recruitment and retention challenges for qualified children's social workers and WCF were focusing on being the employer of choice in this area.

Ongoing monitoring of budget information alerted the Panel to significant pressures on home to school transport and in March 2023 the Panel held a discussion on the issues involved. The meeting was also attended by the Chairman of the Environment O&S Panel. Members heard that a Corporate Transport Review is now underway, and the Panel looks forward to a further update in September of this year.

## **Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Since January 2022, the Panel has looked at a wide range of topics, from the Council's commercial and procurement work, recruitment and retention of staff, the customer experience, the Here2Help Scheme, libraries, museums, arts and culture, support for refugees and digital technology.

The Panel, with the support of the CMR for Corporate Services and Communication has throughout the year been piloting Power-Bi (data visualisation software) for its monitoring of quarterly performance and in year budget information. The ability to interrogate the data to understand trends and highlight possible areas for Scrutiny is welcomed by Members. For instance, the Panel has used this information to understand the challenges around the registration of deaths within 5 days. It is planned that Power-Bi will be rolled out to all Scrutiny Panels in due course.

The Council currently spends approximately £633m per annum with external organisations for goods, services and works to support the delivery of the Council's priorities and has a responsibility to ensure that public funds are spent wisely and effectively. The Panel has been following the development of the Council's refreshed Procurement Strategy (including the Key Performance Indicator Delivery Plan) which runs alongside the Corporate Plan and has taken into account the impact of Covid-19.

Recruitment and retention of staff is a challenge for the Council and the Panel welcomed a wide-ranging discussion about the initiatives and actions the Council is taking to improve the situation. The discussion around this included the need for succession management, apprenticeships and consideration about how to promote the Council and Worcestershire as a good place to work. Linked to this, Members also considered Smarter Healthier Greener Ways of Working with an emphasis on remote working and maximising the use of Microsoft Teams.

Since November 2021, the Panel has been regularly monitoring the performance of compliments, comments and complaints and is pleased to note that the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter for 2022 showed an improving picture for complaints along with an improved performance for children social care complaints being completed in 65 days.

In May 2022, the Panel refreshed its workplan and looked at the Council's overall Policy on Support for Refugees. The Panel was informed about the detail of the four resettlement programmes that Worcestershire are involved with.

At its July meeting, the Panel received an update on progress of implementing the Worcestershire's Library Strategy and the Library Service's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Libraries Unlocked (open library service delivery model) was introduced at Droitwich and Stourport libraries in June 2022 and brought in an 85% increase in opening hours.

In the autumn, the Panel looked into the culture of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers along with the detail on the services and functions provided by or on behalf of the Council.

In November 2022, the Panel was interested to hear about how the Council recognises the importance of arts, culture, and heritage in making Worcestershire a great place to live, work and visit. Whilst the Council, has no overarching Museum, Arts and Cultural strategy, it delivers and provides access to a wide range of opportunities.

At the start of 2023 the Panel has looked at the important areas of how the Council provides support for volunteers and volunteering through the Here2Help Service and income generation at the Council's countryside sites.

## **Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel (until May 2022)**

In preparation for scrutiny of the 2022/23 budget proposals in January, a small task group of Panel members had considered detailed budget information. The Chairman had also written to the relevant CMR's with the Panel's request that Cabinet considered funding for particular service areas including small flood alleviation schemes, footways and public rights of way. At the January meeting the Panel welcomed the draft budget and Members were pleased that it included additional investment in those areas about which Members had expressed concern.

Also in January, the Panel received an update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the role of the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot in Bromsgrove which was intended to establish the concept and gauge the benefits and risks. The Panel was informed that the pilot had been well received and feedback was very positive. Subject to funding being obtained from the Department of Transport, the Panel was advised that the Council would then be able to look at how DRT could be embedded in the network in the county.

A street lighting update was received by the Panel in March following the additional £6m funding which had been included in the Council Budget for the LED conversion work. The update included details of progress made by the Lighting Maintenance Contractor and it was anticipated that the remainder of the conversion of non-LED street lighting would be completed within 12 -18 months.

The Panel benefitted from a site visit to the Lydiate Ash depot to view the site systems and operations, which Members found very helpful to aid their understanding.

At the Panel's final meeting in May 2022, Members were pleased to receive a number of detailed updates in relation to active travel, the cutting congestion programme, and road safety and reduction of speeding by use of built highways infrastructure. The Panel looked forward to an update the following year to include information on what had been achieved and delivered, as well as details of completed schemes and future projects.

## **Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel (from May 2022)**

This new Panel had a remit for scrutinising the economy, which includes workforce skills, strategic infrastructure and broadband communications.

Initially, at its first meeting, the Panel received an overview of the economic situation in Worcestershire to help Panel members determine areas of focus and to understand the Council's role in economic development including how it works with partners. Following which the Panel set a theme of holding a meeting at each of the six district council offices in Worcestershire, inviting the respective District Council Leaders, to set out the economic challenges faced in their area and how the County Council could help. From Malvern, the Panel



learned that the County Council could support the District by being an advocate for additional bus services, endorsing active travel to and within the district, continue to promote the expansion of the successful Malvern Hills Science Park, and ensure the most rural parts of the district had access to superfast broadband. The Panel agreed that reliable transport options were vital for economic growth and that active travel was a positive way forward.

From Wyre Forest, the Panel learned that the key area that the County Council could support the District with would be with improving the subways in the town centre, which were currently a barrier to attracting visitors to the town. Other areas highlighted included, public transport improvements and developing new areas of joint working such as parking enforcement, residents' car parking schemes and maintenance of highways verges. The District was also keen to ensure that the effective joint working and communication was able to be continued and developed.

Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Panel has been interested to hear about tourism, the work completed and what is planned since the Council took over the running of Visit Worcestershire.

The Council's role in promoting apprenticeships has also been explored. The Panel heard that around the county there had been a shift in the focus of apprenticeships with growth in Public Services and decline in retail and manufacturing although this was now improving. The Panel expressed concern about the lack of apprenticeships in disciplines such as construction due to an inability to recruit tutors and it was explained this was a problem nationally due to the fact that earnings in these trades were so much higher than in tutoring. The CMR advised that the Council had committed £1.2m to support providers which would help, for example, give flexibility to pay more for a period of time. In response to a Panel suggestion, the Skills and Investment Group Manager would verify that colleagues had considered promoting tutoring roles to recently retired people from these sectors.

During the annual update to Scrutiny on broadband, it was agreed that while the roll out of superfast broadband had been extremely successful, some disappointment was expressed that mobile phone call coverage was not as good. It was reported that there was a national drive to improve 4G coverage and public bodies were working together to install additional masts, however, sites were sometimes rejected due to communities objecting to proposed mast sites.

An update was received on the Council's Enterprising Worcestershire Start-Up programme and details of how the Council supported and promoted enterprise in the County. It was reported that the European funding which would cease at the end of June 2023, would be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, for which the 6 District Councils would have responsibility for managing and allocating funds. The Panel learnt that proposals had been submitted to the Districts for continued funding for business support, with confirmation now awaited. The Council had also allocated funding through the Open For Business Board for a business support and grant programme and the Panel noted that the next 2 years of activity for business start-ups would shortly be commissioned.

As part of the Panel's regular performance and in-year budget monitoring, additional figures are now provided for business survival rates, railway station usage and journey times for all the main stations in Worcestershire.

## Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel (from May 2022)

The other new Panel had responsibility for the Environment including Net Zero Plans, Highways, Flooding and Waste.

At its first meeting in July, the Panel welcomed the new CMR for the Environment to outline the priorities for the year ahead and beyond. The Panel also received details of the countywide footways programme, for which there was a total available budget for 2022/23 of £6.8m. The key issues raised by Members included the rollover of funds between years and Members being given an earlier input in future as to how the strategic funding was allocated.

In October, the Panel received an update on developments within Community Transport, with 14 schemes currently in operation in the county and were pleased to welcome the Chair of Worcestershire Community Transport Consortium to join the discussion. The Panel was reminded of the differences in funding with some schemes receiving their funding from the Strategic Grant, which was diminishing but currently at £90k per annum, whilst other schemes were fully funded by District Councils. The Panel urged the CMR to consider how the Council's overall support for community transport could be improved. They also wrote to the Government Minister with responsibility for buses to stress the importance of protecting concessionary fares funding beyond March 2023.

At the same meeting, the Panel received an update on the new requirements of the 2021 Environment Act, covering 3 key areas: biodiversity, waste and pollution, which were at an early stage of implementation. Two of the new requirements of particular interest were development sites being required to deliver 10% biodiversity net gains for a minimum of 30 years, and the introduction of the extended producer responsibility in waste services. The Panel also welcomed an update on developments and highlights relating to the Council's Net Zero Carbon Plan. Members were pleased to learn that there had been a 47% reduction in net emissions being achieved since 2009/10, through factors including energy efficiency schemes and the move from landfill of household waste to disposal through EnviRecover.

The Panel received background history relating to the waste services management contract which covered the Council's role as a Waste Disposal Authority. The 25-year integrated contract had commenced in 1998, with one contractor covering all the services. The Panel was informed that a 5-year extension was currently being finalised which would extend the contract to January 2029.

Members scrutinised the 2023/24 Budget proposals in January and felt the proposals were generally positive for the Environment area. They welcomed the Cabinet's continued commitment to funding the pavement improvement programme, flood mitigation measures and LED street lighting. The Panel still had some concerns about particular service areas including Public Rights of Way and the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs), and issues relating to Section 278s which they would continue to closely monitor through the quarterly performance indicators.

Following a site visit to the Lydiate Ash Maintenance depot the previous year, the Panel welcomed Ringway, the Council's Highways Maintenance Contractor, to provide an update on new developments and efficiencies in highway maintenance in the county.

In March the Panel received the Flood Risk Management Annual Report for 2022 which set out details of progress on flooding schemes and initiatives throughout the year. Representatives from partner organisations joined the Panel for this discussion and their input and expertise was valued. The Panel have asked for a briefing paper on the implications of the potential legal

change which would enable the Council, as the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) approval body, to be able to adopt SuDs in the future.

Finally, in recent weeks Panel members enjoyed an interesting visit to the House of Commons. A key highlight of the visit was being able to observe a Liaison Committee hearing in action as its members scrutinised the Prime Minister in his work. They also watched the House in session and enjoyed a tour of Parliament.

## **Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

The HOSC has looked at a very wide range of areas this year, from maternity services to dementia, the Covid vaccination programme and end of life care. The main focus however has been to scrutinise efforts to relieve pressures on urgent and emergency care, which has of course been a critical national concern at hospitals across the country. In order to be able to maintain scrutiny of these pressures, alongside the existing work programme, the Committee is meeting monthly.

An intensive scrutiny session towards the end of 2021 on ambulance hospital handover delays, led the Committee to identify patient flow as the key area to monitor; delays in a patient entering, moving through acute hospital care and being able to return home or to an alternative setting, were creating unmanageable pressures. HOSC members have been hugely concerned about the impact on patients and staff and it was therefore very pleasing to hear that moving into 2023, demand had started to reduce and that from early January, there had been improvements with less ambulance delays and significantly reduced ambulance waiting times, which was allowing for the improvement work to be embedded.

Regular Q&As on patient flow have taken place with representatives from local Health Trusts, the Integrated Care Board, the Ambulance Trust and Council Directors responsible for adult social care and public health. Adult Social Care also plays a role in enabling patients with ongoing care needs to leave acute hospitals, and this has been scrutinised by the Adult Care and Well Being O&S Panel, with some HOSC members in attendance.

The HOSC has also held one of its public meetings at Worcestershire Royal Hospital and toured the new Urgent and Emergency Care Unit.

The HOSC has heard a consistent message about workforce pressures being a significant problem for the health and social care sector. Recruitment and retention has been highlighted as 'what keeps me awake at night' in several meetings, and the Committee fully supports the message from the health sector that the absolute priority is to attract and importantly, to retain a permanent workforce, for example by trying to be as creative and flexible as possible to ensure a work/life balance. A further update to the Committee is scheduled for May 2023.

Following successive lockdowns, the HOSC was concerned about the potential for and impact of meeting health needs of those who had not come forward with health concerns. During an update on cancer diagnostics in January 2021, it was therefore reassuring to learn that while during the first wave of the pandemic, people were reluctant to go to hospital for cancer treatment, the subsequent swell in referrals was a good indicator that they were now happier to come forward. It was also positive to hear that whilst backlogs continued to be worked through, monitoring of cancer outcomes across the Covid recovery period was not indicating increased harm to patients.

During an update on dentistry in March 2022, HOSC members highlighted to service commissioners (NHS England) the problems experienced by Worcestershire residents in accessing NHS dental care and NHSE accepted that there was a significant problem and was

currently mapping need across the region. The HOSC learned that contract rates was an issue of national concern and reform was being considered by central Government, although the pandemic had stalled discussions.

As part of regular updates on public health expenditure and outcomes, this year the HOSC has also been kept informed about development of the new Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2023. In January, the Committee looked at outcomes from public health work. HOSC members were keen to see the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant fully made use of and were therefore pleased that the 3-year plan in place for the use of the reserves which had been paused during the COVID pandemic, was now underway. Everyone welcomed the success of falls prevention work. Future public health related scrutiny will include the NHS Health Checks Programme for everyone aged between 40-74.

The Committee was very interested to hear the public health themes which were emerging from the pandemic – including the indirect impacts on education, alcohol consumption, physical activity and mental health. The fact that those in deprived areas had suffered more had highlighted the need to focus on the least affluent.

The HOSC has been kept updated about a change in the service model which provides mental health care for people aged over 65 years with severe and enduring mental ill health or disorder that enables patients requiring treatment and support for an acute mental health problem to be cared for within their own homes. The service was originally established in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, when efforts were made to keep older people out of hospital as much as possible. This resulted in the temporary closure of the Athelon ward in Worcester, and the ward budget was used to pilot the Hospital at Home Service. As part of making this temporary change permanent, the HOSC was kept informed about the consultation with service users, their families and stakeholders – and Committee members praised the positive outcomes of the Hospital at Home Service and the initiative in taking it forward.

In October, the HOSC discussed Stroke Services, the organisation and running of which was being reviewed, to make sure those accessing services in Herefordshire and Worcestershire would have the best opportunity to survive and thrive after stroke. Ahead of an engagement exercise, HOSC was presented with an Issues Paper which highlighted the challenges currently faced and potential solutions – the main challenge being recruitment of staff with specialist stroke skills to provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week services across the 2 Counties.

The HOSC has continued to monitor improvement of Maternity Services, following the Care Quality inspection in March 2021 which rated the Service as requiring improvement for being safe and well-led. Assurances have been sought about the Acute Hospital Trust's own monitoring of progress against the actions required by the CQC, and while workforce remains a concerning key pressure, reflecting the national picture, in October it was reported that the Service was in a much better position with new recruits.

The HOSC has continued to keep abreast of the development of the Integrated care System (ICS) for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The major change highlighted is the ability to move finance around the system, whilst also shifting away from the current very monetary based system to one which focused on outcomes and flexibility – and Committee members will be keen to see the benefits this may bring.

In November, the HOSC considered an overview of the role of Community Hospitals and site by site services, and it was explained that while historically there had been multiple contracts for clinics, this was being streamlined. The discussion gave HOSC greater understanding of community hospitals' role in enabling patients to leave acute hospital care, and also generated debate around minor injury units, some of which were very busy with others underused.

Physiotherapy Services was a new topic for consideration and HOSC members learned that a shift towards extended hours and 7-day working supported more flexible employment, and that increasing demand for physiotherapy was in part due to an ageing population, who was encouraged to keep well for longer at home. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, referral to treatment of 18 weeks was more usual, however, self-care was improving and the pandemic had accelerated new ways of working, such as remote consultations.

Assurances were sought about the Hillcrest Mental Health Ward following concerns about safety and staffing raised by the Care Quality Commission. The HOSC was reassured that actions had been taken to make improvements, including a new leadership structure, changes to staffing, including regular agency staff, increased therapy, greater patient voice and enhancements to the building – however the inspection report will be considered at a future meeting, when available.

The HOSC also requested an overview of the Elective Recovery Programme, which is working to eliminate long wait times for elective care coming out of the pandemic, including hospital appointments, investigations and treatments. Operating theatre capacity had increased from the previous year and the focus was on eliminating wait times of 65 weeks by April 2024. It was hoped that the further 7 operating theatres to concentrate all elective surgery at the Alexander Hospital, would be a further boost.

The Committee's final meeting during this report period looked at Community Pharmacies and the role they play in everyday life, including dispensing prescriptions and providing clinical advice. For some, they offer vaccination clinics and a number are providing enhanced additional services. Commissioning arrangements will transfer to the ICB from July and HOSC will be very interested to see what changes further integration will have on these high street community assets. Workforce pressures across the system were highlighted as was differing ways of working across each pharmacy or pharmacy group and the pharmaceutical needs assessment undertaken by Public Health. A few Members had heard from residents that some medicines were subject to regular shortages and we were informed of possible reasons and solutions.

At the same meeting, the HOSC had an update on the Carenotes Electronic Patient Records Outage which affected the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust. The supplier had been subject to a cyber security attack which disabled access to the Carenotes system. HOSC was assured that no data was released and business continuity planning ensured that services continued. The system is now rebuilt and services are using Carenotes once more, however, performance data for the affected period is still incomplete.

Feedback from Healthwatch Worcestershire has been very helpful over the year and has fed into the Committee's discussions on patient flow, for example communication around Minor Injuries Units, and feedback from residents on maternity care, cancer treatment and engagement around plans for Stroke Services.

The HOSC will also welcome the opportunity to comment on NHS Quality Accounts, which are reports about the quality of services and improvements offered by NHS healthcare providers.

## **Scrutiny Task Groups:**

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

The CAMHS Scrutiny Task Group, with a terms of reference '*to investigate access to and the availability of appropriate mental health services for children and adolescents*', was ongoing throughout 2022 and completed in early 2023.

In order to gain an understanding of the services currently available to support children and young people (CYP) with their mental health and the referral process for accessing those services, the Task Group met with a range of colleagues from Specialist CAMHS, Public Health and Education Psychology, the CAMHS Well Being and Emotional Support teams and from Onside Advocacy who run the Act on It Programme. The Group also obtained feedback on the experience of service users including schools, GPs, a youth facility and looked at practice in other areas.

The Task Group's draft report was considered and approved by OSPB in February 2023. The report was then presented to Cabinet in March, alongside formal responses to the recommendations from the relevant CMR's and from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board. The report was welcomed by Cabinet and the response of the CMR's was adopted as the way forward. An update on progress made on the recommendations would be provided to the OSPB in 6 months-time.

## **Developer Funded Highways Infrastructure**

The Developer Funded Highways Infrastructure Scrutiny Task Group looked at *how to get developer-funded highways infrastructure built quicker for the benefit of residents and road users and How the Council can help ensure the planning conditions imposed on developers to build key highways infrastructure by certain deadlines are met.*'

From the outset it was recognised that the process of approving developer funded infrastructure is, by its nature, complicated since applications to alter a public highway involve planning law; schemes need to work for residents, the local area and be safe.

During the process the Task Group interviewed a range of witnesses including housing developers, other county councils, a construction engineering company and the Council's current Highways Professional Services Contractor (HSPSC) and also collected and analysed data.

Resulting from this the Task Group developed 21 recommendations covering specific working practices and processes currently in place, the oversight and performance management of the teams, liaison and communication with developers, joined up working with the Local Planning Authorities and performance monitoring by the Environment O&S Panel.

The Task Group's draft report was considered and approved by OSPB in April 2023 and will be considered by Cabinet in May, alongside the response from the CMR.

## Further copies of this report are available from:

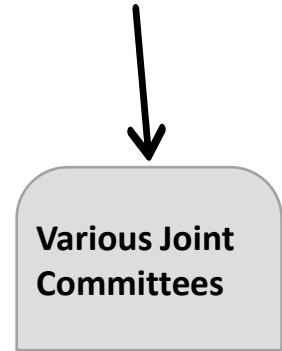
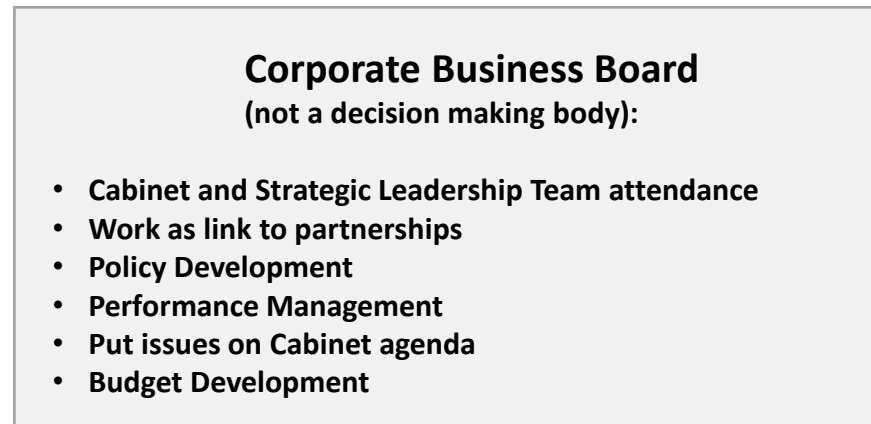
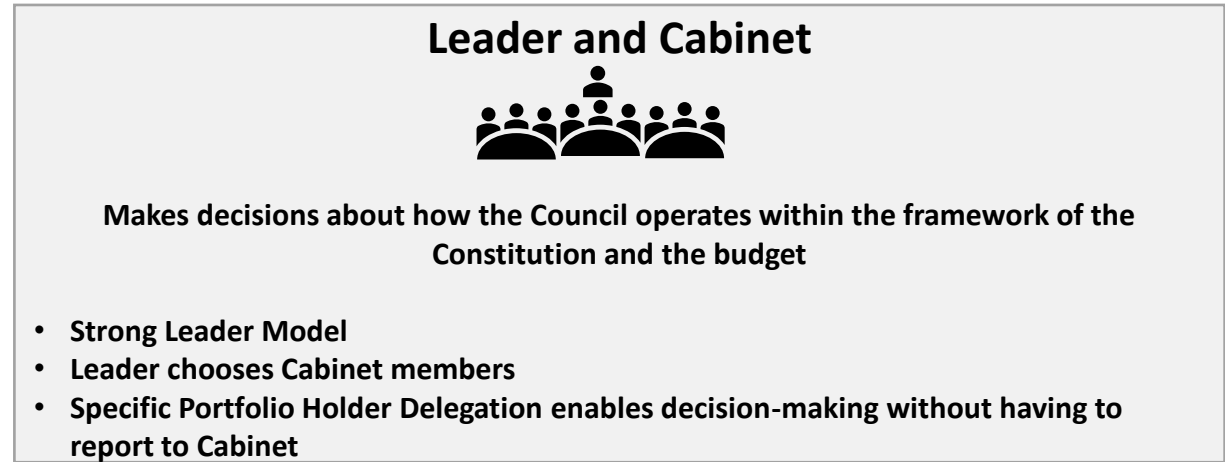
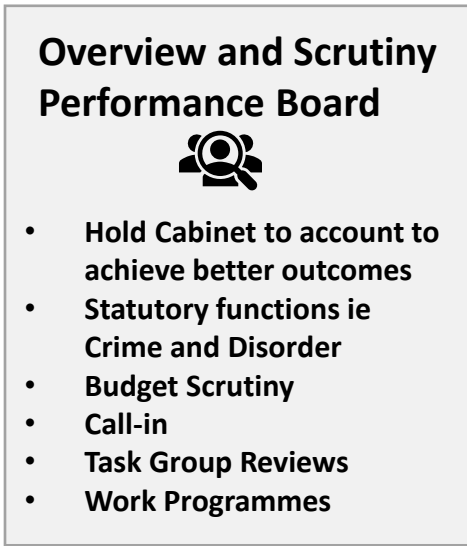
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## Governance Model



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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

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**Recommendation**

1. **The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board recommends that the 2023/24 Scrutiny Work Programme be endorsed.**

**Summary**

2. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board has agreed a suggested 2023/24 Work Programme to be considered by Full Council. The work programme was developed following consultation with all scrutiny Members and is attached as an appendix.

**Background**

3. Worcestershire County Council has a rolling annual Work Programme for its Overview and Scrutiny function. The 2023/24 Work Programme has been developed by considering issues still to be completed from 2022/23 and the views of Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
4. The 2022/23 Scrutiny Work Programme was used as a starting point for the development of this year's Work Programme. However, Members were also free to suggest other priorities. The Work Programme was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 28 April taking into account feedback from the Scrutiny Panels.
5. Suggested issues have been prioritised using scrutiny feasibility criteria in order to ensure that Work Programme topics are selected objectively and the 'added value' of a review is considered right from the beginning.

**Specific Contact Points for this report**

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**Supporting Information**

Appendix – 2023/24 Scrutiny Work Programme

## **Background Papers**

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

- Agenda and minutes for the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board.

[Committee details - Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/committees/overview-and-scrutiny-performance-board)

**Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board – 2023/24 Work Programme**

| <b>Date of Meeting</b> | <b>Issue for Scrutiny</b>   | <b>Date of Last Report</b> | <b>Notes/Follow-up Action</b>   |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| 26 June 2023           | Update on the 2022-27 Corporate Plan  |                            |   |
|                        | Update on the relocation of Redditch Library  | 25 October 2022            |   |
|                        | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan                         |                            |   |
| 26 July 2023           | Budget Scrutiny 2024/25 Planning  |                            | Suggested at 28 April 2023 meeting  |
|                        | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan                         |                            |   |
| 6 September 2023       | Update on the progress of the recommendations from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Scrutiny | 27 February 2020           | Considered by Cabinet on 30 March 2023 and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board |
|                        | Annual Update from Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)  |                            |   |
|                        | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan                         |                            |   |
| 19 October 2023        | Annual Crime and Disorder Meeting   | 20 October 2022            |   |
|                        | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan                         |                            |   |

|                  |   |               |                                      |
|------------------|---|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 19 December 2023 | Update on the progress of the recommendations from Developer-Funded Highways Infrastructure and Section 278 Technical Approval Scrutiny | 28 April 2023 | Considered by Cabinet on 25 May 2023 |
|                  | Budget Scrutiny 2024/25   |               |                                      |
|                  | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan   |               |                                      |
| January 2024     | Budget Scrutiny 2023/24   |               |                                      |
|                  | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan   |               |                                      |
| February 2024    | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan   |               |                                      |
| March 2024       | Review of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board Work Programme  |               |                                      |
|                  | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan   |               |                                      |
| April 2024       | Refresh of the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme   |               |                                      |
|                  | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan   |               |                                      |
|                  |   |               |                                      |

| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |   |                 |  |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| TBC                          | Income Generation   |                 | Suggested at 17 March 2020 meeting     |
| TBC                          | Crime and Disorder – Safety of Worcestershire parks and open spaces   |                 | Suggested at 30 September 2021 meeting |
| TBC                          | Update on the Drugs and Alcohol Strategy  | 30 January 2023 |  |
| TBC                          | Draft Scrutiny Report: Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)   |                 |  |
| <b>Standing Items</b>        |   |                 |  |
| Each meeting                 | Scrutiny Chairmen (and Lead Member) Update, Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan (including Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring – Feedback from Scrutiny Panels where appropriate) |                 |  |
| March                        | Review of Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board Work Programme  | Annually        | March                                  |
| April                        | Refresh of the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme   | Annually        | April                                  |
| September                    | Annual Update from Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)  |                 | September                              |
| October                      | Annual Crime and Disorder Meeting   | 20 October 2022 | October                                |

|                                     |   |          |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| November – January (as appropriate) | Budget Scrutiny   | Annually | November – January (as appropriate) |
| As necessary                        | Call-ins  |          | As necessary                        |
| As necessary                        | Commissioning work for Scrutiny Panels  |          | As necessary                        |
| As necessary                        | Establishing Scrutiny Task Groups (agreeing Terms of reference and Reports)   |          | As necessary                        |
| As necessary                        | Advising on Council’s Policy Framework i.e. Sustainable Community Strategy (if any), Corporate Plan, Children and Young People's Plan, Local Transport Plan, Youth Justice Plan, 'Act Local in Worcestershire' framework, such other plans and strategies as required by law to form part of the Policy Framework |          | As necessary                        |



## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting  | Issue for Scrutiny  | Date of Last Report                 | Notes/Follow-up Action               |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 22 May 2023  | The Council's Adult Services Replacement Care Offer (previously known as respite)   |                                     |                                      |
|  | Independence Focused Domiciliary Care Service in Worcestershire   |                                     | Directorate Suggestion February 2022 |
|  | Performance (Q4 January to March) and In-Year Budget Monitoring   |                                     |                                      |
| 6 July 2023 – Joint with Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Age Disability (0-25) Service (ongoing Scrutiny of the transformation of the Service)</li> <li>Learning Disability Strategy</li> <li>Autism Strategy</li> <li>Carers Strategy</li> </ul> | 11 January 2021<br>15 November 2021 |                                      |
| 14 July 2023   | Performance (Q4 January to March) and In-Year Budget Monitoring   |                                     |                                      |
|  | Update on Better Care Fund  | 23 January 2023                     |                                      |
|  | The role and cost benefit of Assistive Technology in Care Planning  | 14 January 2022                     |                                      |
| 13 October 2023  | Performance (Q1 April to June) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                                     |                                      |
| 5 December 2023  | Performance (Q2 July to September) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                                     |                                      |
| January 2024   | Scrutiny of 2024/25 Budget  |                                     |                                      |
| March 2024   | Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                                     |                                      |

|                              |  |   |  |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |  |   |  |
| TBC                          | Update on The Role of Adult Social Care in Complex Hospital Patient Discharges | 7 November 2022<br>18 July 2022                   |  |
| TBC                          | NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) including any funding implications            |   | Directorate Suggestion July 2022                 |
| TBC                          | How the Council works with Carers  |   | Suggested at 8 July 2021 meeting                 |
| TBC                          | Update on Direct Payments  |   | Suggested at the 20 May 2022 meeting             |
| TBC                          | Staff Vacancies and retention  |   | Suggested at 28 September 2022 meeting           |
| TBC                          | Liberty Protection Safeguards – awaiting national guidance on implementation   |   | Panel member suggestion March 2022               |
| TBC                          | How to access Adult Social Care  |   | Healthwatch Worcestershire suggestion March 2023 |
| TBC                          | Quality of Care Homes in Worcestershire  |   | Healthwatch Worcestershire suggestion March 2023 |
| TBC – requires scoping       | Care market for older adults (care home and domiciliary care)                  |   | Suggested at 24 March 2023 meeting               |
| <b>Standing Items</b>        |  |   |  |
| March                        | Safeguarding Adults Annual Update  | 28 January 2021<br>15 March 2022<br>24 March 2023 | Annually   |
| September                    | Compliments and Complaints for Adult Services                                  | 15 November 2021<br>28 September 2022             | Annually   |
| November/January             | Budget Scrutiny  |   | Annually   |
| March/July/                  | Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring                                      |   | Quarterly  |

|                    |  |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| September/November |  |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|--|

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## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting   | Issue for Scrutiny  | Date of Last Report | Notes/Follow-up Action  |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| 24 May 2023       | Update on GET SAFE and GET THERE  |                     | Requested by Panel 10 May 2022                                    |
|                   | Worcestershire Children First Independent Fostering Service Ofsted Inspection   | 23 February 2022    | Inspection took place February 2023                               |
|                   | Update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Accelerated Progress Plan   | 3 November 2022     |   |
|                   | SEND Strategy   |                     |   |
| 6 July 2023       | All Age Disability (0-25) Service (ongoing Scrutiny of the transformation of the Service)<br>All Age Autism strategy<br>All Age Learning Disability Strategy<br>All Age Carers Strategy | 11 January 2022     | Adult Care and Wellbeing O&S Panel members to be invited          |
| 7 July 2023       | WSCP Annual Safeguarding Report   | July 2022           |   |
|                   | Children's Social Care – The Government's Implementation Strategy and WCF Business Plan   |                     | Chairman agreed items be added to Work Programme - February 2023. |
|                   | Performance (Q4 January - March) and Year End Budget Monitoring   |                     |   |
| 27 September 2023 | Home to School Transport Review outcome   |                     | Chairman agreed item be added to Work Programme – February 2023   |
|                   | Performance (Q1 April to June) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                     |   |
| 6 December 2023   | Performance (Q2 July to September) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                     |   |

