

**COUNCIL**  
**13 JULY 2023**

## **REPORTS OF CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY**

### **(a) CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

#### **Introduction**

1. I would like to thank Council for this opportunity to bring my second Health and Wellbeing report, following my appointment in May 2021

2. I am responsible for Public Health, which includes health improvement among both children and adults, as well as mental health, protection against infectious disease, community safety and emergency planning.

3. I also lead on our joint working with our NHS partners and, as part of that role, Chair Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board.

4. A lot has happened since my last report, starting with the appointment of Dr Lisa McNally as our new Director of Public Health back in March 2023.

5. In this period, we have enjoyed a number of high-profile achievements: Our success in increasing the uptake of cancer screening was reported on by the BBC, as was our proactive work on vaping among young people, which was covered by Breakfast TV last month. Our joint working with midwifery teams has led to a significant drop in the number of pregnant women smoking. We have seen improvements in the number of young people engaging in physical activity programmes, with four of the six most active areas in the region being right here in Worcestershire. Our work on substance misuse has delivered substantial improvements our successful engagement with those leaving prison in drug treatment programmes, stopping them falling back into addiction and crime. Our local Prevent programme, which forms part of responsibility to avoid radicalisation and terrorism, has been rated positively by the Home Office and assessed as 'strong' across all domains of work. Our extensive work aimed at combatting loneliness and social isolation was featured as a best practice example in The Municipal Journal - with recent data showing that it is having a positive impact. In fact, our area now has the second lowest rate of loneliness in the whole country. Finally, we have just heard that we have won a Public Health award for our health protection systems.

6. One common factor in all of these achievements is effective partnership. For example, I am working with Cllr Onslow, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education on a Public Health Grant scheme to enable schools to carry out innovative health and wellbeing projects. Cllr Morris, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment and I have worked together to deliver community asset based public health work in West Droitwich. Cllr Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care is a key partner in our work on falls prevention and Cllr Bayliss, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills through his work on the Crime Reduction Board, is supporting our work on community safety and the Prevent Programme. I also work closely with NHS partners and Worcestershire's crucial voluntary sector organisations. Nothing in Public Health is achieved alone and together

we become more than the sum of the parts. So, my thanks go out to all of the colleagues and partners I have mentioned.

7. In summary, Worcestershire's national reputation for Public Health work has grown significantly in the last few months. But there is so much more we can achieve and a lot more work to do as we tackle key, system wide issues. My report will now examine some of these in greater detail, starting with a description of the wider system within which we work.

## Background

8. Work to improve health in Worcestershire is overseen by our [Health and Wellbeing Board](#). While this Board is a formal committee of the local authority, it is actually a system-wide forum that brings together a range of health and care partners. The members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are set out in Figure 1.

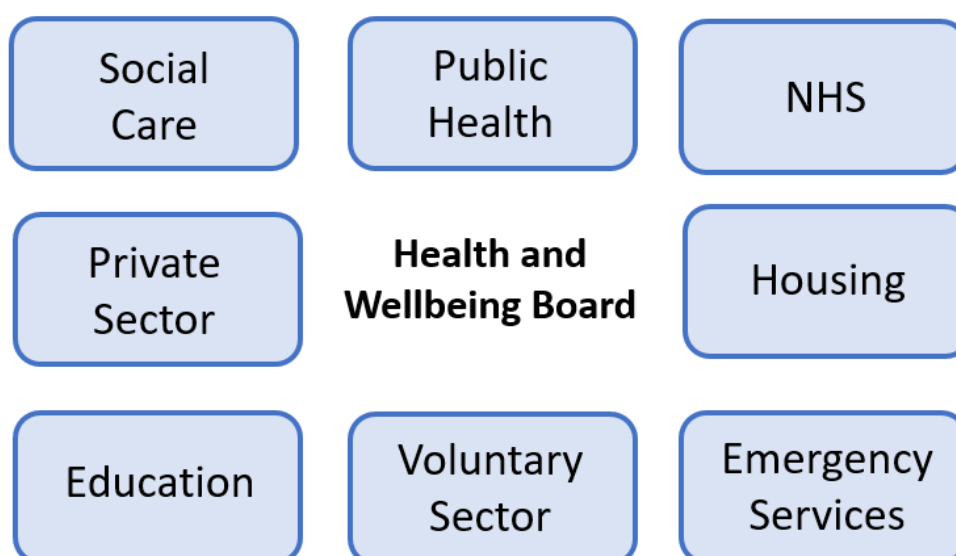


Figure 1 Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board partners

Public Health works closely with all of these partners. The team is focused on enabling people to live healthier and happier for longer. The directorate impacts all aspects of our resident's lives, from the very youngest to the oldest. The breadth of our work is set out in Figure 2 below:



9. Following a far-reaching and valuable public consultation, we were proud to launch the [Worcestershire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032](#). This is a call to action, to accelerate our efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing across the county. The strategy complements the new Herefordshire and Worcestershire [Integrated Care Strategy 2023-2033](#), and the NHS Five Year Joint Forward Plan 2023-2028 (currently in development).

10. Informed by [Worcestershire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), the Health and Wellbeing Board has focused its strategy on good mental health and wellbeing, supported by action on the wider determinants of health. The NHS Joint Forward Plan clearly demonstrates plans to address this priority, through partnership working at county and district collaborative level. NHS partners recognise the inextricable links between the diverse range of social, economic, and environmental factors influencing our health, and commit to work together across our system to address these in order to improve health outcomes.

## **Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing**

11. In general, the population of Worcestershire is healthy with many health-related measures consistently better than national average. However, there are some pockets of the county where the average masks disparities. There are continued pressures on our local health services, and as is the case nationally, an ageing population. There has been significant work in the past year to improve health outcomes for Worcestershire residents, where we both commission and collaborate with partners and communities – as demonstrated below. This preventative work seeks to reduce demand on health services, support education and the local economy.

12. Like the rest of the country, Worcestershire has an ageing population. and keeping active in later life has a significant impact on a person's ability to continue simple daily activities, reduce the risk of falls, and remain independent. Our Living Well for Longer programme provides social activities to connect communities focused on promoting strength, balance, and flexibility for those over 50 years of age.

13. Public Health delivers a range of falls prevention programmes, including structured courses led by qualified postural stability instructors, as well as the provision of free resistance bands via libraries and other locations. These have been positively evaluated and Worcestershire currently has a significantly lower rate of falls related hospital admissions than the national average. However, there can be no room for complacency given how devastating a fall can be for someone's health and independence. Therefore, we are currently reviewing falls prevention work across the wider system in order to keep improving outcomes and increasing the accessibility of services.

14. Also related to healthy ageing is participation in bowel screening for those aged 60 to 74 years. Following some successful campaigns and joint work with NHS partners, participation across Worcestershire has increased significantly. The top three rates of participation in the West Midlands were Malvern Hills, Wychavon, and Bromsgrove, achieving uptake rates of over 75% of those eligible. This is notable progress since 2021 when rates were below national average, with only 64% of those eligible being screened, rising to 73.3% in 2022, significantly above the national average. Continued positive Public Health messaging has contributed, and will continue, as we encourage everyone who is eligible to take part in this accessible screening programme that can ultimately save lives.

15. Another key determinant of health is loneliness, which can be experienced at all ages and can have a negative effective on mental and physical wellbeing. It is a major risk factor for premature mortality and has been found to increase health and social care service use or care home admission. With rates of loneliness rising nationally, this has and continues to be a priority for Worcestershire.

16. Recent data from the Active Lives Survey in England (2021/22) found that 4.7% of adults (aged 16+) in Herefordshire and Worcestershire report feeling lonely “often/ always” in comparison to the national average of 6.8%. However, we know from talking to our communities that the COVID-19 pandemic increased loneliness and isolation across all age groups but particularly in the elderly, rural and young people.

17. Community initiatives and groups can reduce loneliness, with far reaching benefits for health such as reduced medication use or fewer instances of falls. We have been working with District Collaboratives to support local initiatives and social activities across our communities. In addition, a new [The Stay Connected Pledge](#) encourages organisations to take steps to help people feel more connected. Signatories include the Chamber of Commerce, sports organisations, district councils, and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations such as Age UK, Onside Advocacy, and the Worcestershire Association of Carers.

18. Suicide prevention remains a national and local priority. The death of someone by suicide has a devastating effect on families, friends, workplaces, schools, and communities and every life lost to suicide is a tragedy. Across Herefordshire and Worcestershire there has been continued work to raise the profile of suicide prevention and encourage help seeking behaviours for all ages. The [Orange Button Community Scheme](#) trains community members to support individuals, through active listening and by providing timely information about help available, before a potential crisis point is reached. Over the past year we have also developed tailored prevention campaigns aimed at reaching the farming community, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities ([Hold Out a Hand | Travellers Times](#)), and middle aged-men ([Acting Together to Prevent Suicide campaign](#)) raising awareness of support and addressing the substantial inequalities in suicide rates for these populations. This work was shortlisted for a West Midlands Public Health Award 2023 and also, reached the final public voting stage in the Charity Film Awards 2023.

**Figure 3: Orange Button Community Scheme and suicide prevention campaign**



19. In Worcestershire we have seen improvement in important outcomes related to substance misuse, including continuity of care (which relates to our success in engaging prison leavers in substance misuse treatment). In early 2022, this was at 19% in Worcestershire, but through the efforts of our Public Health team and colleagues in Cranstoun, this is now at 46%, exceeding the national average. This is a crucial harm reduction strategy as it addresses the risk of individuals with acquired naivety to opioids suffering fatal overdose on release. This is one of our key objectives; working towards a world class system that reduces drug related deaths.

20. In relation to the health of our younger residents, Public Health is working very closely with schools and other education settings. Young people face a variety of health challenges, and we believe schools are well placed to create healthier environments within which children can thrive. To this end, I have worked with Councillor Onslow to create a Public Health grant scheme for schools, which will enable them to innovate and create new ways of improving physical or mental health within their communities.

21. Schools are increasingly forced to deal with the rise in vaping among young people and accompanying anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, illicit vapes may have higher than the legal dose of nicotine or oversized tanks, causing even more harm if smoked by under-18s. Public Health is working with Worcestershire schools and other partners to explore the messages children receive about vaping and our Trading Standards team continue to work hard to remove illegal product from the local marketplace.

22. Youth services give young people safe spaces to go and develop trusted relationships with adults that can be the difference between making positive choices and being drawn into negative situations. Last year, Public Health worked to strengthen the youth offer across Worcestershire, redesigning and recommissioning the delivery of activities and opportunities for those at greatest risk of poorer outcomes. We aim to improve access to youth services, support mental and physical health, upskill for life and work, and provide more opportunities to connect with communities. The new district-based youth offer allows services to be shaped to local need and District Youth Networks provide a more coordinated approach between providers, address local issues, and support through targeted one to one work.

23. It is also pleasing that physical activity amongst children has risen to be significantly higher than the national average. Public Health has supported initiatives such as establishing a new 'junior parkrun' in the County plus campaigns such as 'Walk this May' to encourage people of all ages across the county to be active, which contributes to both physical and mental health.

24. Public Health has been working closely with maternity services to shape and support the work of two new Public Health midwives. This work includes the ongoing development and strengthening of the antenatal and postnatal smoking services. Since April 2022, the number of women who smoke when their baby is born has fallen in Herefordshire and Worcestershire from 10.8% to 8.8%, which is just below the England average of 8.9%. Work has included a unique Stop Smoking in Pregnancy Service within Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, a team of dedicated stop-smoking advisors and free nicotine replacement therapy. In addition, we are increasing information sharing with midwives and health visitors, developing a systemwide approach to healthy weight in pregnancy, and training for midwives to have positive conversations that address health challenges in pregnancy. This focus will drive a healthier start for more babies being born in Worcestershire and impact health outcomes of their families.

25. Public Health's work under the 'Prevent' duty aims to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and support local communities and institutions to challenge and reject the message of extremism. This year, Worcestershire's annual assessment by the Home Office was deemed overall to be 'strong', exceeding expectations in most areas, with positive feedback on the programme. Within this, training has been a priority, alongside ensuring effective working of the Worcestershire Prevent Strategy Group and Channel Panel, which was observed during the Home Office review.

26. The NIMROD outbreak management system, which was developed in-house and used by our Public Health outbreak response team, won an award at the West Midlands Public Health Awards 2023. This software has now been refined for ongoing health protection management, for any infectious disease.

## **Summary**

27. Worcestershire health and care partners are making progress in delivering against our 10-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy. There is a real shared purpose to ensure good mental health and wellbeing for those who live and work in this county, with a focus on addressing health disparities and ensuring increased preventative action. Data demonstrates a move in the right direction; however, we recognise there is always more to do, and health is a long-term investment for the future population and prosperity of our residents and communities.

28. I would like to thank Dr Lisa McNally, our Director of Public Health, the extended Public Health team and Liz Altay for the time she acted as Interim Director of Public Health earlier this year. Also, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their contribution, and Health and Wellbeing Board partners and wider health colleagues for their engagement, attendance and commitment to the health and wellbeing of Worcestershire residents.

**Councillor Karen May**  
**Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health & Wellbeing**

## **(b) CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

### **Introduction**

29. As the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport, I am delighted to provide you with an update on the various developments and initiatives that are transforming our highways and transport landscape in Worcestershire. Our comprehensive approach has been carefully designed to meet the needs of our diverse community, whilst ensuring environmental sustainability remains at the forefront of our actions. From significant investment in roads and footpaths, upgrading our street lighting and traffic signals to energy saving LED, implementing the Bus Service Improvement Plan, to expanding our Demand Responsive Transport, we are dedicated to making Worcestershire more accessible for all.

30. Moreover, we are continually investing in community-focused services such as Home to School Transport and Community Transport schemes, whilst also improving Public Rights of Way and developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. These efforts are all part of our vision for an integrated, efficient, and sustainable highways and transport system that serves all our residents and visitors effectively.

31. We are also looking towards the future, developing a strategy for Electric Vehicle charging and managing our budget to accommodate the realities of inflation in the construction and highways sectors. I am excited to share with you the progress we have made so far, and the ambitious plans we have for the future of highways and transport in Worcestershire.

### **Communications with Members and the General Public**

32. In 2022 the Council introduced the Member Portal for the logging and tracking of member enquiries. The Member Portal is essentially the 'one stop shop' for all Local Member enquiries across the Council. Work to integrate this with the Highways online reporting functionality was carried out in Autumn 2022. In February 2023, a project was established to review the handling of enquiries via the Member Portal. The project initially prioritised Highways; this is the subject of most of our customers' enquiries. The project has driven further development and updates of the portal and ways of working to further improve responses for local members. This work also recognises the continued, key role of the Liaison Officers in dealing with local member matters.

33. We have listened to members' feedback and are always trying to make the system as easy and intuitive to use as we can. An example of this is that members have said that they would prefer updates to be 'pushed' through to them, rather than needing to log in to another system to check for updates – that development will be considered as part of Phase 3. The portal is a brilliant tool, keeping all Divisional issues in one place until closed, and which is accessible at any time. Highways and transport issues are often quite complex and so can remain live for a while, but they will not be lost or forgotten.

34. Additionally, as part of future developments, my aspiration is to provide easier ways to log new tickets especially from mobile devices, including the potential to enable councillors to request speed limit reviews and consideration of school streets, supported by their devolved funding packages to fund the necessary preliminary assessment work.

This approach reflects the diversity of Worcestershire's needs and empowers local members to deliver schemes in their localities based on community priorities.

35. There are now two Liaison Officers working in each district area. This strengthens our previous 'Buddy' system and means that local members will always have someone to go to, who is fully briefed on their caseload and area.

