

Parish Council Annual meetings.

12 month review,

County Councillor Phil Grove.

2018/2019 REVIEW

Economic Development

Work on the new **Worcestershire Parkway** Railway Station is continuing apace with external steelworks and glazing substantially completed on the station building. Currently work is concentrated on platform installation and paving the car park and the landscaping and planting around the site.

The station is set for an opening at the end of this year.

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Worcestershire has been successful in its bid for Government funding to test and explore **5G connectivity**. 5G is the next generation of mobile technology. When it becomes available in the UK, 5G is expected to have a profound impact on the way people live their lives. As many as 1.4 billion 5G connections are predicted by 2025, as well as a host of new technologies not yet imagined.

The Worcestershire 5G consortium, led by the County Council and Worcestershire LEP launched the first-ever British 5G factory trials at the Worcester Bosch factory earlier this week.

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Railway history has been made with the launch of electric trains at **Bromsgrove Station**. The first-ever electric service departed at 9.07am from platform 11a of Birmingham New Street Station on July 29, with electric train number 323202 heading to Bromsgrove. Due to this electrification there will now be up to five trains per hour to and from Birmingham New Street during peak times and between two and four trains per hour during off-peak times. This represents a major uplift in the number of trains serving Bromsgrove from 45 to

132 on weekdays.



Works are now underway on the final phase (4) of the **Worcester Southern Link Road** scheme. A security fence has been erected and vegetation is being removed on the southern side of Temeside Way between the Carrington Bridge and Powick Roundabout. The Ketch viewpoint is now temporarily closed.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The latest monitoring visit by **Ofsted Inspectors** has found that the Council has made progress in improving its services for children and young people who are at risk from sexual exploitation and those who go missing.

Inspectors described how children are proactively worked with to reduce the risk. The Council's more effective approach, said the report, had reduced the numbers of children and young people going missing.



Last year WCC's Cabinet approved recommendations for the development of a Wholly Owned Council Company as the alternative delivery model to deliver Children's Social Care.

The company name is '**Worcestershire Children First**'.

Cabinet will make a final decision around the scope and transfer of services and functions to Worcestershire Children First on 14 March and interviews are also scheduled to take place for the Chair of Worcestershire Children First and for a Director of Resources.

Over the next few weeks we will also begin the recruitment of the Non-Executive Directors (NEDS) that will sit on the company board. There will be five NEDs in total on the board, three of which will be recruited externally and the remaining two from within Worcestershire County Council: one councillor and one officer.

A phased shadow period will commence on 1 April enabling the Company Board to begin working as a team, and with representatives from the Council, to help prepare for Worcestershire Children First to go live on 1 October 2019.



Our **SEND Local Offer** website has been updated to provide easier access to information about provision within education, health and social care for children and young people who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The revamp also includes a dedicated email that people can use to contact the team directly, regarding any concerns they may have. You can view the website [here](#).



For the new school term in September 2018, 91.4% of youngsters in Worcestershire were offered a place at their first choice secondary school. For primary school, 92.5% were given a spot at their first choice school.

This was slightly up on 2017 when 92.02% were offered a place at their top choice primary school. In total, 97% of applications across Worcestershire for both primary and secondary schools were made online

HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

Adult Social Care turned 70 in 2018 and we were happy to celebrate this milestone.

We shared videos, stories and interesting facts about the history of social care and how adult social care is improving vulnerable adults' lives.

A 70th birthday card signed by members from across the Council was handed over to the Health Secretary in December. Councillor Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, and Richard Keble, the Assistant Director of Adult Services travelled down to London to personally hand the card over to Matt Hancock MP at the Department of Health and Social Care offices. The aim of the trip was to highlight that more needs to be done by Central Government to better fund adult social care in Worcestershire and across the country.



The work of an Adult's Social Care team at Worcestershire County Council was highlighted in a national report. The Young Adults Team gets a special mention in the 2017/18 Annual Report of the national Chief Social Worker for Adults, Lyn Romeo.

The team is a dedicated social work team that was set up to support transition from childhood to adulthood and minimise the stress of change for service users and their families or carers.

The case study included in Lyn Romeo's annual report showcases the work that the team does as a good example of collaboration across adult's and children's services with skilled social workers promoting great outcomes, so congratulations to all those involved.