|                              |  |                   |   |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| January 2024                 | Scrutiny of 2024/25 Budget   |                   |   |
| March 2024                   | Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring                                     |                   |   |
|                              | Annual Update on Educational Performance Outcomes  | 22 March 2023     |   |
| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |  |                   |   |
| TBC                          | Current organisation of Education within the County (2 tier/3 tier)                                    |                   | Requested by Panel 16 July 2021<br>To be considered when further KS2 data available |
| TBC                          | Update on the Assessment Pathway for children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) |                   | Requested by Panel 11 January 2022  |
| TBC                          | Children Missing Education   |                   | Requested by Panel 23 March 2023  |
| TBC                          | Ofsted Inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS) Inspection – Feedback                    | 11 September 2019 | ILACS inspection due post July 2022   |
| TBC                          | Delivery Model for Medical Education Provision – Update  | 16 March 2021     |   |
| TBC                          | Autism provision and the availability of places within education settings                              |                   | Requested by Panel 10 May 2022  |
| TBC                          | Nursery provision and wrap around care   |                   | Following Budget announcement March 2023  |
| <b>Standing Items</b>        |  |                   |   |
| March                        | Education Performance outcomes   |                   | Annually  |
| July                         | WSCP Annual Safeguarding Report  |                   | Annually  |
| November/January             | Budget Scrutiny  |                   | Annually  |

|                               |   |  |           |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-----------|
| March/July/September/November | Quarterly Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring |  | Quarterly |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-----------|

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## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting         | Issue for Scrutiny   | Date of Last Report | Notes/Follow-up Action  |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| 8 June 2023             | Libraries Unlocked   |                     | Suggested by Assistant Director for Communities for June Panel meeting. |
|                         | Registration of Deaths within 5 days (including out of hours registration) |                     |   |
| 25 July 2023<br><br>TBC | Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q4 January-March 2023)          | 28 March 2023       |   |
|                         | Member Portal – Case Management System                                     |                     | Suggested at 28 March 2023 meeting                                      |
|                         | Power BI update  | 1 January 2023      |   |
| 3 October 2023          | Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q1 April to June)               | 25 July 2023        |   |
|                         | Performance Monitoring of Comments, Compliments and Complaints             | 21 September 2022   |   |
|                         | The Council's Customer Contact Centre (including accessibility options)    |                     |   |
| 23 November 2023        | Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring (Q2 July to September)           | 25 July 2023        |   |
|                         | Review of Museums, Arts and Culture Strategy 2023/24                       | 1 November 2022     |   |
| January 2024            | Scrutiny of 2024/25 Budget   |                     |   |
| March 2024              | Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring         |                     |   |

|                              |   |   |  |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
|                              |   |   |  |
| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |   |   |  |
| TBC                          | Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chat GTi systems   |   | Suggested at 28 March 2023 meeting                             |
| TBC                          | Update on role of Here2Help (including the Executive Summary of the Business Plan).   |   | Suggested at 19 January 2023 meeting                           |
| TBC                          | Worcestershire One Public Estate  |   | Suggested at 14 February 2022 meeting                          |
| TBC                          | Electric Vehicle charging points on the County Council Estate   |   | Suggested at 14 February 2022 meeting                          |
| TBC                          | Council Communication   | 8 November 2021   | Suggested at 8 November 2021 meeting                           |
| TBC                          | West Mercia Energy Joint Committee Business Plan  | 17 January 2022   |  |
| <b>Standing Items</b>        |   |   |  |
| November/January             | Budget Scrutiny   |   |  |
|                              | Annual update on the Council's energy purchasing arrangement via the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee including the Business Plan | 17 January 2022   | Agreed at October 2021 Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board |
| TBC                          | Councillors Divisional Funding Scheme   | 20 July 2021  |  |
| TBC                          | Worcestershire County Council Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy (RIPA)   |   |  |
| TBC                          | Performance monitoring of comments, compliments and complaints  | 21 September 2022<br>8 November 2021<br>20 July 2021<br>11 March 2021 |  |



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## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting              | Issue for Scrutiny   | Date of Last Report | Notes/Follow-up Action                                |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| 7 June 2023                  | District Council Economic Challenges and how the County Council could help – Bromsgrove District Council | 27 March 2023       |   |
|                              | Worcestershire’s Workforce Skills, including the role of Colleges  |                     | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| 17 July 2023                 | Performance (Q4 January to March) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                     |   |
| 5 October 2023               | Performance (Q1 April to June) and In-Year Budget Monitoring   |                     |   |
| 17 November 2023             | Performance (Q2 July to September) and In-Year Budget Monitoring   |                     |   |
| January 2024                 | Scrutiny of 2024/25 Budget   |                     |   |
| March 2024                   | Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring                                       |                     |   |
| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |  |                     |   |
| June to October 2023         | Rail Strategy  |                     | Agenda Planning Directorate suggestion September 2022 |
| TBC                          | Strategic Infrastructure, including road and rail developments   |                     | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                          | Shrub Hill Quarter   |                     | Agenda Planning January 2023                          |

|                               |   |  |   |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| end of 2023/24                | Local Transport Plan 5  |  | Agenda Planning Directorate suggestion September 2022 |
| TBC                           | The Council's position on encouraging the over 50's back into the workforce   |  | TBC   |
| TBC                           | Worcestershire's Employment Levels  |  | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                           | Rural Economy and Agriculture, including workforce and skills, access to training and operating costs   |  | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                           | Worcestershire's Business Parks, including occupancy levels post Covid-19   |  | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                           | Opportunities for Growth, including the available space for specific sectors  |  | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                           | Partnership Working, including the role of District Councils and the Private Sector   |  | Panel Member suggestion June 2022                     |
| TBC                           | The levelling up agenda and the impact on Worcestershire (including the Towns funding allocated to Redditch and Worcester and the impact on all main towns in Worcestershire) |  | Suggested by OSPB 29 June 2022                        |
| TBC                           | Post Offices/Postal Services in Worcestershire  |  | Suggested by OSPB 29 June 2022                        |
| TBC                           | County Council processes for scrutinising contracts involving County Council funding  |  | Suggested at the 29 July 2022 Panel meeting           |
| TBC                           | Town Centres  |  | Suggested at the 29 July 2022 Panel meeting           |
| TBC following further scoping | The Council's assets and how they are managed   |  | Agenda planning February 2023                         |

| <b>Standing Items</b> |  |  |           |
|-----------------------|--|--|-----------|
| Mar/Jul/Sep/Nov       | Performance and In-year Budget Monitoring                                  |  | Quarterly |
| November/January      | Budget Scrutiny Process  |  | Annually  |
|                       | District Council Economic Challenges and how the County Council could help |  |           |
|                       | Broadband Annual Update  |  |           |

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## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

| Date of Meeting   | Issue for Scrutiny  | Date of Last Report | Notes/Follow-up Action  |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| 26 May 2023       | Road Diversion Signs<br><br>Issue of reinstatement and utility works (use of Section 58 restrictions)<br>Severn Trent emergency work permits. |                     | Requested by Chairman 22 November 2022<br>Requested by Panel 23 March that report covers 2 additional items as listed.            |
| 19 July 2023      | Update on Street Lighting (to include LED conversion)   |                     | Requested by Panel 18 Jan 2023  |
|                   | Solar Power Generation & Use<br>Electrification/Charging points.  |                     | Requested by Panel 18 Jan 2023<br>Requested by Panel 23 March 2023 that additional item is included.                              |
|                   | Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide   |                     | Prior to being considered by Cabinet.   |
|                   | Performance (Q4 January - March) and Year-End Budget Monitoring   |                     |   |
| 25 September 2023 | Update on Buses<br>Community Transport, DRT, Bus Service Improvement Plan and HTST bus passes   | September 2022      | Requested by Panel 18 Jan 2023<br>Requested by Panel 23 March 2023 that the additional items be included.                         |
|                   | Performance (Q1 April to June) and In-Year Budget Monitoring  |                     |   |
| 30 November 2023  | Net Zero Plan Update<br><br>Update on cutting congestion and the cycling and walking infrastructure   |                     | Regular update requested by Panel Nov 2022<br>Requested by Panel 23 March 2023 that the 2 additional items be included in update. |

|                              |  |                 |   |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------|---|
|                              | Performance (Q2 July to September) and In-Year Budget Monitoring                                       |                 |   |
| January 2024                 | Scrutiny of 2023/24 Budget   |                 |   |
| March 2024                   | Performance (Q3 October to December) and In-Year Budget Monitoring                                     |                 |   |
| <b>Possible Future items</b> |  |                 |   |
| TBC                          | Monitoring of Section 38 agreements  |                 | Requested by Chairman Feb 2023                        |
| TBC                          | Environment Act - update on developments when further guidance has been provided by Central Government |                 | Requested by Panel on 7 October 2022                  |
| TBC                          | Waste Management Service Contract  | 8 November 2022 | Update report once contract extension has been agreed |
| TBC                          | Road Safety and Reduction of Speeding by use of Built Highways Infrastructure                          | 13 May 2022     | Update in 12 to 18 months                             |
| TBC                          | Environment approach: partnership working  |                 | Suggested by CMR June 22                              |
| TBC                          | Rainbow Crossings  |                 | Suggested at OSPB on 29 June 2022                     |
| <b>Standing Items</b>        |  |                 |   |
| March/July/<br>Sept/Nov      | Budget and In-year performance monitoring  |                 |   |
| November/January             | Budget Scrutiny Process  |                 |   |
| Annually                     | Flood Risk Management Annual Report  | 23 March 2023   |   |