36. The Highways-on-Friday update for local members provides details of what is happening in members' divisions. Whilst the focus is predominantly on highways planned works, we have started to expand this to include updates from other service areas and links to useful sites e.g. One Network. This weekly email is a great way to keep members informed about what is happening in their divisions, and all members are encouraged to look out for them.

37. As part of our Customer Experience Programme (started October 2022), we are looking at opportunities to review and enhance the way in which customers and stakeholders interact with our services. Our vision is to improve the end-to-end customer journey and overall customer experience through improvements in self-service and reductions in manual processing and turn-around times. One workstream is the design and implementation of a digital system for managing the Parish Lengthsman Scheme. This will have significant benefits for both the County and Parish Councils.

38. The new online reporting system was introduced in August 2022. Customers can now map their enquiries and track their reports and the system can provide interim updates, particularly important where enquiries may be more complex and likely to take longer to resolve. A new telephone system was implemented in September 2022 allowing call back features and superior call monitoring. We trialled our 07:00 to 19:00 operating hours in the Highways and Transport Control Centre from January 2023. We had hoped that residents would find this useful, however the call volume during the extended hours of operation was exceptionally low. We have therefore suspended the extended hours facility for now, albeit during a severe weather event we will restart this so that we are on hand to help residents.

39. I am planning to hold 'Surgeries' starting in the Autumn in each District Area. This is a refresh of the previous Highways & Transport Briefing Sessions and members will be invited to drop in and talk about local issues or problems they are experiencing.

## **Highways**

40. Our residents continue to tell us that roads are a very high priority and so we are continuing to invest in our highways network to ensure we have some of the best roads in the country.

41. As the Highway Authority for Worcestershire, we are responsible for the highway network within the county except for the A46 Trunk Road and any Motorways which are the responsibility of National Highways. The remaining network makes up over 4,000km, of which most rural sections will have verge on each side. There are three distinct cutting requirements: Rural, Dual Carriageway and Urban.

42. This year we will be delivering £8M of footway improvement schemes across the county. In addition to the DfT funding, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) is investing further funding this year as part of a three-year commitment to improve the condition of footways throughout the county. This will see the delivery of around 275 footway

improvement schemes, utilising eight construction gangs resulting in the improvement of over 75Km footway.

43. This year we will be delivering circa £25M of carriageway improvement schemes across the county (including surface dressing). In addition to the DfT funding allocation, WCC is investing additional funding this year as part of a three-year commitment to improve the condition of carriageways throughout the county. This investment will see the delivery of more than 150 resurfacing schemes resulting in more than 40km of roads resurfaced.

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>DfT</b>	<b>21,869</b>
<b>Members Highway allocation</b>	<b>1,905</b>
<b>Capitalised former Revenue</b>	<b>7,000</b>
<b>Strategic Initiative - C/W upper</b>	<b>12,758</b>
<b>Strategic Initiative - F/W upper</b>	<b>4,469</b>
<b>Flood Mitigation</b>	<b>555</b>
<b>Highway Drainage works</b>	<b>720</b>
<b>Street Lighting Column</b>	<b>1,508</b>
<b>Street Lighting LED replacement</b>	<b>1,511</b>
<b>Small Infrastructure Projects</b>	<b>919</b>
<b>PROW</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Inflation allowance 2023/24</b>	<b>6,003</b>

44. Surface dressing is an important part of the annual carriageway maintenance programme. In the surface dressing process, hot bitumen is sprayed onto the road surface using a calibrated tanker. Chippings are then applied onto the bitumen from a metered spreader. The new surface is rolled and then swept to remove loose chippings after 24 hours, again after 48 hours, and again after seven days.

45. Surface dressing improves the skid resistance of the road surface. It seals the road surface against water ingress, preventing potholes forming. It is an extremely effective method of extending the life of the road.

46. The process is very weather dependent so the programme may be affected by spells of wet or very hot weather when it is not possible to conduct the work. The decision to proceed in weather conditions is devolved to the contractor, and if they decide to proceed it is at their risk in the event of failure, with no cost to the authority for corrective actions.

47. Our surface dressing programme started in April and is nearly complete, apart from a few remedial works. Circa £4M of the carriageway budget will be invested in surface dressing this year. This investment will see the delivery of around 180 sites and more than 200km of carriageways treated.

48. We no longer carry out surface dressing in cul-de-sacs due to the impact of low-speed manoeuvres in what is likely to be a restricted space. In extreme circumstances, small areas can be addressed through water texturing.

49. Last year, we repaired:

Potholes – <b>Carriageway defects</b>	6,224 (70% as Type 1)
Potholes - <b>Footway defects</b>	2,938 (70% as Type 1)
Defective manhole covers and gulley lids	811
Kerbing defects	1,241

N.B. Type 1 are permanent repairs and Type 2 temporary repairs.

50. Each defect is given a defect rating and a probability rating, which together provide a risk factor and corresponding response time. This ensures that defects with the greatest likelihood of an event occurring and with the greatest consequence are treated as a priority.

51. Response time categories for defects identified are:

- make safe or repair within one hour;
- make safe or repair within 24 hours;
- repair within 7 working days;
- repair within 4 weeks (28 working days).

52. Where defects with potentially serious consequences for network safety are made safe by means of temporary signing or repair, a special inspection regime is in place until a permanent repair can be made.

53. Gully cleansing and drainage repairs remain a top priority. The analysis of gully cleansing data gathered over several years has allowed the development of an optimised cleansing programme. This optimised process ensures gullies are prioritised using a risk-based approach and are cleansed as often as required. Furthermore, it ensures that gullies are not cleansed unnecessarily, making the service more efficient and cost effective.