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Worcestershire has been chosen as one of a handful of areas in England to change how we all think and act about mental health locally by becoming a Time to Change Hub.

Time to Change is a national campaign run by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness. Time to Change hubs are local partnerships which demonstrate their commitment to:

- Putting people with personal experience of mental health problems at the heart of their work
- Embedding anti-stigma and discrimination work locally, whether that be local schools, workplaces or other community settings
- Proactively campaigning to improve people's attitudes and behaviours towards mental health.

ENVIREOMENT

At the time of writing we are hoping that we have avoided any significant snow events in the county this winter. We are also seeing much higher than expected temperatures for this time of year. Our gritting teams remain on alert however ready to act as necessary if required.

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This year has seen significant investment in two schemes designed to alleviate flooding and keep key roads open. **New Road**, Worcester was raised last year and will allow the road to be operated two-way if necessary, keeping a key east-west route across the city open at times of significant flooding of the River Severn.

Similarly, works are set to be completed this spring at **Upton-upon-Severn**, where the A4104 which links the town with the strategic A38 is being raised and straightened to ensure business continuity and avoid lengthy diversions when the river is in flood.

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We held a series of events last year alongside our partners at West Mercia Police as we launched the **Roads Focus** road safety campaign.

The campaign gave residents across the county an opportunity to share their views on Worcestershire's roads and offered education on the dangers of distracted driving.

Events were held in **Wolverley, Catshill, Bishampton, Feckenham** and **Hanley Swan** and were very well attended at each venue. Professional officers from Highways were joined by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, Traffic Officers, staff from the Safer Road Partnership as well as local County, District and Parish Councillors

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Three parks managed by the County Council have been recognised by the **Green Flag Award Scheme** as some of the very best in the country. Worcester Woods Country Park, Waseley Hills Country Park, Rubery and St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve, Malvern have each been successful again in receiving Green Flag status. The international award, now into its third decade, is a sign to the public that the space boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities.

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Worcestershire County Council has been crowned Council of the Year at the **West Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards**. The Award recognises the work that has been undertaken by the Council over the last year and the financial and carbon savings that have been achieved. Several projects have helped to contribute towards saving figures including Spend to Save and the Worcestershire Energy Switch. Through implementing a spend to save plan installing energy efficiency measures, the County Council reduced gas and electricity costs for their corporate sites by £125,000 compared with the previous year.

COUNCIL UPDATE

A new approach to promoting Worcestershire regionally, nationally and internationally was launched in late 2018. The ambition is to encourage businesses, organisations and individuals from across the county to get involved by championing Worcestershire.

The plan is to attract champions from all parts of the county to join the **Worcestershire 1000**. Branding has been developed to help to promote the county. A film has been produced to showcase Worcestershire.

The County Council supports the ambition of this new approach and hopes it will help us to attract more inward investment to Worcestershire. You can find out more and watch the

promotional film by visiting the new website: www.oneworcestershire.com

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Following the commitment made by Worcestershire Leaders' Board last February to resettle up to 50 refugees via the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, WCC commissioned Refugee Action to deliver an integration and independence service for resettled refugees.

In addition to the 50 refugees that were resettled under the Scheme in 2016/17 we have since welcomed another 17 refugees to the county in 2018/19. These new families have been resettled in Bromsgrove and Malvern with a further three families, comprising 10 refugees, scheduled to arrive in March.

We are continuing to work with partners to identify further properties for resettlement, including the last remaining area Wychavon, and are currently on track to fulfil the current commitment by the end of this summer.

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Summer resident roadshows were held across the county in 2018.

These annual roadshows gave officers and councillors the opportunity to meet and speak to residents, to answer questions and to raise awareness of the services that the Council provides. Amongst matters discussed were the Council budget, active living and understanding what people like best about living in Worcestershire.

The roadshows were at **Redditch Green Fair, Bewdley Riverside Market, Tenbury Countryside Show, Worcester Show, Pershore Plum Festival and Sanders Park, Bromsgrove 50th anniversary celebrations.**

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We're delighted that the **Tour Series**, Britain's premier national cycle race series, will return to Worcestershire when Redditch hosts Round One on May 16, the eighth consecutive year that the event has been to the town.

The Redditch route in the town centre is firmly established as one of the most long-standing and favourite circuits for elite pro racing cyclists.