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## SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

### Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| Date of Meeting | Issue for Scrutiny  | Date of Last Report                                | Notes / Follow-up Action  |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| 10 May 2023     | Workforce   | 10 June 2022                                       | Requested at 17 October 2022 meeting  |
|                 | Update on the Integrated Care Strategy  | 2 November 2022                                    | Requested at 2 November 2022 meeting  |
|                 | Maternity Services (to monitor progress of the Acute Trust's Action Plan for improvement)                                       | 17 October 2022<br>9 May 2022<br>21 September 2021 | Requested at 17 October 2022 Meeting  |
| 15 June 2023    | Update on Improving Patient Flow* to include Onward Care Team and Integrated Intermediate Care Service                          | 10 February 2023                                   | Requested at 10 February 2023 meeting   |
| 10 July 2023    | Worcestershire Mental Health Needs Assessment   | 21 September 2021<br>19 September 2018 (CAMHS)     | Following the discussion of the Needs Assessment the priorities for further scrutiny will be identified |
|                 | Adult Mental Health Inpatient Services Redesign   |  | Suggested by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust on 17 April 2023                    |
|                 | Public Health Ring Fenced Grant (PHRFG) – Twice Yearly Budget Monitoring  |  |   |
| Sep/Oct 2023    | Progress against targets for the elective recovery programme and future plans   |  | Requested at 13 March 2023 HOSC   |
| Sep/Oct 2023    | Update on CQC Inspection (including a range of mental health and physical health services and the Hillcrest Mental Health Ward) |  | Agenda planning March 2023  |
| Sep/Oct 2023    | Progress against targets for the elective recovery programme and future plans   |  | Requested at 13 March 2023 HOSC   |

| <b>Possible Future Items</b> |  |   |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Ongoing                      | Integrated Care System (ICS) Development   | 10 May 2023, 2 November 2022                                |   |
| 2023                         | Commissioning Arrangements under the Integrated Care System (ICS)                                |   | Including Pharmacy, Dentistry, Optometry, Specialised Acute, new arrangements for Mental Health, Specialist Mental Health and Prison Health |
| 2023                         | Out of Hours GP Services   | 18 October 2021 as part of general Primary Care (GP) Access | Suggested by the Cabinet Member   |
| 2023                         | Community Paediatric Services  |   | Suggested at Agenda Planning 23 August 2022   |
| 2023                         | Screening (Cervical/Antenatal/Newborn/Diabetic Eye/Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)/Breast/Bowel) |   | Suggested at 19 July 2021 meeting   |
| 2023                         | Routine Immunisation   |   | Suggested at 19 July 2021 Meeting   |
| 2023                         | Hospital at Home Service   |   | Requested at 10 June 2022 meeting   |
| TBC                          | Haematology  |   | Suggested at 10 May 2023 Meeting  |
| TBC                          | Neurology  |   | Suggested at 10 May 2023 Meeting  |
| TBC                          | Update on Garden Suite Ambulatory Chemotherapy Service   | 19 July 2021  | To review service relocation from February 2023   |
| TBC                          | Stroke Services – update   |   |   |
| TBC                          | Update on Dental Services Access   |   | Requested at 9 March 2022 meeting   |
| TBC                          | End of Life Care   |   | Requested at 10 June 2022 meeting   |
| TBC                          | Prevention Work in Health and Social Care  |   | Suggested at 17 October 2022 meeting  |
| TBC                          | Glaucoma Services  |   | Suggested at 17 October 2022 meeting  |

|                       |  |                                 |                                       |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| TBC                   | NHS Health Checks Programme  |                                 | Requested at 13 January 2023 meeting  |
| TBC                   | Podiatry services  |                                 | Requested at 10 February 2023 meeting |
| TBC                   | Long Term plan for WAHT Theatres   |                                 | Requested at 13 March 2023 HOSC       |
| TBC                   | Update on Community Pharmacies   |                                 | Requested at 18 April 2023 HOSC       |
| <b>Standing Items</b> |  |                                 |                                       |
| When required         | Substantial NHS Service Changes requiring consultation with HOSC         |                                 |                                       |
| TBC                   | NHS Quality Accounts Quality and Performance                             |                                 |                                       |
| TBC                   | Annual Update on Health and Wellbeing Strategy                           | 17 October 2022                 |                                       |
| January/July          | Public Health Ring Fenced Grant (PHRFG) – Twice Yearly Budget Monitoring | 13 January 2023,<br>8 July 2022 |                                       |
| TBC                   | Performance Indicators   |                                 |                                       |
| TBC                   | Annual Update from West Midlands Ambulance Service                       | 27 June 2019                    |                                       |
| March                 | Review of the Work Programme   |                                 |                                       |

\*Scrutiny of patient flow is a continuation of the Scrutiny Task Group in November 2021

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**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023**
**QUESTION TIME**


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**Question 1 – Support for mothers**

1. Cllr Lynn Denham will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families:

"What advice can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility give colleagues when approached on a Saturday afternoon by a mother who needs help because she has no money left to buy formula feed for her baby?"

**Question 2 – 20mph review meeting date**

2. Cllr Matt Jenkins will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"In January 2021 the following motion was approved by the full council:

"Requests for more 20mph speed limits, particularly in residential areas and near schools, are often made to councillors. This motion requests that a task group or member advisory group be set up to review how 20mph areas are currently considered and look at the feasibility of creating a process that would allow a 20mph area to be created within a councillor's division."

It has been well over two years since this motion was approved, but no group has met. Can I ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to set a date for the first meeting of such a group as soon as possible, and before the full council meets again in July?"

**Question 3 – Online capture of highways comments**

3. Cllr Beverley Nielsen will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport:

"Councils up and down the country use 'Fix My Street', [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com), to help residents to report pressing highways issues supplementing whatever IT solutions they have of their own, such as our 'Report It' solution.

Does Worcestershire County Council capture comments made online from 'Fix My Street' in addition to those made via 'Report It' as well as tracking time to respond to any such comments?"

#### **Question 4 – Impact of the installation of full fibre**

4. Cllr Matt Jenkins will ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills:

"Concerns have been raised by residents about the impact of the installation of full fibre in their streets. For example, where cabling was installed under the footway/highway, it has been left in poor condition. Elsewhere, telegraph poles were installed with no consultation. This led to residents arguing with City Fibre staff about the location of the poles. Clearly, this is not good enough.

Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility ensure that there is improved communication by City Fibre with residents and that we ensure that work is completed to a high standard?"

#### **Contact Points**

Contact Points for this report  
Simon Lewis, Committee Officer  
Tel: 01905 846621  
Email: [slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers**

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

**COUNCIL**  
**18 MAY 2023****REPORTS OF COMMITTEES****(a) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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**External Auditor's Annual Report 2021/ Report**

1. Mark Stocks, Key Audit Partner from Grant Thornton presented the External Auditor's Annual Report 2021/ Report. The Annual Audit Report which brings together all aspects of external inspection work undertaken across the County Council, including the audit work carried out on the accounts. The Annual Audit Report looks back over the 2021/22 year and summarises all of the reports and work that the external auditors have undertaken. The report closes the 2021/22 audit. The report includes the auditor's opinion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources, and opportunities for improvement.
2. The Committee has noted the External Annual Audit Report 2021/22. The Committee emphasised the importance of risk management and invited the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure and the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change, as lead officers, to provide an update on the Council's approach to risk management at its meeting on 21 July.
3. The Committee has requested that reports be brought to future Committee meetings in response to the recommendations 1-9 as set out in the External Annual Audit Report relating to financial sustainability, governance, and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

**Statutory Accounts 2022/23 Progress, Accounting Policies and Estimates**

2. The accounting policies are the principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by the Council that specify how the financial effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the financial statements. As in previous years, the notes to the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts will include the relevant accounting policies.
3. Following a review, there is one change to the Council's accounting policies for 2022/23, which is the introduction of a de minimis level of £5,000 for capitalisation. There is no de minimis level introduced for capital expenditure by schools.
4. There are other amendments to the wording of the accounting policies for the 2022/23 accounts, however these are not changes to the policies themselves, but rather expansion of detail in the accounts to clarify existing policies.

5. The Central Finance Team are on target with both the preparation work required for the Statutory Accounts production, and with responses to support external audit planning and initial risk assessment activity. The Committee has noted the work in preparation for the 2022/23 Statutory Accounts.

6. The statutory deadlines for the 2022/23 accounts are for draft statements to be published no later than 31 May 2023, and for external Audit sign-off to be completed by 30 September 2023. The Council's detailed closedown plan is built around these deadlines. A further meeting of the Committee has been arranged on 26 May 2023 at 2pm to consider the draft Statutory Accounts of 31 May 2023. The Committee has approved the accounting policies for 2022/23.

7. The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions which affect the value of assets and liabilities reported at the balance sheet date and amounts recognised as income and expenditure in the year. The material accounting estimates which affect balances and transactions in the year for the year ending 31 March 2023 have been identified by management as; valuation of land and buildings, depreciation and impairment, measurement of financial instruments, and the valuation of defined benefit net pension fund liabilities. The Committee has noted the management arrangements to identify and evaluate accounting estimates.

### **Annual Governance Update**

8. The Annual Governance update report indicated that overall, most audit actions are on time and being progressed. There continues to be some delay arising from the departure of the Monitoring Officer in the financial year which will now mean some actions will flow over into late 2023. Some of the work around performance has also slipped as the Strategic Leadership Team are reviewing the arrangements surrounding risk management.

9. A large proportion of this work is due to be delivered in the final quarter of this year and as such this progress is broadly as expected and a further report will be brought to the July Committee. The Committee has noted the Annual Governance update.

### **Internal Audit Progress Report**

10. The role of the Council's Internal Audit Service is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing independent assurance, advice and insight into the Council's overall risk management, governance, anti-fraud and corruption and internal control processes.

11. The Committee received details of the progress of the audit and compliance 2022/23 deliverables and plan. Internal audit are working closely with operational service managers to ensure that audit actions are undertaken. For actions relating to limited assurance audits where a follow up audit is planned, actions are transferred to the new audit.

12. The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise within and between public and private sector bodies to help prevent and detect fraudulent activity. The Council have received back all the NFI reports which require review and Internal Audit are working with service areas to ensure timely review of the matches.

13. Since the last report, of the 4 open reported inquiries, 2 cases have been closed and Internal Audit are continuing inquiries with 2 cases. A further 5 inquiries have been received and appropriate action has been undertaken either by investigation by Internal Audit or service area reviews. 3 of these have been closed and 2 remain open.

14. The grant certification work supports the Council in ensuring that money claimed from government agencies is correctly accounted for and Internal Audit work closely with operational teams to deliver this. 10 grants have been certified as accurate at the date of the Committee.

15. Currently the Audit and Compliance Manager is overseeing the day-to-day operational aspects of the Internal Audit Service with support from the Chief Internal Auditor of the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services. This arrangement is set to continue until at least the end of the financial year. The Committee has noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.

### **Internal Audit Plan Focus 2023/24**

16. The Internal Audit Plan Focus details the coverage and approach that Internal Audit will take to provide assurance to the Council. The Plan is a risk-based and considers the adequacy of the Council's risk management, performance management, challenges, other assurance processes as well as organisational objectives and priorities. School audits feature prominently in the plan. Internal Audit will work towards achieving a satisfactory outcome by adopting and following the process. The audit plan is shared with the external auditors for information along with some of the work that is undertaken during a review.

17. The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan Focus provides high level review areas for the year. Internal Audit have assessed the resource requirement against availability and can confirm that the Plan is based on a full establishment. Internal Audit currently have two vacancies but are actively recruiting. Any adjustment to the Plan will not jeopardise the end of year Chief Internal Auditor opinion. The Plan will be continually reviewed against the risks of the Council and related organisations and updates will be provided to the Committee on a quarterly basis including any planned adjustments.

18. The Internal Audit Charter approved by the Committee in March 2022 remains predominantly unaltered. The Committee has approved the Internal Audit Plan Focus 2023/24 .

### **IT Control Recommendations - Progress Report**

19. At its meeting on 30 November 2022, the Committee requested that a report on the progress being made on the development of IT systems to improve the management control mechanisms over journals

20. In March 2021, Grant Thornton completed an IT Audit report for Worcestershire County Council and the Pension Fund. The report included ten recommendations around overall IT Controls. Of these ten, three remain not fully implemented. As at March 2023, the Finance Systems Team have appointed to two new posts in their structure which will enable faster completion of development work, including the control issues still outstanding. The Committee has noted the progress and latest management comments on IT Controls.

## **Work Programme**

21. The Committee has noted its work programme.

**Cllr Nathan Desmond**  
**Chairman**

## **Contact Points**

Specific Contact Points for this report  
Simon Lewis, Committee Officer  
Tel: 01905 846621  
Email: slewis@worcestershire.gov.uk

## **Background Papers**

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

Agenda papers for the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 10 March 2023

[Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Friday, 10th March, 2023, 10.30 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

## **COUNCIL**

### **18 MAY 2023**

## **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

### **(b) SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE**

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#### **Pension Board and Pension Investment Sub-Committee (PISC) Minutes**

1. As set out in the Terms of Reference of the PISC, all decisions taken, and recommendations will be reported back to the next available ordinary meeting of the Pensions Committee in the form of the minutes of the PISC. In addition, the Pension Board has requested that their deliberations be reported to the Committee. The Committee noted the minutes of the PISC meeting on 2 March 2023 and the Board meeting on 3 March 2023.

#### **Local Government Pension Scheme Central (LGPSC) Budget and Strategic Business Plan 2023/24 (Exempt item)**

2. Each year LGPSC is required to produce an updated budget and Strategic Business Plan. The intention of the Company and Practitioners Advisory Forum (PAF) which has key representation from lead officers for each of the Partner funds, is to take an agreed set of papers to the Shareholder Forum. The budget proposed for the financial year 2023/24 is £15.195m, compared to £13.495m in 2022/23 an increase of 12.6%.

3. The Committee has noted the LGPSC Budget and Strategic Business Plan for 2023/24 update (The Fund's representative on the Stakeholder Forum addressed any changes on its behalf). The Committee has noted the latest version of the 2023/24 LGPS Central Strategic Business Plan and budget presentation. The budget was subsequently agreed at the Shareholder Forum on the 28 February 2023.

#### **Strategic Asset Allocation Review (Exempt item)**

2. The Committee has considered a Strategic Asset Allocation Review report which set the scene and took stock of the performance and composition of the Fund's Strategic Asset Allocation as endorsed by the Committee in 2019. The Committee also considered a series of recommended changes to the Fund's Strategic Asset Allocation. The recommendations are designed to shape the strategic direction of the Fund's investment strategy, which will involve further work and consideration before definitive recommendations are made to the Committee at the appropriate time.

3. The Committee has approved the Strategic Asset Allocation recommendations set out in the report. The recommendations will enable the Fund to continue to meet the assumptions contained within the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement with regard to

ongoing expected returns more than CPI inflation and consider Central Government's asset pooling agenda that established the LGPSC pool from the 1 April 2018.

### **Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) and Climate Risk Strategy Update**

4. The LGPS Investment Regulations that came into effect from 1 November 2016 required all funds to publish a new ISS by 1 April 2017. The Fund's 2017 ISS was designed in collaboration with the seven other funds within LGPS Central to ensure a consistent approach to investment beliefs and responsible investment beliefs. The ISS must then be kept under review and revised from time to time and at least every three years.

