



Members Update

Top 5

JANUARY 2021



Open for Business

Works on three proposed schemes to make improvements along the **A38 corridor in Bromsgrove** are set to go ahead, prior to the wider A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP) being delivered.

These three schemes aim to provide a high-quality walking and cycling corridor between the Artrix area and Charford Road. The works include, a new Toucan Crossing on the A4448 Stratford Road, adjacent to Blackwood Road and Fordhouse Road, a segregated footway/cycleway between Harvington Road and Charford Lane and an upgrade to the northern footpath on Charford Road between the A38 and South Bromsgrove School, which will include a new Toucan Crossing.

Works are set to start on these three schemes early in 2021 and follow completion of a dedicated right turn lane into Barley Mow Lane and works which are ongoing to improve capacity at J4 of the M5 and J1 of the M42.

Meanwhile, works on the congestion scheme at **St John's** in Worcester has recommenced with the final phase 2 works set to be completed in March.

Works have also restarted at **Sabrina Bridge** and a reopening date will be announced soon.

Works are also continuing on various sections of the major **Worcester Southern Link Road** dualling scheme, as flood water recedes from Powick Hams.



Children and Families

The County Council has welcomed the increase in **funding for Worcestershire's schools** from Central Government.

Over the last two years, funding policy has seen over £300 million allocated from Central Government to support the county's schools.

The Council has seen a significant increase in the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant, which has risen from £314.6m in 2018-19 to £369.5m for 2021-22.

The local formula will continue in Worcestershire, as required, to include the DfE's statutory Minimum Funding Levels, which are increasing in 2021-22 to £4,180 from £3,750 for primary and to £5,415 from £5,000 for secondary.

Tina Russell has been appointed Interim Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children First and Interim Director of Children's Services initially for a period of 9 months, after following all appropriate governance arrangements.

The appointment follows the recent news that Catherine Driscoll will be leaving Worcestershire early next year to become the new Director of Children's Services at Dudley.

Tina is currently Director of Social Care & Safeguarding and has delivered significant improvements in Children's Social Care since she joined us 4 years ago.

The recruitment process to appoint a permanent replacement for Catherine will begin in Summer 2021.

Health and Wellbeing



During the Covid-19 pandemic, it's been more important than ever for residents to stay in touch with their loved ones and this hasn't always been easy due to restrictions in place.

Care Homes across Worcestershire have gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure residents continue to have vital contact with their relatives. We've seen many examples of new and innovative ways of staying in touch, including garden visits, face time calls using iPads or phones and some homes have built rooms to enable visiting to take place, using Perspex screens.

As we enter lockdown, national guidance advises that visiting can still take place, as long as substantial measures such as screens or windows are in place.

Libraries across Worcestershire will continue to support residents during the lockdown by providing free access to computers and the internet for people who cannot get online at home.

A free 'Reserve and Collect' service will replace browsing and borrowing in libraries.

The mobile library service will be suspended and study desks will be unavailable until further notice. Customers will be able to return books into drop boxes at library entrances.

Due to current restrictions, customers requiring access to a computer must book in advance by calling the customer contact centre on 01905 822722 or online via www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries. To ensure customer and staff safety, all computer sessions will be reduced to 50 minute slots.

The free 'Reserve and Collect' service is available via the normal [online reservation process](#). Alternatively, customers can request items from their local library by calling the customer contact centre.

[The Digital Library Hub](#) is home to a growing collection of e books, e audio books and e magazines and a wide range of online resources available to customers from home such as Credo Reference, CoBRA and Ancestry genealogy service.

[The Digital Library Hub](#) also provides 24/7 access to a range of library services, events and activities, providing opportunities for people to connect and engage safely with others online, to help them **feel less isolated** and to **improve their wellbeing**.

As soon as it is safe, libraries will bring more services back into libraries to help residents affected by Coronavirus.

For up to date information regarding Worcestershire Libraries visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/Libraries

The Environment



16,500 LED lanterns have now been installed across Worcestershire, marking the completion of the Council's **LED street light replacement project**.

The quality of the white lighting produced by the LED luminaires provides a more controlled standard of illumination and minimal light pollution. In addition, the conversions to LED lights will result in a significant and welcome reduction in the County's energy consumption.

As part of the project, the Council has also replaced 750 concrete columns.

Street lighting upgrades also continue to be delivered as part of the Council's Major Infrastructure Projects. Lighting improvements have already been made across a number of schemes including Southern Link Road Phase 4, Churchfields, Broomhall Way footbridge, Pump Street, and Pinvin Crossroads with more to follow as other schemes progress.

In addition, lighting improvements have also been made at a number of locations where new zebra installations are being introduced.



The Council cleared nearly 60,000 **gullies** in 2020 - over half of all the gullies throughout the county!

Keeping the gullies clear is an essential part of highways maintenance and helps to ensure that the overall drainage system will not become blocked. It also helps to reduce the likelihood of flooding and helps surface water drain away quicker.

Council News Update



The Council's **winter maintenance** teams were particularly active over the Christmas and New Year period and wintry weather is set to continue so the teams will remain on high alert.

The vast majority of road closures associated with flooding have now reopened and flood defences and pumps have either been removed or are in the process of being so – nevertheless, with ground water tables at a high level, teams will remain in close contact with Environment Agency partners.

The combination of wet and wintry weather looks set to present challenges going forward which officers and contractors are ready to meet.

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Everyone at the County Council has been saddened by the recent death of **County Councillor Pattie Hill**.

Pattie joined the council in May 2013, representing Arrow Valley West (Shared) as a County Councillor. She was also Mayor of Redditch in 2015 and represented Batchley and Brockhill for Redditch Borough Council.

She worked as a police officer and for Solihull Metropolitan Council.

Our thoughts and condolences are with her husband Graham and her family and friends at this sad time.

Find out more online:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk

