

COUNCIL
14 JULY 2016**REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY**

(a) Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care**Adult Social Care - Population and Demographic Context**

1. The population of Worcestershire is increasing and the demographic is showing increasing longevity. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) Population Estimates and Projections show the picture across the UK varies. Worcestershire has a larger proportion of the population aged 65+ (21%) than nationally (18%) and the numbers in this age group are expected to increase by 37% to about 167,000 by 2030. The numbers of people aged 85+ is projected to increase by 85% to 29,900 by 2030.

2. Worcestershire has a higher proportion of people aged 65 and over in the highest two social economic classifications. Overall Worcestershire is ranked 111th out of 152 local authorities in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (1 = most deprived) but there is variation across the different Districts. Almost 80% of people aged 65 and over in Worcestershire are owner-occupiers, compared to 74% in England. The highest level is in Bromsgrove at over 84%, whilst the lowest is in Redditch at just over 71%.

3. According to a November 2015 snapshot the numbers of older people living in residential care homes are predominantly self-funders (69%). This figure changes to 49% when looking at the numbers of people in nursing beds. Council-funded Deferred Payment Agreements are available to those owning their own property so that they do not need to sell their property in their lifetime to fund their care.

4. Legislation places a duty on local authorities to provide means tested care and support. The means test takes place after needs have been established. The test is applied on income, capital and property. Whilst the older people's population in Worcestershire has risen, and will continue to rise, the number of older people receiving a local authority funded social care service has fallen from 7,090 in 2010/11 to 5,668 in 2014/15. 336 clients previously funding their own care transferred to WCC funded care between April 2014 and March 2016.

5. The decrease in the numbers currently receiving a funded service has not been followed by a decrease in expenditure because the complexity of care has increased with increased frailty and those living longer with a disability and complex needs will require more intensive services. The balance of cost attributed to the health service or to the local authority is key to how we manage future expenditure. 99 service users who were previously funded through Continuing Health Care (CHC) transferred to local authority social care during the period April 2014 to November 2016.

6. Eligibility for funded support is decided by a personal assessment. The Access Centre handled 40,289 contacts last year of which 1,811 were safeguarding reports, 15,882 were contacts in relation to known service users and 22,596 new referrals for support of some kind. Of those referrals 7,795 were for the Patient Flow Centre leaving the remaining 14,801 as being for social care. Of these, one third were resolved by the Access Centre through the provision of information and advice, one third were sent through to the Rapid Response or Enhanced Care teams for urgent care and the remaining were sent on to Triage for further assessment.

Assessment

7. A combined assessment is now offered to adults with care and support needs and their carers so that needs and circumstances can be considered together. Separate assessments continue to be available if preferred. This whole family approach has been developed to provide a support framework to help both service users and carers to maintain their independence throughout the period of care. Every assessment is personal to the individual's needs and will result in an individual personal care plan.

8. In April 2015 the Triage and Assessment Team was introduced to make sure we have expert professional input close to the point of entry into the service and to continue working with vulnerable adults. From 1 July 2016 the seven days a week Access Service is being combined with the Triage and Intervention Team with the aim of reducing duplication, reducing hand off, improving information and advice. Through this new service Worcestershire County Council will also meet its specific duties for the assessment of people with sensory impairments.

9. The central recording system, Framework-i, has been reviewed and changes made. Reporting used to be through cumbersome form filling as well as extensive and confusing workflow and authorisation. System redesign has resulted in refined records and processes and authorisation points have been reduced and staff productivity has increased. Framework-i is now used when hospital discharges are planned reducing the risk of double recording individuals passing through and into both sectors.

10. We have introduced an online contact assessment for individuals and professionals. Thirteen locally based Area Social Work Teams have been created across the north and south of the county. Locality team structures will be the base point for further integrated care services. These align as much as possible with NHS GP localities. Out of County boundary surgeries are included where service users live just inside our borders.

11. Each Locality Team will have a Social Work Locality Manager. Local NHS managers will be considering how they can best ensure clinical staff (including District Nurses, Enhanced Care Teams, Pro-Active Care Teams (PACT) and Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapists) work together in their GP Localities, and will eventually aim for each of the localities to have a weekly multi-disciplinary meeting with staff, including social workers, voluntary organisations, etc. The implementation date for this new way of working will be confirmed during the summer.

Technology

12. The system redesign of Framework-i has supported access to daily real time information about demand, capacity and performance. Work is in progress to provide mobile technology to staff so that more time is available for face-to-face contact with service users.

13. In November 2015 funding of £2m was set aside to invest in the "New Technologies in Care Project". This project supports the identification of partners that will develop new technologies specifically to improve the outcomes and experience of people in receipt of local authority funded care. The procurement process to identify innovative partners has been published. The evaluation of applications will be the next stage. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board has included this project in its 2016/17 work programme.

