

# Foreword

## Our County

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Council

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

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

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

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

### **Our plan for Worcestershire**

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

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

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

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

Simon Geraghty

Leader, Worcestershire County Council

# Open for Business

## Vision and Objectives

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

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

## Our plan for growth

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

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

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

We will:

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

## A Connected County

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Delivering Strategic Investment Sites**

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

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

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

### **Investing in the Workforce**

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

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

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

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

**How we will measure this:**

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

# Priority – Children and families

## Vision and Objectives

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

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

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

## Education – providing the best start in life

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

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

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

## Transition from education to employment

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

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

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

## **Keeping Children Safe**

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

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

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

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

### **Measures:**

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

# The Environment

## Vision and Objectives

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

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

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

## A Greener Future

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

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

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

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



## **Resilience Transport Network**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Reducing our Waste**

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

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

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

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

**How we will measure this:**

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

# Health and Wellbeing

## Vision and Objectives:

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

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

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

## Living Well in Worcestershire

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

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

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

## **Independent Living and Adult Social Care**

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

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

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

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

## **Health & care services when you need them**

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

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

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

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

**How we will judge progress:**

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

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

## Vision and Objectives

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

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

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

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

## For You, Your Family and Communities

Our journey to reshape our Council alongside our communities continues.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **For the Council**

### **Councillors working for you**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Our Council**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Our Finances**

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

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

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

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



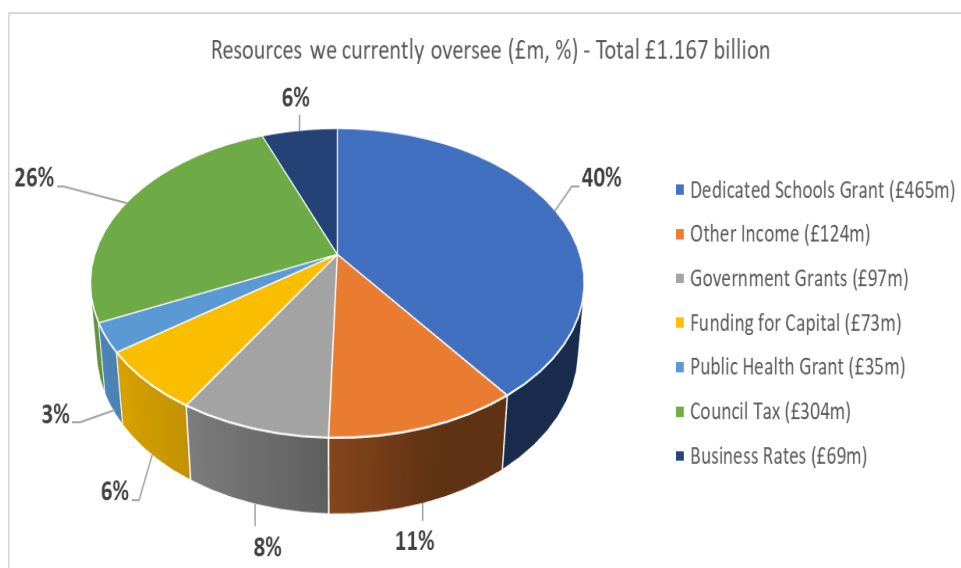
Medium-Term Financial Plan – in reducing that demand for our most costly services, whilst providing better outcomes for the needs of our residents.

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

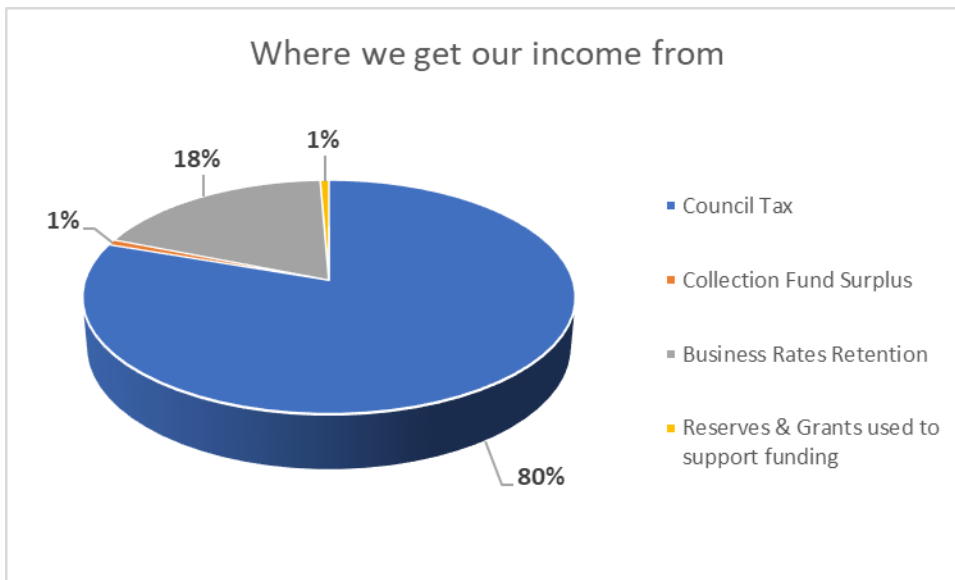
We will continue to work with partners to leverage additional funding into the County to fund our capital and regeneration ambitions. Already we have supported over £87m of central government capital funding through the Getting Building Fund and Local Growth Fund to support the delivery of key investment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

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

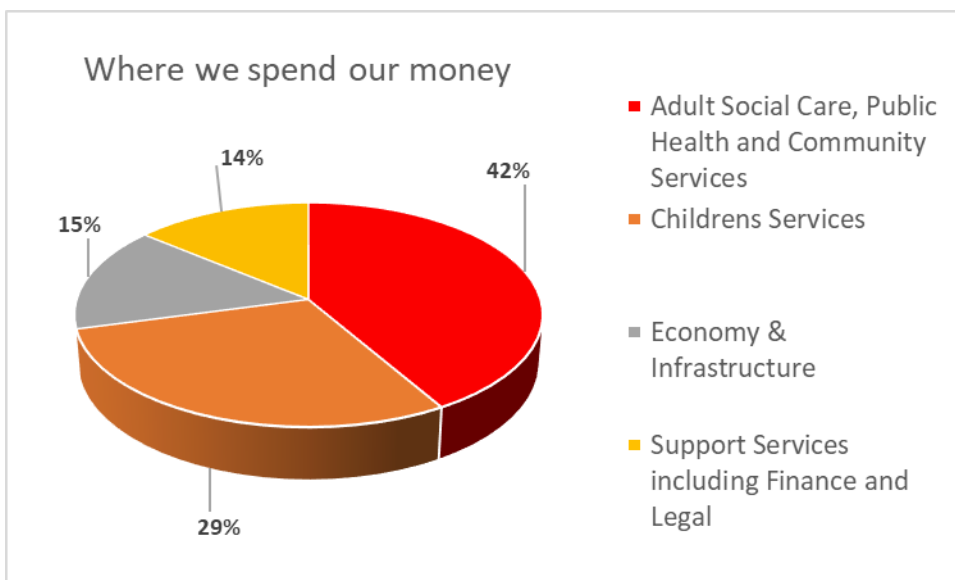
**Resources we currently oversee:**



## Where we get our income from:



## What we spend your money on:



## How we will measure this:

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