54. This process is supplemented by our routine safety inspection protocols where our Highways Safety Inspectors may identify gullies that require cleansing earlier than historical data suggests. The cleansing frequency for these gullies can be reviewed and adjusted, with the same review being possible if gully defects are reported to us by members of the public via the Report-it system.

55. The Report-It system has been updated as a result of work by the Environment Scrutiny Panel to bring forward a live 'gully map' that enables residents to see when a gully was last attended, and what inspection cycle is currently in place.

56. All reported defects are triaged by our team of Highway Safety Inspectors and prioritised using a risk-based approach.

57. This year we will be spending £1.5M on highway drainage improvements to address more substantial and complex drainage issues. CCTV surveys are often required to establish the nature and extent of these issues and help to determine the cause of the problem and form part of the design process to develop a solution. Drainage improvement schemes can vary from quite minor repair work, root cutting and

pipe lining, to extensive system renewal or replacement, or the construction of new drainage infrastructure.

58. The drainage team also proactively seeks to recover costs from third parties for repairs to damaged systems as a result of the installation or maintenance of utility infrastructure (often a cause of broken gully connections).

### **Verges, Hedges and Grass Cutting**

59. Rural: The rural grass cutting is managed by WCC and delivered by our Highways Maintenance Service Contractor. There are normally two safety cuts during the growing season, the first being in May and the second later in the season (typically August or September) depending on growing conditions.

60. Dual Carriageway: again, this is managed by the WCC and delivered by our Highways Maintenance Service Contractor. There are two cuts to the dual carriageway network, generally following the same dates as the rural cuts. Each cut will take between 4 to 6 weeks and will require traffic management to close lanes. Where lane closures are required, the service co-ordinates any maintenance activities that can make use of this type of traffic management and additional activities are undertaken when required including; street lighting maintenance (including illuminated signs), gully emptying and road marking maintenance. We also invite District Council partners to utilise our closures to safely carry out litter picking, thus reducing interruption to the highway network and maximising value for money. An exception to the dual carriageway arrangements is in Redditch where the Borough Council conducts the cutting of their urban-based dual carriageways and around the Cloverleaf junction.

61. Urban: The six District Councils carry out urban grass cutting, usually a minimum of five cuts per season for amenity and landscaping purposes, for which WCC provides a budget. Many Parish Councils manage the seasonal growth of highways within a 30mph (or less) zone.

62. Hedges are the responsibility of the adjoining landowner and therefore, in most cases, hedges are not the responsibility of WCC. However, there are approximately 41km of hedges that WCC do cut.

63. Within the highway verge network there are 38 protected Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNR) located around the county, which are maintained by WCC's Countryside Service. These sites have been set up to protect the biodiversity (wildflowers and animals) that live and grow within the highway verges.

64. WCC and our district partners are currently engaged in a 'fair funding' review to update budgets for work such as grass cutting and sweeping.

### **Winter Maintenance**

65. There are 35 gritters in the fleet which are strategically allocated to depots around the county. The gritters have the capability to provide GPS tracking (location details) and send information on road surface temperatures. This enables the collation of data so that, for example, the discharge rate for salt can be adjusted to ensure efficient operation in small areas that may otherwise be problematic.

66. The formal "Winter Service" Period is from mid-October to mid-April each year, with monitoring of the weather beyond this to ensure any required response is provided. This season we spread circa 5,000 tonnes of salt, covering 113,000km.

67. The headline numbers are shown in the table below:

Winter period	183 days
No of standbys (where marginal or sub-zero temperatures were forecast:)	76
No of primary treatments	34
No of secondary treatments (precautionary)	20
No of snow events	1
Tonnes of salt spread across network	5,127
Salt delivered to Parishes (tonnes)	19
Salt delivered to schools (tonnes)	17

## Street Lighting

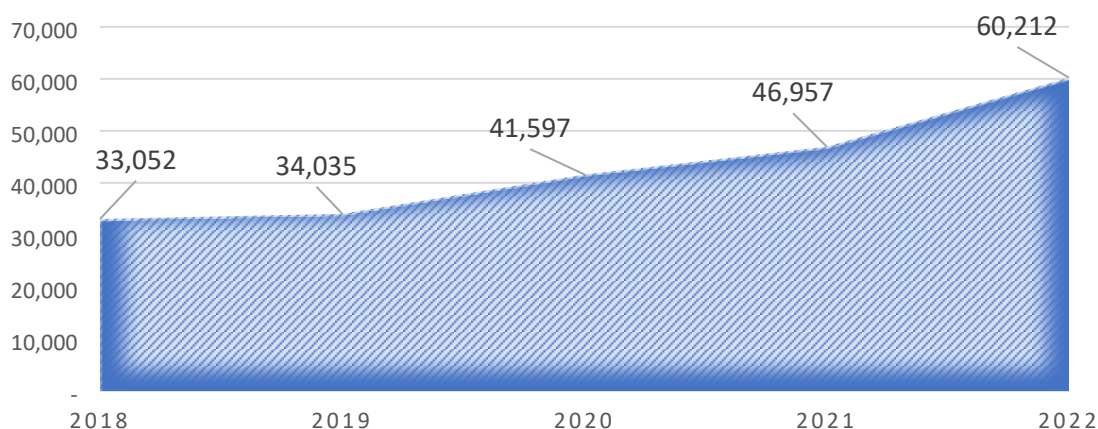
68. Following the investment agreed as part of the WCC's Highways Infrastructure Investment Fund in 2018 and subsequent further investment, 96% of the outstanding LED conversions have now been completed and the full programme is scheduled for completion in September 2023. The conversions have resulted in a 21% reduction in both carbon emissions and energy use, when compared to the previous year.