5. The current 2022 ISS was approved by the Committee on 3 March 2022 and a key focus was to continue to enhance and strengthen the Stewardship and Responsible Investment (RI) areas. This was after taking into account the Fund's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Audit, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) mapping, the Fund's second 2021 Climate Risk report provided by LGPS Central and the first annual ESG review that the Fund conducted on 2 February 2022.

6. The Administering Authority is required to formulate an investment strategy which must be in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The Committee has approved the Fund's 2023 Investment Strategy Statement. The Committee has approved the updated LGPS Central Voting Principles.

7. The Fund has a separate Climate Risk Strategy which sets out its approach to addressing the risks and opportunities related to climate change. This also reflects the potential material effect of climate change and the response to climate change on the assets and liabilities of the Fund. The Committee has approved the Climate Risk Strategy. This has been updated to take on board the outcome of the ESG workshop that was conducted informally with Committee members on the 8 February 2023. The Committee has noted the Fund's ESG Workshop Review and the recommended outcomes.

8. The Fund has received its 3rd Climate Risk Report – January 2023 report from LGPSC covering the Fund's listed equity portfolio. The report contains a series of recommendations by LGPSC for the Fund. The Committee has noted the Fund's 3rd Annual Climate Risk Report.

9. LGPSC provided the Fund with an updated draft Task Force on Climate related Financial Disclosures (TCFD report) and the Fund has added areas of additional activity and outcomes that have occurred during the year. The Committee has approved the TCFD report.

### **Pension Investment Update.**

10. The Committee has noted the independent investment adviser's fund performance summary and market background. The Committee has noted the update on the investment managers placed 'on watch' by the Pension Investment Sub Committee.



11. As at the end of January 2023, the estimated funding level for the Fund was 97%. The Committee has noted the funding position compared to the investment performance.

12. The Fund took the opportunity to exit the equity protection strategy given the continued downward trend in market valuations at the time in early November 2022 and the £231m funding was then reinvested back into the passive equity market capital funds. Although the Fund has exited the equity protection strategy, it is looking to have this facility available as part of the investment tools in its investment strategy. The Fund will need to reprocur equity protection going forward. The Committee has noted the update on the equity protection current strategy.

13. The Committee has noted the update on Responsible Investment activities, Local Authorities Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) and Stewardship investment pooling. The Committee has noted the update on the LGPSC report on the voting undertaken on the Fund's behalf. The Committee has noted the update on the TCFD Consultation.

## **Business Plan**

14. Progress has been made with the recruitment of new staff and now only 6 vacancies are left to be filled. A recruitment process is currently being run to fill the remaining business support roles and two apprenticeships have been offered for these vacancies. The remaining vacancies went out to advert during March 2023, including the newly created Governance Officer role.

15. A workforce plan has been implemented in conjunction with the wider finance team including regular one-to-one meetings and the development of bespoke training plans for all staff. This will help improve service resilience, staff development and future succession planning. The Committee has noted the Worcestershire Pension Fund Business Plan as at February 2023.

## **Governance Update**

16. Following a review of the Fund's Risk Register, progress in developing mitigating action for five risks will henceforth be reported as part of the Governance Update, to enable the Committee to assess whether further mitigating actions are appropriate. These risks are WPF 26 Fraud by staff; WPF 15 Failure of the actuary to deliver the services contracted; WPF 01 Failure of governance arrangements to match up to recommended best practice; WPF 17 Failure of custodian to deliver the services contracted; and WPF 04 Not having an established and meaningful Business Plan / Pension Administration Strategy. The Committee has received details of the mitigation action taken on these risks since the last report.

17. The Committee has noted the Good Governance Position Statement as at February 2023. The Committee has approved the draft Worcestershire Pension Fund Governance Policy Statement 2023.

18. The Committee has approved the draft Worcestershire Pension Fund Policy on Representation 2023. The Committee has noted the Worcestershire Pension Fund Policy on Conflicts of Interest.

19. The Committee has approved the draft Worcestershire Pension Fund Pension Administration Strategy 2023. The Committee has noted the update on reviewing the objectives for and performance of the independent investment adviser.

### **Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund Administration Budget 2023/24**

20. The Fund's forecast outturn is estimated to be £21.638m compared to a budget of £21.015m, which represented an overspend of £0.623m. Excluding the uncontrollable costs of investment management fees, this forecast overspend is within the £0.5m variation limit delegated to the Chief Financial Officer by the Committee and in line with the Administration budget reported to the October Committee where the variations were agreed.

21. The budget now proposed for 2023/24 is £22.964m, an increase of £1.949m (9.3%) from the 2022/23 budget. The largest proportion of the budget (£19.817m) is investment managers' fees that are dependent on the value of assets being managed, and the investment return performance which is dependent on market conditions. Also, to comply with the cost transparency code initiative, this also includes all known transaction and associated costs. The Fund's "controllable" budget (i.e. excluding investment management fees) is £3.147m, which is an increase of £0.161m (5.4%) net increase on the original budget.

22. The Committee has approved the Pension Fund Administration Budget, including manager fees, for 2023/24 totalling £22.964m. The Committee has noted the indicative budget allocations for 2024/25 and 2025/26, and the monitoring of the variations against budget. The Committee has granted delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to approve variations of up to £0.5m.

### **Actuarial Valuation and Final Pension Fund Strategy Statement (FSS)**

23. Every three years, in line with legislation, the Fund Actuary, Mercer, carries out a full Actuarial Valuation of the Fund to calculate how much the employers in the Scheme need to contribute going forward to ensure that its liabilities, the pensions due to current and future pensioners, will be paid as they fall due. The purpose of the FSS is to set out a clear and transparent funding strategy that will identify how each Fund employer's pension liabilities are to be met going forward.

24. The consultation on the draft FSS was sent to Employers in November 2022. The Fund received no responses to the proposed FSS by the closing date and therefore the FSS provided to the December 2022 Committee meeting together with those changes highlighted within the report to the March 2023 Committee meeting will provide the final published FSS. The Committee has noted the outcome of the Funding Strategy Statement consultation and the proposed final FSS.

25. An important part of the risk analysis underpinning the funding strategy will be to identify the impact of climate transition risks and physical risks on the potential funding outcomes. The impact of different scenarios at the whole Fund level versus the baseline (which assumes the funding assumptions are played out) is being considered as part of

the valuation to ensure the funding strategy is sufficiently robust to the risks posed by climate change. The Committee has noted the update to the climate change funding level scenario analysis within the FSS.

26. The Committee has noted the Initial draft of the 2022 valuation rates and adjustment certificate provided by the actuary.

### **LGPSC Update**

27. The Pension Investment Sub Committee has agreed an indicative £30m per annum investment into LGPSC Infrastructure Strategy for the next 2 years subject to due diligence. The Committee received details of the proposed LGSPC 2023/24 strategic business plan. The key focus areas are in line with the previous year.

28. At a recent meeting, LGPSC Shareholders approved the appointment of 2 replacement non-executive directors. LGPSC have managed to recruit to their key posts although it remains a highly competitive recruitment market with principle candidate concerns around remuneration and benefits packages, location and flexible working. The Committee has noted the LGPS Central update.

### **Training Update**

29. The Training Plan summarises the training work that the administration team plan to progress. Its cornerstone for pensions administration staff is using a buddy system and an internal Skills Matrix to highlight the progress being made in delivering resilience in pensions administration by identifying knowledge and knowledge gaps for staff. The Committee has noted the Worcestershire Pension Fund Training Update including the Training Policy and Programme (Appendix 1) and the Training Plan.

### **Risk Register**

30. The Risk Register is kept under regular review. The February 2023 review has resulted in the re-grouping of existing risks into two risk areas: Investment / Funding and Administration. The review also resulted in the number of risks included in the Register being reduced from 32 to 16. The review added no new risks. The review resulted in no increases or increases to risk scores. The Committee has noted the February 2023 Worcestershire Pension Fund Risk Register.

### **Forward Plan**

31. The Committee has approved the Forward Plan.

**Cllr Elizabeth Eyre**  
**Chairman**

### **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 Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers for the meetings of the Pensions Committee held on 8 February 2023 and 22 March 2023:

[Agenda for Pensions Committee on Wednesday, 8th February, 2023, 12.45 pm - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

[Agenda for Pensions Committee on Wednesday, 22nd March, 2023, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)