14. The "Your Life Your Choice" website created in 2015, now has over 450 services available. In the first six months after the launch 13,567 people visited the website. To date there have been 29,844 individual visits. Some information on the site is now available in 'Easyread' and the website is fully Care Act compliant. The number of visits resulting in an online assessment was

537 (191 safeguarding and 346 adult social care). The website is improving all of the time and I urge those having difficulties using the site to contact Frances Howie who oversees this project so that any problems can be ironed out.

15. The Council has phased out the 0845 telephone number. Callers now access Adult Social Care services direct on 01905 768053 or through the Council's new web service "Your Life, Your Choice". This number can also be used for safeguarding concerns. Dual running numbers helped during the phase in period.

Care Act

16. A stock-take on compliance with the Act has taken place. Additional pressures have been noted in areas of increased carers assessments, flexible breaks and an increase in the numbers of people receiving home care. We are now responsible for working with prisons under the Act and the number of prisoners assessed during the year was 8 with 4 now receiving a service. The programme of learning and development for social work staff continued through 2015/16 to embed new practices required by Part 1 of the Act. In total over 3,000 training places were provided, within which 1,111 were half-day basic awareness training and the remainder more advanced training directed to specific job requirements.

17. Care Act revisions were published in March 2016 with minor additions/changes. Most revisions have been made for reasons of accuracy or clarity. Some are more substantial, such as those around safeguarding and the previously announced postponement to the funding reforms. The changes reflect learning from the first period of implementation and feedback from stakeholders and partners.

18. Of note are updates to the safeguarding chapter highlighting the growing prevalence of internet and doorstep scams and the role of professional and practice leadership in adult safeguarding. On this latter point, the guidance emphasises the need for expertise within organisations where practitioners and managers can go for advice and recommended courses of action.

19. There is a requirement under the Act for local authorities to provide a sustainable care home market offering wide choice to all of the population including self-funders.

The Domiciliary Care and Home Care Market

20. There are 209 care homes of all types across Worcestershire, 6 of which are owned by Worcestershire County Council. Recent calculations indicated that 41% of care homes were considered by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to be "part of a brand" (i.e. large enough to be regulated as a single company as part of the CQC Market Oversight Regime). This is notably more than the regional figure of 32% and the national figure of 33%. The county also has a higher number of smaller homes than is the case nationally. The CQC August 2015 report indicates that 62% of residential care homes in Worcestershire have less than 20 beds and only 3% have over 60 beds.

21. The workforce in care homes is predominantly female (89%). This mirrors the UK benchmark of 88%. It is too early to tell how the National Living Wage will impact upon the retention and recruitment of care home personnel. There is low unemployment across Worcestershire. The claimant count is 1.1% compared to 2.1% in the West Midlands and 1.8% across England. There are 44 providers of adult social care apprenticeship training in Worcestershire with 1,700 courses. This is in keeping with the national picture.

22. The CQC currently lists 92 providers of domiciliary care in Worcestershire. The number of providers has been rising with on average a 7% increase each year for the past two years. Providers are concerned there are now too many agencies. The development of Extra Care Villages could impact dramatically upon both the residential care market and the domiciliary care market.

Supported Living and Extra Care

23. The numbers of Supported Living Apartments have increased, alongside shared housing resulting in 210 service users with a learning disability currently living in their own accommodation with assured tenancies. In the last twelve months a range of new build apartments have been delivered including 14-supported living apartments at Hazel Court, St Johns, Worcester in partnership with Sanctuary Housing, 12 apartments at Hampton Mews, Kidderminster with Community Housing Group and 12 apartments at Samuel Place, Redditch with Bromford Housing. A further 8 apartments for service users with complex autistic spectrum conditions are due to be built at Upper Ford Lodge, Droitwich in partnership with Fortis Housing.

24. The ambition is to ensure all service users who are able to live in supportive housing are given the opportunity to do so rather than be placed in residential care. A total of 260 service users are under review to ascertain the potential numbers able to move into accommodation as this becomes available. New developments will be available countywide to facilitate service users the opportunity to live near family and friends. The strategy is in line with the Winterbourne View recommendations to bring people back into county, from out of county residential placements, where appropriate. We also aim to offer young people, coming into adult services, the opportunity to live independently, where appropriate.

25. Extra Care Housing offers a holistic approach to individuals over 55 years old who may have care and support needs. Over the last two years we have worked in partnership with District Councils and housing providers across the county to increase the numbers of self-contained apartments with 24 hour support. We have developed social care placements for 186 service users at schemes in Arch Hill Court, Kidderminster, St David's, Redditch, Terryspring Court, Redditch, Yates Court, Evesham, Meadow Court, Worcester, Noble House, Worcester, Clarence Park, Malvern and Gilbert Court in Bromsgrove. In addition we have also recently worked with Rooftop Housing to open the first purpose built dementia care Extra Care scheme in the region.