69. Where we receive queries or complaints about the LED scheme we seek to resolve them either by fitting a baffle to prevent lights shining into people's properties, or by using a bulb with a softer hue.

## Street Works

70. 2022/23 saw a rise in requests for permits and variations to work on the highway continuing the trend of year-on-year increase in road and street works activity. The reasons behind the increases include; aging utility infrastructure combined with impact of extreme weather events, development activity, WCC maintenance activity and the large scale roll out of superfast broadband infrastructure. The WCC Street Works team continues to grow to meet the demand and respond to the increased activity.

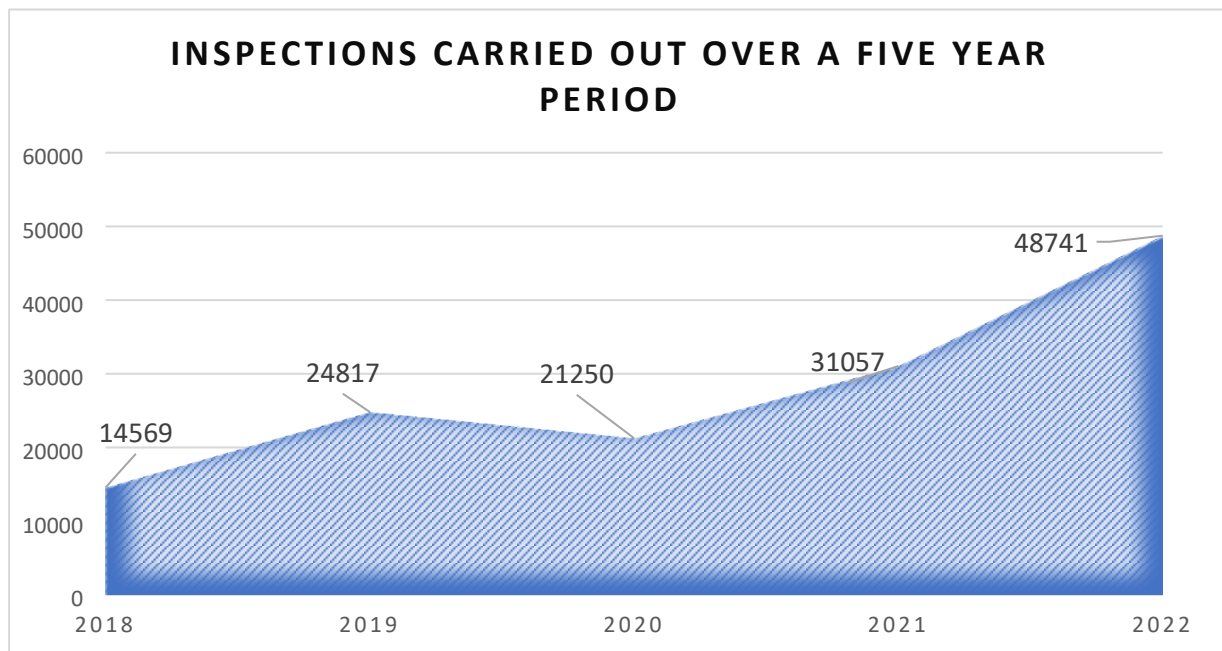
## PERMITS AND VARIATIONS CONSIDERED OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD



	Main Roads	Main Roads	Main Roads	Minor Roads
<b>Reinstatement Category of Street</b>	0,1 and 2 Heavily Trafficked	3 and 4 Lightly Trafficked	3 and 4 Lightly Trafficked	3 and 4
<b>Street designated as traffic sensitive or not</b>	All Streets	Traffic Sensitive at some times/locations	Traffic Sensitive at some times/locations	Non-Traffic Sensitive at any time or location
<b>Time and location of activity</b>	Any time location	Any part within traffic sensitive times/locations	Wholly within non traffic sensitive times/locations	Any time and location
<b>Provisional Advance Authorisation</b>	£105.00	£105.00	£73.50	£75.00
<b>Major Activities (over 10 days duration and Major activities requiring a TTRO)</b>	£240.00	£240.00	£168.00	£150.00
<b>Major Activities (4 to 10 days duration)</b>	£130.00	£130.00	£91.00	£75.00
<b>Major Activities (up to 3 days duration)</b>	£65.00	£65.00	£45.50	£45.00
<b>Minor Activities</b>	£65.00	£65.00	£45.50	£45.00
<b>Immediate Activities</b>	£60.00	£60.00	£42.00	£40.00
<b>Permit Variations</b>	£45.00	£35.00	£35.00	£35.00

71. The total income from permit fees for 2022/23 was £1.478m

72. There is a strong focus on inspections of both live works as well as the standard of reinstatement. This is an area continuing to develop in line with new legislation that came in on 1 April 2023, which includes a new performance linked inspection rate for utilities and a streamlined process for escalation of reinstatement defects. This latest change in legislation supports the DfT Street Manager system which must be used by all works promoters to apply for a permit and to provide live updates on progress. All local highway authorities must use the system to co-ordinate works, apply conditions, to generate inspection schedules and record inspections and penalty notices.



2022/23						
	Total FPN's issued	Total charge	S74(7B)	S70(6)	Regulation	Regulation 19
National Grid	328	£30,640.00	119	61	128	20
STW	1466	£132,680.00	477	206	713	70
Cadent	245	£21,140.00	85	39	114	7
BT	336	£32,100.00	56	122	137	23
Network Rail	14	£1,120.00	8	3	3	0
Virgin	49	£3,920.00	9	24	16	0
City Fibre	345	£30,460.00	33	106	193	13
Minor	552	£47,900.00	184	234	117	17
Lighting	927	£74,160.00	577	333	17	0
278/117/Signals	490	£40,880.00	460	5	16	8
Maintenance	1060	£89,200.00	903	20	117	20
<b>Total Utility</b>	<b>5812</b>	<b>£299,960.00</b>	<b>2911</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>178</b>

## Road Traffic Collision Reduction

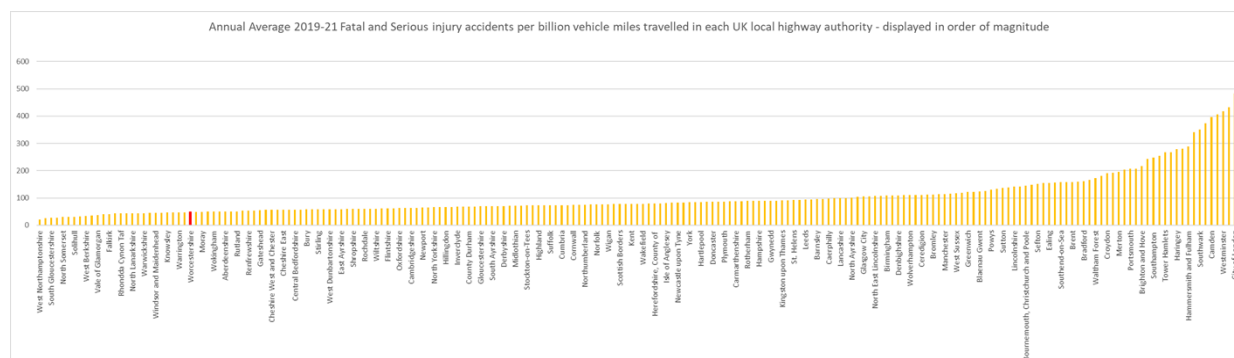
73. The road safety engineering team works in close partnership with West Mercia Police to keep the highway network safe and traffic moving by minimising the potential for road traffic collisions. Collision data analysis provides the basis for road safety engineering measures and feeds into all new and improved highway schemes and maintenance programmes. There is a dedicated programme of casualty reduction schemes to tackle the highest priority locations in the county to reduce injury collisions.

74. All highway schemes with the potential to change driver, rider and/or pedestrian behaviour are road safety audited at both design and construction stages.

75. Casualty Severity Comparison between 2017-21 average and 2022.

Casualty Severity	2017-21 Average	2022	% Difference +/-
<b>Fatal</b>	20	20	No change
<b>Serious</b>	200	204	2% increase
<b>Slight</b>	862	755	12% decrease
<b>Total</b>	1083	979	9% decrease

76. WCC is a top quartile performing local highway authority for accidents per billion and vehicle miles travelled



## Traffic Monitoring

77. The roll out of live, minute by minute, permanent traffic monitors across our strategic highway network is nearly complete including 50 additional traffic volume, speed, and classification sites and 11 strategic cycle monitoring sites. Included is a powerful analytics platform giving data trends by the minute, hour, day, week, month or year. This data feeds into Transport Planning, Development Control, Street Works permitting conditions, TRO timed restrictions and speed limits, the Asset Management Programme and the monitoring and evaluation programme for highway improvement schemes.

78. The on-highway equipment is fully solar powered which, after being trialled since 2018 across Worcester City, has proved to be very efficient and resilient in terms of data provision and maintenance.

### **Traffic Signal Control**

79. Work continues to upgrade halogen signals to LED to reduce energy consumption. 84% of our signals are now LED.

### **Worcestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) & Enhanced Partnership (EP)**

80. Worcestershire County Council has been allocated £1.43 Million for 2023-24 as part of new funding which focuses on authorities that did not benefit from previously announced allocations from the original BSIP funding. Worcestershire's BSIP highlights our commitment to improving public transport across the county that will; improve journey times, increase reliability, and provide clear and concise information to passengers.

81. Worcestershire's BSIP is highly ambitious vision for a fully integrated transport network. It is a living document which will be maintained and updated and will be delivered as further funding is identified.

82. Delivery of elements of the BSIP will be led by the Enhanced Partnership (EP) - WCC Transport Operations and Transport Operators and consultation will commence shortly.

83. The "Get Around for £2" fare scheme that capped single bus fares in England outside of London as part of Help for Households, has been extended until the end of this October. This will encourage people back on the bus by reducing the average fare by about 30%, while saving passengers money during difficult economic times especially those who need to travel longer distances by bus. This will be followed by a longer-term fare cap of £2.50 that will run from 1 November 2023 to 30 November 2024.

### **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)**

84. One critical element of Worcestershire's BSIP is the provision of alternative services such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT).

85. Bromsgrove on Demand (BoD) has been highly successful since the switch to a paid service during the last 6 months with, on average, 2600 ride requests per month, around 1300 trips taking place with 67% requesting the service "asap" and 33% pre-booking. There has been circa 2100 users who have downloaded the app. Following the successful pilot, there is now an opportunity to refresh and re-launch the service to increase demand which will be actioned over the next 3 months.

86. Following the early successes derived through the BoD, WCC has now launched a second Pilot in South Malvern for increased provision of sustainable and efficient DRT in a rural environment. The service will initially focus on South Malvern Hills (Upton/Kempsey). Unlike the BoD service it is possible for residents within this area to travel to points of interest (such as Malvern Hospital or Malvern train stations) outside of the zone. Due to the rural nature and demographics within Malvern, we will have an active

call-centre option which will be handled by the Highways & Transport Control Centre. This service commenced in June with two vehicles operated by Malvern Community Action (in conjunction with Worcester Wheels) and LMS Travel.

## **Home to School Transport**

87. There has been a sustained growth in the population, with an increase in the number of pupils with SEND. This, in turn, has increased the number of pupils eligible for travel assistance and those that have more complex needs requiring specialist provision. Subsequently, this is providing a significant challenge from a transport perspective to ensure that we can source suitable provision.

88. For Mainstream Schools there has been a trend of significant growth in applications which has resulted in an increase of 20% of passengers on contracts rising from 7,847 in July 2022 to 9,822 in January 2023.

89. There is also continued growth in contractual costs due to the impact of inflation on fuel and driver wages, and further costs because of reduced operators in the market.

90. As a result, the cost of transport provision for children and young people continues to rise. This is not unique to Worcestershire and many authorities are experiencing similar exponential growth.

91. A Corporate Transport Review has commenced, and this will continue over the next quarter. This review is required to offer assurance, both now and in the future, that these costs are appropriate, proportionate and have been mitigated as far as is reasonable.

## **Community and Voluntary Sector Transport**

92. There are 14 Community Transport (CT) schemes covering the whole of Worcestershire and providing journeys in minibuses, MPVs and volunteer-driven cars for those who cannot travel by other means. Together they provide around 100,000 journeys each year to medical appointments, hospitals, day centres, clubs and activities and for shopping. Most customers tend to be those with limited physical mobility, older people, and those who have no others who can assist.

93. It has been agreed that we will include CT information on medical appointment letters and the Community Transport website – <https://www.communitytravel.org.uk/>. This is a widely used service. Here2Help is notifying volunteers of the opportunity to drive for CT schemes and there is a recruitment drive underway for 'out of hours' drivers. All schemes have undertaken relevant risk assessments.

## **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

94. Walking brings a wealth of benefits to our health and wellbeing, and we are committed to financial investment in the Public Rights of Way service area. Some of the good work we have carried out this year includes:

- Increasing the number of our volunteer work party groups
- Launch of Volunteer Manual and refresh of our volunteer training courses

- Completion of capital projects across the county, including surfacing work on the Cotswold Way by Broadway Tower.
- Trial of PROW work associated with the Parish Lengthsman Scheme.
- Strimming of 150kms of paths last summer
- Installation of nearly 400 new signposts
- Inspection/resolution of 2,600 reported problems in the last year
- Replacement/repair of 84 footbridges.

## **Walking and Cycling - New Projects**

95. We have commenced the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for the major towns and city in the county with funding secured from Active Travel England. The plans are due for progressive completion through 2023 and 2024.

96. The following routes funded through Active Travel England have also been delivered in 2022/ 23:

- Pershore Wyre Road active travel corridor
- Redditch Arrow Valley Active Travel Network
- Worcester Diglis to Sixways canal corridor
- Stourport to Kidderminster canal corridor

97. Additional cycling infrastructure has been provided along the A4440 Southern Link Road in Worcester with the provision of new bridges for pedestrians and cyclists at Hams Way, Broomhall Way and Crookbarrow Way and an underpass at Ketch roundabout as part of the integrated improvements for walkers and cyclists.

98. We are also delivering a package of active travel routes through the county. These are identified in the table in the Appendix.

99. In addition to the major schemes outlined in 65 above, we have also delivered, or have proposed, a series of enhancements to crossing points as part of journeys to school.

100. Work has also commenced on the delivery of Kepax Bridge, Worcester, a new bridge for walkers and cyclists across the River Severn. This will link communities on the east and west banks of the river and extend the opportunities for walking and cycling for leisure or commuting in the city.

101. We have been working with Active Travel England officials to submit a plan in advance of the next assessment which is expected to take place this year. An Active Travel Stakeholder Group has been established and the first meeting took place in May 2023. This brings together a range of stakeholders to discuss active travel across the county.

## **Electric Vehicle Charging**

102. Funding has been provided from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to produce an Electric Vehicle charging strategy. It is expected that this will take approximately 12 months to produce.

## **Budget**

103. The Council will know that there has been a steep increase in inflation in general terms, but this has been heightened within the Construction and Highways sectors.

104. To help ensure the previously approved WCC additional Capital funding allocated for the carriageway and footway initiatives still achieve the anticipated results, a further £19.3m has been added to those budgets covering 2022/23 to 2024/25.

105. The DfT Maintenance allocation received an additional £3.331m in the form of an increased Pothole Action Fund.

**Mike Rouse**

**Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport**