

COUNCIL
19 MAY 2022

REPORT OF CABINET - SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

Worcestershire Response to the Invasion of Ukraine

1. Cabinet has considered a report setting out the response by the County Council and its partners to the invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent humanitarian impact.
2. The Home Secretary launched the Ukraine Family Scheme on 4 March, which will allow thousands of families to be reunited in the UK. Those joining family through this scheme will now be granted leave for three years. Successful applicants will be able to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds.
3. The Prime Minister also announced the Local Sponsorship Scheme for Ukrainians with no ties to the UK to be able to come here. Sponsors can offer housing to those escaping the conflict in Ukraine.
4. The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board has been updated on the County Council's approach.
5. Cabinet endorsed the joint 'One Worcestershire' approach to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, with the County and District Councils working together to co-ordinate a response. It also approved the Council's participation in the Ukraine Family Scheme and Local Sponsorship Scheme, agreed the Council use of its resources to help the co-ordination of efforts across the County including supporting the voluntary and local community response, and noted work being done to review existing contracts and to suspend any investments in Russia and Belarus.

Approval of Worcestershire Children First's Business Plan 2022-23

6. Cabinet has approved Worcestershire Children First's Business Plan for this financial year. The service delivery contract between the County Council and Worcestershire Children First (WCF) includes a requirement for WCF to produce a Business Plan each year.
 7. The 2022/23 Business Plan has three principles: sustain and improve, innovate and invest in Children's services. The main priority is to sustain and improve on the significant achievements made since the County Council was rated as an inadequate authority in October 2016, continuing to evidence progress through key performance indicators, the Quality Assurance Programme and external inspection outcomes.
 8. The Business Plan outlines a number of priorities for the year, including WCF Fostering Improvement Plan, SEND Accelerated Action Plan, implementation of the All-Age Disability Service and Early Help Family Hub & HAF Strategy.
-

9. The financial section of the Business Plan outlines the agreed contract sums. The 2022/23 gross cost is equivalent to the budget set by Council in February 2022.

Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy

10. The County Council commissioned the development of the first Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy (WRIS) in 2016. The strategy was intended to set the economic context for rail investment, inform the development of Local Transport Plan 4 and underpin the future pipeline of rail projects.

11. The 2016 WRIS has been updated to reflect the rail schemes which have been delivered, the review of Local Plans and Government changes, including the emerging concept of Great British Railways and the impact of Covid 19 on patterns of movement.

12. The updated and revised Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy (WRIS2) utilises the 2016 strategy, updating the baseline of the current rail situation in the County, scale of growth expected, and identifies gaps and solutions to achieve economic benefits and prioritise the investment to achieve maximum value for money.

13. The Strategy identifies a number of improvements including increasing connectivity, building new stations and better facilities in and around stations generally. These initiatives involve working with others to achieve what is set out in the Strategy.

14. Cabinet has authorised publication of the Strategy for engagement with the public and agreed the mechanism for final approval.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Update

15. Cabinet has noted progress implementing the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 duties placed upon Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and the publication of a new Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-25.

16. Changes introduced by the Act include introducing a broader definition of Domestic Abuse, improvements to the criminal justice processes and a range of new duties (Part iv), for Tier 1 Local Authorities (in this case WCC), requiring the Authority to provide safe accommodation and support services for victims of Domestic Abuse and their families.

17. The Council has set up a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB) to oversee the responsibilities under the Act and it must consult in relation to various functions, including assessment of need for safe accommodation and support, publishing an associated Strategy, and commissioning the accommodation and services.

18. The new Worcestershire Strategy, like those in other Local Authority areas, goes beyond just the Part iv statutory requirements and builds upon the existing countywide partnership approach to prevent and tackle domestic abuse in all its forms. The four key principles in the Strategy are Prevention, Provision, Partnership and Pursue. It has been developed with partners and places victims and their families at the centre of the approach. Whilst the intention is for them to remain in their own homes, there is provision for quality accommodation where it is not safe to do so.

Adult Social Care – Annual Local Account 2021-22

19. Adult Social Care is required to publish an annual Local Account. This is a summary of activity, setting out priorities for the service, showing how it has improved, where it needs to do better and includes feedback from people who use its services. This promotes transparency, scrutiny and accountability to adult social care service users and the public, as recipients and funders of public sector services.

20. Cabinet has received and considered the Account and endorsed the improvements Adult Social Care made in 2021/2022.

Continuing Health Care Partnership Policy

21. Cabinet has approved a revised Continuing Health Care Partnership Policy. This sets out a partnership agreement with NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Herefordshire County Council and Worcestershire County Council in its approach for the delivery of NHS Continuing Health Services for the population for whom NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group ('the CCG') is the responsible commissioner. In October 2018 the National Framework for NHS Continuing Care and NHS-funded Nursing Care *Revised* (the 'Framework') set out the principles and processes relevant to NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care and therefore the policy required updating. Adult Social Care also commissioned an independent review of Continuing Health Care and S117 funding and as a result, key areas for improvement were identified.

22. The proposed Policy has no specific or immediate resource implications for the Council but will enable it to monitor performance closely through the Partnership Board in the future.

23. Where an adult has a primary health need, the NHS is responsible for commissioning a care package that meets the individual's health and social care needs. If a person's health is deteriorating rapidly, the individual should be considered for the CHC Fast-Track pathway so that appropriate care and support can be put in place by the NHS (fully funded and usually within 48 hours).

24. CHC assessments, including Fast Track, are completed by multidisciplinary teams to make a recommendation regarding eligibility for NHS Continuing Healthcare. A person with a primary health care need who has been deemed eligible for CHC/Fast Track will receive care and support services (for both health and social care needs) fully funded by the NHS.

25. The Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of each organisation, including management of disputes, and will guide front line staff and senior officers in decision making in line with the Framework, setting out robust timescales.

Section 75 Agreement between Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG

26. Cabinet has endorsed the Section 75 document (S75), which is the funding agreement between Worcestershire County Council and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (HWCCG) and sets out the management of services funded via the Better Care Fund.

27. The Agreement had not been reviewed fully for some time and it has now been extensively reviewed to prepare for the introduction of the Integrated Care System. It will need to be updated once the new Integrated Care System comes formally into being to ensure that the governance arrangements etc fit within the new regime.

Pershore Area Review Consultation Findings and Recommendations.

28. The Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA) incorporates part of the Wychavon district, made up predominantly of small rural villages. Until 2019, the education provision in this area has followed a three-tier journey, where pupils attend first schools from the ages of 4-9 (reception to year 4), transfer to middle schools at age 9-12 (year 5 to 7), and then transfer for a final time to high school at age 12 to complete their education (year 8 to year 13). A number of changes were agreed or proposed after this, which led to uncertainty and sustainability concerns across the EPA.

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

30. Overall, respondents were in support of the proposals, with 78% agreeing and 16% disagreeing on the proposals to convert to a single tier structure in Pershore. Overall, respondents supported the quickest timescale for changes to take place, although there was some variance between school responses, therefore the overall preference cannot be viewed in isolation or used to form recommendations.

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

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

33. Discussions following the conclusion of the consultation could not confirm that sufficient funding would be available for some capital works needed at both the Academy Trusts' and Local Authority maintained schools to enable the proposed changes to meet the earliest date for change to take place in a co-ordinated way.

34. Cabinet has therefore agreed a commitment in principle to support a collective change of age range to align schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area to a single, two-tier system of education, subject to funding being fully secured. Until a collective solution for funding is identified, Cabinet cannot take proposals for Local Authority Maintained schools forward, and officers are continuing to work with all partners to find a collective solution to fund the changes required. This means that changes are likely to be made from September 2025 at the earliest.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01905 846011

Email: sjones19@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

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

Agenda and background papers for the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24 March and 21 April 2022.

[Browse meetings - Cabinet - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://moderngov.co.uk/council/cabinet/)