26. During May 2016 officers and members of the Cabinet including myself visited an impressive 'Retirement Village' in Birmingham which included a gym, restaurant, pub, garden centre, workshop, hairdresser, bowling alley and library as well as one and two bedroomed apartments that offered modern, secure, self-contained accommodation with a real sense of community support. I have ambitious targets in relation to Extra Care but I believe this offers the best opportunity to facilitate individual's ability to maintain their independence and wellbeing.

Support Groups and Carers

27. The number of carers seeking help and support in Worcestershire is a fraction of the number of the estimated 60,000 of carers that are thought to be caring for a family member. Assessments of carers have increased from an average of 307 per month to an average of 387 a month with 41% resulting in funding eligibility.

28. A Carers' Hub has been created. The tender was advertised in January 2016 and Worcestershire Association of Carers (WAC) was the successful bid. The Hub, jointly funded by Worcestershire County Council and the three NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, will coordinate support for the 60,000 plus unpaid adult carers in Worcestershire. The launch on 1 July 2016 introduced new services, by providing a single point of access for information, advice,

support and training across local areas. The contract will run for two years. WAC meets on a regular basis and they hold an Annual Conference. Other consultative support groups exist which welcome carers to attend. These include the Older People's Consultation Group and Learning Disability Partnership Board.

29. The Learning Disability Partnership board meets four times a year and also has six sub-groups; Having a Place to Live, Having a Job, Staying Healthy, Living Well, Staying Safe, and Preparing for Adulthood. The sub groups report back review findings to the main Partnership Board meetings. The Staying Healthy sub-group is funded by the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

30. The Learning Disability Partnership Board has recently reviewed Living Well & Staying Healthy. Progress has been made with Worcestershire's CCGs agreeing to fund a GP lead for people with learning disability. Community nurses have delivered training on "My next patient has a learning disability" to trainee GPs outlining what is a learning disability and has provided sessions to all student nurses in local universities in Worcester, Birmingham and Coventry.

31. In September 2015 the Staying Healthy sub-group reported on the Speakeasy Health Checkers Team review of GP practices. Health Checkers add a significant contribution in facilitating and communicating the views and experiences of people with a learning disability who have accessed health-funded services. Health Checkers have also carried out unannounced reviews of Worcestershire Royal and Redditch Alexandra Hospitals and have reviewed Community Hospitals and Accident and Emergency Services.

32. In February this year the chairman of the Speakeasy People's Parliament won a Prime Minister's Point of Light Award. The Speakeasy People's Parliament helps people with learning disabilities to have a voice and to speak up for themselves. They have a number of expert members and through the Parliament people with learning disabilities can set their own agenda and hold local decision makers to account. This national award for volunteering was won for her hard work with Speakeasy NOW, Worcestershire's self-advocacy organisation for people with learning disabilities.

Day Services and Employment

33. The Learning Disabilities Day Services Review has resulted in much improved opportunity for people living with a disability. Day services newsletters have been emailed regularly to all Members. The local offer has been improved across all Districts. New activity includes mainstream leisure, sporting and educational opportunities. The feedback from carers where new centres are now up and running has been extremely positive.

34. Three Springs Resource Centre in Pershore was the latest centre to open on Friday 22 January 2016. A carers' design group worked with officers to oversee the project. This resource centre required much more extensive renovation work than was needed at our Connect Centres. The carers have been delighted with the result expressing thanks to staff for a well-managed and well-organised move. The next Connect Centre to be opened will be within Evesham Library and is expected to open in October this year.

35. Setting an example of how to make positive change one of our Worcestershire young people, gained a place, and local authority funding, to go to Derwen Residential College in Oswestry Shropshire. CB aged 19 completed the initial educational programme and three years later chose to stay for a further two years on its live work programme designed to build vocational skills. CB was rewarded for her efforts with a one-day a week placement at a local Premier Inn. CB has also since moved to her own Supported Living flat.

36. The “Go Green” Kidderminster remodelling talks resulted in a social enterprise company being formed last year. A panel unanimously selected the Emily Jordan Foundation (Spokes) to deliver the contract. The successful transfer took place in July 2015. The Emily Jordan Foundation has experience in supporting trainees with moderate learning difficulty to move closer to getting a job. Go Green is a day service that recycles a range of clean materials like cans, plastics, foil, spectacles etc.

37. A Community Catalysts Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Council joint venture was recognised last year in a UK wide competition run by the Carnegie UK Trust, which celebrates groups and organisations that are empowering communities and putting wellbeing at the heart of their work. The joint venture supports local ventures and businesses that help older people and those living with a disability to help them to socialise, learn skills, keep fit or get a break from their caring responsibilities. A £5,000 prize was accepted at an award event in London on the 25 November 2015.

38. Micro enterprise projects currently include 84 separate community micro-enterprises and ventures that have between them capacity to support 1,712 people with 938 current users. They have created 98 jobs and 175 volunteering opportunities. There are 34 services offering opportunities to access training, employment or to develop life skills; 19 services offering opportunities to take part in a range of leisure activities including drama, art and sport; 17 day time support including lunch or social clubs; 11 offering support at home, supported housing, transport, and drop in and 3 potential micro providers of regulated services registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Working with Partners & External providers – Health

39. The Patient Flow Centre project is now well established. The Centre helps to improve hospital to home rehabilitation prospects for our frail elderly, providing timely support that helps them to return to independent living as soon as possible or organising long term care for those unable to return to independent living. Between April 2015 and February 2016, there were 5,005 referrals to the Patient Flow Centre for hospital to home (Pathway 1) services. The feedback from people and families has been exceptionally good.

40. A Worcester City pilot, Recovery at Home Service, which brings together Worcestershire County Council’s Urgent Promoting Independence social care service with Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust’s Enhanced Care Team is now well developed. Both services provided care to patients recovering at home and by joining these we have improved the patient experience by reducing duplication as well as improving efficiency.

41. The Hospital Social Work and Rapid Response Teams have been brought together to create one urgent care Service. The new capacity means that a 7 day a week and 24 hour a day service can be provided.

Staffing

42. Richard Harling left the County Council in February to take up a senior position at Staffordshire County Council. Through his leadership we have managed some major strategic challenges and integration projects with health partners.

43. The Adult Services Directorate has restructured its service delivery teams to better integrate services with the wider health economy and I am sure this will greatly improve efficiency and quality. The staff and managers are to be congratulated and thanked for the way they have contributed to change and have worked towards positively working with health partners. Their dedication to the public they serve and the commitment and energy with which they approach

their work, the challenges and sometimes disappointments has been truly exceptional. This was absolutely true of the popular and talented manager at Exmoor House Bromsgrove, Jayne Rosewarne and Hospital Social Work Manager, Jonathan Monks, who both sadly died in 2015.

44. My personal thanks go to the senior management team whom I meet with on a regular basis. They have my absolute respect for their professionalism, leadership, flexibility and tolerance but above all for the care and sensitivity with which they deliver their work and set the standard for others to follow.

Sheila Blagg

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

(b) Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure

45. It is a great privilege to offer this report to Council on the work carried out in the areas of economy, skills and infrastructure over the last 14 months. Naturally, it also reflects work for which I have had the briefest of responsibility, but in that time I have come to appreciate and value more fully the work of the officers involved, and of my predecessor, Simon Geraghty.

46. As the report deals with past activity, it does not reflect the impact of the result of the recent referendum, leading as it will to our leaving the EU. This will undoubtedly affect our funding under European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), although those programmes that have already received approval should hopefully continue.

47. By the same token, the Government has been at pains to emphasise that it wishes to see continued investment in infrastructure, both public and private. In that regard, the County Council will be pressing ahead with its plans for developments as outlined below.

48. With the above reservation, we have seen strong developments in the local economy over the last year, with exceptional rates of growth, and growth of productivity. This demonstrates the effectiveness of our “Open for Business” priority within the Council’s Corporate Plan.

49. As decided by Council the Business, Environment and Community Directorate has recently changed its name to “Economy and Infrastructure”, but this should not be taken to mean any downgrading of the importance of the environment, nor that the work on skills is a less important section of its work. It rather forms part of an objective of more cross-directorate working, so that the Council operates as a single entity, rather than groups of officers working in independent silos.

Economic Growth and Investment

50. The work of the growth and investment team directly supports the Open for Business theme of the Corporate Plan and the economic priorities of the County Council which focus on job creation and growth.

51. Worcestershire has recently been highlighted as an area of significant growth, having the third highest growth in prosperity between 2010 and 2014 out of all 39 LEP areas. The research, released by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), measured prosperity through a variety of indicators, including Gross Value Added (GVA), earnings, employment, skills and qualifications. The JRF research also highlighted Worcestershire as having the greatest growth in workforce skills during that period, measured in terms of the number of people in higher level occupations and the quality of educational attainment.

52. To support these findings the latest statistics released by the Office of National Statistics show that during a similar time period (2009 – 2014) Worcestershire’s productivity grew on average by 3.1%, in terms of GVA per hour worked, placing the county second of all 39 LEP areas.

53. Key highlights from our 2015/16 programme include:

- Support provided to over 2,700 new and existing businesses
- 350 new business have been established
- Over £5m given out in grants to support business growth and business start ups
- Creating 1,285 jobs within the county.

Key Programmes:

Worcestershire Innovation (WINN)

54. Partners across Worcestershire have come together recognising the need to galvanise the individual organisations' activities and efforts into a combined strategy for innovation across the county. They have come together under the brand of WINN.

55. Services will be delivered for the purpose of supporting businesses within the Worcestershire region in developing new, improved and valuable products and services, and accessing new markets, with the primary objective of increasing economic activity, productivity and GVA.

56. Partners include:

- Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
- Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP)
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (HWCC)
- Malvern Hills Science Park (MHSP)
- Central Technology Belt (CTB)
- University of Worcester (UoW)
- Birmingham Science City
- QinetiQ.

57. The core objectives are to:

- Build and maintain a thriving innovation ecosystem in Worcestershire
- Facilitate/co-ordinate activity that enhances science and technology-based innovation in the county and wider national/international scale
- Provide focus for marketing, promotion and communication of innovation in and on behalf of Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

58. Worcestershire County Council is a key partner in the WLEP, also performing the role of accountable body. Worcestershire County Council's Corporate Plan is clearly aligned to the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and is committed to supporting the delivery of an **additional 25,000 jobs and increase in GVA by £2.9 billion by 2025**. This equates to growing the local economy by one third.

59. The Worcestershire LEP continues to provide funding for key infrastructure projects such as:

- Hoobrook Link Road
- Southern Link Road
- Bromsgrove Railway Station
- Malvern Hills Science Park

- Worcester Parkway
- Superfast Broadband Roll-out.

60. The £2m Worcestershire Growth Fund managed through Worcestershire County Council, supporting business expansion, job creation and increased productivity, including currently supporting 12 businesses creating over 120 jobs in the local economy, with further funding rounds still operating.

Business Support Programmes highlights:

61. Successes for 2015/2016

- **Worcestershire Expansion Programme:** a £2.2m Regional Growth Fund Project which has supported 22 businesses to date with their expansion plans. The project has created over 192 jobs, with private sector leverage of £13.8m
- **Women2Web:** successful in obtaining funding for a second year to support female entrepreneurs, promoting a digital skills programme funded by DCMS. Over 250 women have been supported - free networking, training, and business mentoring, which has now supported over 550 female entrepreneurs over the past 2 years
- **Enterprising Worcestershire:** Enterprising Worcestershire assisted 400 businesses to start trading, creating 503 jobs
- **Proof of Concept (POC):** £2.6m Innovation programme to help business with research and product development. The project has worked successfully with the Central Technology Belt to support 48 local businesses to bring new projects to market. The project to date has been linked to 26 new jobs being created.
- **Finditinworcestershire (FIW):** now has over 8,000 members, with an average of 125 businesses attending each month's networking event, advertising over £200m worth of contracts
- **Warndon Skills Centre:** £300,000 bespoke Construction Skills Centre in the heart of Warndon, Worcester. The centre was successfully launched in November 2015.

LEADER Programme

62. Worcestershire has been successful in securing a £1.96m LEADER programme which aims to create a vibrant, connected and enterprising rural area that inspires diverse and inclusive rural communities in which to live, work and visit. Rural businesses and community groups can apply for up to £35,000 to make a difference to the local area and grow the rural economy.

63. The programme opened at the end of November 2015 and since then has received a large volume of enquiries from businesses and organisations keen to apply.

64. This investment will create upwards of 85 new jobs within the county, contributing to the growth of small local businesses and Worcestershire's rural economy.

National Cyber Skills Centre (NCSC):

65. Worcestershire County Council continues to support NCSC, building a reputation for Worcestershire as a centre of expertise in cyber security. Over the past 12 months the

centre has worked with 336 businesses to providing training to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks.

66. A key objective of the Centre is to inspire the next generation of cyber talent, ensuring a pipeline of skills within the county. To support this aim, NCSC has worked with over 250 young people opening their minds to careers within the cyber industry.

New EU Funding Programme 2014-2020

67. Before the referendum, Worcestershire County Council had submitted eight European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) bids totalling £16m with a County Council contribution of £700,000 and District Council contributions of £450,000. Of the bids submitted all have gone through to the full application stage with 3 having been contracted as follows:

Contracted:

- Business Growth – contracted
- Innovation – Proof of Concept – contracted
- ERDF Technical Assistance

Full Application Stage:

- Resource Efficiency – Approved
- Cyber Security
- Inward Investment
- Business Start-up
- Low Carbon Programme.

Worcestershire Business Central

68. The County Council has been working closely with partners over the past 12 months to develop a sustainable partnership for Worcestershire's growth hub - Worcestershire Business Central (WBC). The service is now successfully co-located within Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce.

69. The enhanced growth hub has continued to develop a proactive engagement strategy to ensure Worcestershire businesses are aware of the support available to them. WBC now has 9 members of staff, namely 4 Business Engagement Managers, focused on supporting business growth and the three key priority sectors of agri-tech, advanced manufacturing and cyber security, and 5 telephone-based support staff (4 of which are Council staff seconded to the team). The website continues to have approx. 5,000 visits per month and over the past 12 months the service has supported 605 Worcestershire-based businesses.

Worcestershire Local Transport Body

70. Following the Government announcement of the decision to devolve funding for local major transport schemes to Local Transport Bodies (LTBs) from 2015, the Department for Transport (DfT) required that each LTB develop an assurance framework, setting out its governance and working arrangements. The Worcestershire LTB (WLTB) assurance

framework was agreed with the DfT in 2013/14 and updated in 2015/16 to reflect the focus on Growth Deals.

71. During the last year the WLTB has approved Growth Deal funding to support important transport and highways works across the county. These schemes include Hoobrook Link Road in Kidderminster, Worcester Southern Link Road, Worcester 6, Cathedral Square Phase 1, flood alleviation schemes across the county and Worcestershire Parkway. In addition, the following schemes have been assessed and approved to be taken forward for future Growth Deal funding: A38 in Bromsgrove and Pershore infrastructure improvements including a new Northern Link Road to the Keytech Business Park and improvements to the Pinvin crossroads.

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan

72. The Local Transport Plan is a statutory document, which all Local Transport Authorities are required to produce, deliver and maintain under the Transport Act (2000) and the Local Transport Act (2008). The current plan was adopted in 2011 but is now in need of updating to reflect our growth ambitions and the Districts' Local Development Plans.

73. Pre-consultation with local members, Districts and parishes has recently commenced, with wider public consultation starting in October this year. The aim is to get it fully approved and adopted by full Council in Spring 2017.

Skills

74. Improving skills is a key objective of the Council and we work closely with the WLEP Employment and Skills Board to achieve this. The priority list of key skills to be developed are chosen by the business community working with the education providers. Our objective is to increase the employment rate, reduce the number of people on benefits, so as to increase Worcestershire's GVA.

Connecting Schools & Business

75. We have continued to develop links between businesses and schools working through the WLEP Employment & Skills Board, focussing on the 3 key work streams. These are: (i) providing increased work experience programmes, (ii) careers related support and guidance and (iii) careers related curriculum development. These key elements of the Connecting Schools and Business programme are focussed on developing the skills needed by students, alongside their formal qualifications to be fully prepared to enter the world of work.

76. The development of the "Worcestershire Skills Central" web portal has now been completed, adding the ability for parents across Worcestershire directly to access available work placements, ability to provide online feedback, links to our series of You Tube videos and links to useful careers related sites.

77. The Worcestershire Careers Central site has been fully launched containing information on Worcestershire's 10 Key Growth industry sectors, associated job roles and career pathway information. This was launched last June to coincide with the exam period for years 11 and 13.

78. The 2nd annual Worcestershire Skills Show was held on Wednesday 9 March 2016 at Sixways Stadium. This year we had over 1,500 young people attend from Worcestershire High Schools, an increase of 300 students compared to 2015. Our aim was to enable them to meet employers, attend workshops and gain a hands-on insight into what work with them would be like, as well as highlighting the skills needed.

Careers and Enterprise Company – Enterprise Advisor Programme

79. The Council worked with the Worcestershire LEP to secure £97,000 in January 2016 to operate the Government's National Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Advisor Programme. The programme places a senior business person as a volunteer in an advisory role, matched to a school, to work with them on the careers agenda and support them to meet their responsibilities to young people, joining up and bolstering support for Worcestershire initiatives.

University Technical College (UTC)

80. The Council has continued to endorse a UTC for Worcestershire. This is an all-ability state-funded 14-19 school, which is independent of the local authority, having a "science, technology, engineering and mathematics" (STEM) specialism, alongside business skills and a broad general education. The ethos and curriculum would be designed with employers, including Worcester Bosch, Mazak, Malvern Instruments and Morgan Cars, who then provide support for the UTC and work experience for the students. The application was submitted in the Spring and we hope to gain approval towards the end of August 2016.

Worcestershire Apprenticeships Clearing House

81. Launched in September 2015, the Council commissioned the Worcestershire Training Providers' Association to provide a "no wrong door" service for young people interested in apprenticeships, and employers wanting to offer apprenticeships. This initiative aims to support the reduction in the number of NEETs and increase the number of apprenticeships across the county. To date this has given rise to 255 apprenticeship starts and worked with 260 employers to create apprenticeships.

NEETs

82. The overall picture for the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is positive, and improving. In March 2016, the actual, known, figure was 3.0%. This compares with 3.7% for the same period last year. The proportion of young people where it is unknown what they are doing at March this year stood at 5.7%, compared with 9.5% in March 2015. Despite the marked improvement, the unknowns remain a serious challenge, although substantial progress has been made, both in our working with schools and our tracking of students after they have left school.

Rail Strategy

83. The Council has part-funded the development of a comprehensive rail investment strategy from industry-leading consultancy SLC Rail. This valuable suite of documents will help to inform the Council's approach to the promotion and prioritization of rail investment in Worcestershire. The outcomes of this work, inclusive of suggested schemes, will be included within future iterations of the Local Transport Plan.

84. The emerging (draft) strategy proposes four overarching 'Conditional Outputs' for rail service development, which have the potential to deliver up to £55.2 million more GVA per annum and 1,269 new jobs across the County by 2043:

- two trains per hour Worcester-Oxford-Paddington
- one train per hour Kidderminster-Worcester-Paddington
- calls at Worcestershire Parkway by Bristol-Manchester and Plymouth-Newcastle services
- Regional Services between Kidderminster/Bromsgrove, Worcester and Cheltenham Spa, Gloucester and Bristol.

85. The above service aspirations are reliant on the following supporting rail infrastructure upgrades:

- Electrification of both the Bristol to Birmingham and Snow Hill lines
- North Cotswold line capacity upgrade
- Worcester Area and Droitwich Spa to Stoke Works capacity upgrade
- New car park capacity
- Worcester Shrub Hill Station Major Regeneration.

86. The Council is involved in West Midlands Rail Limited which is seeking to be directly involved in specifying and managing passenger railway services in the West Midlands.

87. The Council has had significant input into the consultation process, the tender specification and engagement with short-listed bidders.

Midlands Connect

88. Midlands Connect is a £5 million collaboration with central government that brings together 28 local authorities and 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships from across the Midlands. Together, the Midlands Connect Partnership and the Department for Transport are developing a transport strategy that identifies the major infrastructure projects needed to improve the connectivity of our region's key locations so we can help drive economic growth and power the Midlands Engine. The strategy is due to be published in March 2017. Several officers are involved in ensuring Worcestershire's strategic transport aspirations are considered as part of this strategy, in addition to Simon Geraghty who is on the Strategic Board.

Kidderminster Rail Station

89. Provisional sums of £2.5million from the Worcestershire LEP and £1.8million from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP are now available for the further development of the proposed improvements to Kidderminster railway station. The County Council, in partnership with London Midland, Network Rail, Severn Valley Railway and Wyre Forest District Council, has commissioned architects to design the station building.

Major Infrastructure Projects (in delivery)

Worcestershire Parkway

90. Significant progress has been made to deliver Worcestershire Parkway in the triangle of land formed by the intersection of the Worcester-Paddington and Birmingham-Bristol lines just outside Norton on the B2084. The station will address Worcestershire's poor accessibility to and from London, arising from the current limited frequency and journey times of train services, as well as inadequate parking capacity. Progress includes:

- Progression of the scheme through **Network Rail's** Governance for Railways Investment Process (GRIP);
- **Planning:** Planning permission for the scheme was secured in August 2015. This is subject to the satisfactory completion of the relevant conditions, most of which will be met by the principal contractor as part of the detailed design process;
- **Land Acquisition:** A Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme was made and, following withdrawal of the objections, the Secretary of State has recently confirmed the order.
- **Construction:** The procurement of a principal contractor for the design and build of Worcestershire Parkway is well underway. This requires the final stages of the rail industry approvals to be concluded.

91. Following the formal rail industry approvals and letting of the design and build contract, the detailed work with the contractor will commence with a target completion of spring 2018.

Worcester Southern Link Road (SLR)

92. The Council is committed to the dualling of the Southern Link Road from Junction 7 of the M5 to the Powick Roundabout. Work is well underway with Phase 3, a c£33m scheme to dual between the Whittington and Norton roundabouts. This is one of the biggest upgrades to road infrastructure in the county for many years. The scheme has been identified as one of the highest priorities in terms of tackling both current and future levels of congestion.

93. Phase 3 includes the provision of a dedicated left-hand turn from the M5 approach to Whittington roundabout on to Crookbarrow Way and finally dualling the section between the two roundabouts including the extension of the rail bridge. Work is currently underway to improve the Norton roundabout with work about to start between Whittington and Norton.

94. Following this, the next phase of the Southern Link Road development will be to complete the dualling to Powick Roundabout. An application for development funding for **SLR Phase 4** (Carrington Bridge), likely to amount to £70 million, was submitted at the end of May 2016. An Outline Business Case will be submitted, as an interim submission, in July for the Local Majors Fund, with the full submission in December 2016. In addition to the preparation of the outline business case, market engagement work has taken place to inform the delivery and procurement strategy for the scheme, as well as survey and other preparatory works, using the £1.4m committed by the Council for the development of this strategic scheme.

Hoobrook Link Road

95. The link road is situated within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park which is one of the strategic employment sites in Worcestershire. The link road will provide improved access, connect two key employment corridors, promote much needed economic growth and relieve traffic congestion. Construction started in May 2015 and continues to progress well, including the well-publicised major milestone of the bridge beam lift that took place in December 2015. The scheme is due to be completed this summer as planned.

Cathedral Square

96. Improvements to Cathedral Square are taking place to unlock development opportunity for the south end of Worcester High Street, bringing greater footfall and investment for this area of the city centre. The Council delivered Phase 1 of this scheme, highways realignment, as planned in October 2015. Phase 2, retail development, is well underway, with the final phase being the Public Realm work that will take place in 2017.

Worcester Six

97. The highways infrastructure to support the development of and future access to Worcester Six, just next to Junction 6 of the M5, was completed as planned this year. Wychavon District Council has recently given planning permission to Liberty Property Trust for the first two buildings on the site, amounting to over 200,000sq ft, intended to house technology-based businesses. This exciting development is one of the four game-changer sites in the County, creating thousands of jobs in their train.

Bromsgrove Station

98. This c£17.m (excluding electrification) project which is funded by Worcestershire County Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority includes a new station building with a footbridge and lifts, toilets, a ticket office and a 350 space car park. The scheme will enable additional and more frequent services to call at the station and will facilitate electrification of the line between Bromsgrove and Barnt Green by Network Rail. The new station is due to open this week, on 12 July 2016.

Major infrastructure projects (emerging)

99. Significant improvements to the A38 Corridor in Bromsgrove have been identified to mitigate the additional trips linked to development growth from the Local Plan. The Council is developing the Business Case to support a funding bid for Local Growth Deal funding. Improvements to key pinch points have been identified at a cost of over £30 million. In addition, we are awaiting the outcome of an £8 million bid to Highways England as part of their Growth and Housing Fund.

100. Pershore Northern Link Road/Pinvin Crossroads. As with the A38 above, the Council is compiling a Business Case to support a bid towards Local Growth Deal funding. This involves improvements to the junction at Pinvin and provision of a new link road to the Keytech Business Park.

Superfast Worcestershire

Update on Progress

101. As at 24 June 2016 the Superfast Worcestershire Partnership had fibre-enabled 332 green broadband street cabinets, meaning an additional 55,545 premises are now able to 'sign-up' with their preferred internet service provider to obtain improved broadband speeds. The fibre coverage across the county has increased from 73% to 92% of all premises, with business premises seeing a huge uplift from 44% to 86% now able to access fibre broadband.

Plans for Expansion

102. When the Superfast Extension Programme is completed in September 2017, the percentage of homes and businesses able to access fibre broadband in Worcestershire will increase to more than 95% - with 94% able to access superfast download speeds of 24megabits per second (Mbps) and above.

103. Programme efficiencies and good levels of take-up have enabled further reinvestment into the programme of up to £3.25m which was approved by Council in November 2015. A survey of stakeholders, including businesses and residents, has helped understanding of the priority areas for further intervention and the Council is currently working with BT to plan and agree fibre expansion plans across Worcestershire. Further details will be announced as soon as they are available.

Stimulating Demand

104. As a result of recognising the importance of promoting the benefits of fibre broadband and helping people understand how they can sign up for the service, a focused demand stimulation campaign has been running since December 2015 and is already showing good results. Overall take up at the end of May 2016 hit an impressive 28.2%, which remains above the national average of programmes working to similar timelines. Take up of more established cabinets, over 350 days old, is at over 34%, a trend which is on track to continue. Social media coverage is also very strong, with over 10,500 Twitter followers staying in touch and commenting on the programme.

Strategic Planning, Development Control and Waste & Minerals Plans

105. Work has continued on the emerging Minerals Plan, with agreement being reached on crushed rock apportionments with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Co-operate, as Worcestershire does not produce any such material, and is unlikely to be able to do so. A second call for sites has been completed, and all relevant statutory bodies have now been consulted on these. The emerging plan will be published for consultation in November 2016.

106. Significant minerals applications have also been submitted, and either determined or progressing towards determination, reflecting the increase in demand from the housing market and infrastructure projects.

107. We have continued to work with the local planning authorities to develop their respective Local Plans and associated Infrastructure Development Plans, coordinating this work across the County Council. South Worcestershire Councils are expected to submit a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule to the Planning Inspectorate this month, July 2016, which has been developed in partnership with the County

Council, and has been through public consultation. Subject to a successful Examination in Public, this will be adopted in 2017.

108. In April 2015, the County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, became the statutory consultee on all major planning applications submitted to Local Planning Authorities with regard to surface water management. In the first 12 months this has resulted in us commenting on 170 planning applications across Worcestershire, with a further 120 consultations.

Conclusion

109. In conclusion, I must place on record my grateful thanks to the officers who have assisted in the preparation of this report, chronicling as it does the hard work of the whole Economy and Infrastructure Directorate. No doubt in the coming months, I will also appreciate close examination of that work from my former colleagues on the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Panel, to the betterment of its output.

Ken Pollock

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure