

LOWER BROADHEATH AND MARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

04.02.19

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

BUDGET .

At Cabinet last Thursday, the draft budget was approved, and will now go to be considered by the full Council on Thursday week, the 14th February. .

Less money is being removed from the allocation for libraries, so revisions can be made without anyone seriously worrying about closures. .

Secondly, charges for parking at Worcester Woods have been dropped. Thirdly, the cuts in the budget for the Archive service have been reduced, so that it is more certain to retain its accreditation as a suitable deposit for archive material.

All three of these areas were subject of fierce lobbying, and it is perfectly reasonable to say that this lobbying had an effect.

Council tax is scheduled to go up by 3.94%, near the maximum permitted without a referendum, but including 1% ring fenced for Adult Social Care.

Council Leader, Councillor Simon Geraghty and Chief Executive held a staff briefing last week, they reported on the projected overspend for this financial year which now stands at £3m. reduced from £17.9m which we reported in September. We continue to work to further reduce this before the end of the financial year.

The Leader talked through the proposed budget for next year which includes a series of capital investments to tackle congestion, improve town centres and to upgrade railway stations across the county.

He also gave an update on the work to redesign the Council. We are currently drawing up a detailed programme plan. The redesign is going to include a full review of our approach to a number of areas including: performance management and appraisals; values; expectations and behaviours. Staff workstreams have now been established to make sure that input from staff continues throughout this process. .

ROADS/GRITTING

The winter weather has reminded us all of the need for care in tricky conditions.

Saying that our gritting teams were on high alert last week as significant snowfall was forecast for the West Midlands. Ultimately, we did not see more than a centimetre in places, mainly across south Worcestershire, however our teams remain vigilant in monitoring the local forecasts and preparing for winter weather. Our fleet of 32 gritters based in our 6 depots across the county will continue to spread salt as necessary.

NEW BUISNESS

A leading manufacturer and supplier of products for the healthcare sector is starting 2019 on a high note after taking delivery of its new £13m headquarters at Worcester Six.

Kimal PLC is planning to move to the 140,000 sq ft. unit in February after Stoford Developments delivered the design-and-build and completed practical completion on time and budget.

The handover means the company will now begin to move 77 staff from their Droitwich into the new unit and will also retain two other centres in Bromsgrove and Uxbridge, where a further 250 staff are located.

In 2018, Stoford Developments announced that **Siemens, Spire Healthcare** and **Kohler Mira** would all be taking facilities at Worcester Six. Once fully developed, Worcester Six will provide 1.5 million sq ft. of accommodation.

SOURTHER LINK

Preparation works will begin on Temeside Way, between the Ketch and Powick Roundabouts, at the start of February, ahead of the main works starting on the final phase of the Southern Link Road scheme.

The start of this last phase of works is planned for early spring and includes a new river bridge and a viaduct and causeway stretching over 1.5km.

In early February, the County Council's contractor is to begin constructing a security fence on the southern side of Temeside Way between the Carrington Bridge and Powick Roundabout.

Temporary traffic lights will need to be in place for a lane closure whilst the fence is being installed.

At the same time as the fence installation, vegetation from the southern side of the road (on the left as you drive towards the Powick Roundabout from the Ketch) will be removed as the new two lane road will be built on this side.

This removal of vegetation is in line with the planning permission for this phase of work and needs to be completed before the bird-nesting season.

To enable the lane closure over a short distance of road, temporary traffic lights will be in operation overnight from 9pm to 5am the following morning, starting on the evening of February 5th, for up to three weeks.

Overnight closures during the first week will be on Tuesday 5th, Wednesday 6th and Thursday 7th February.

During the following weeks the works will continue nightly, starting at 9pm, on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. The latest monitoring visit to Worcestershire children's services 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.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Two years on from an Ofsted report that found that Children's Services in Worcestershire were inadequate, inspectors have completed their final monitoring visit and report that progress has been made.

Earlier this month inspectors reviewed the Council's arrangements for the protection of children and young people who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and who go missing from home or from care.

The report highlights a social media application which is now being used in Worcestershire to improve communication with children and young people.

Under direction from the Department for Education, a wholly owned council company, **Worcestershire Children First**, is currently being developed to deliver Children's Social Care Services. The company is due to be launched in October.

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES.

The Business Plan for Adult Services has been launched. The plan sets out how adult social care in Worcestershire is to be transformed over the next 3 years.

The plan sets out the essential role adult social care has to play in helping people to stay healthy and supported to live in their local community with choice and control; providing information and services to help prevent and postpone the need for care and support, and educate people about the choices they may have if they do need care; ensuring social care is responsive to residents' needs and is seamless between different parts of the system; buying and providing services that are safe and ensuring people are satisfied with the quality of their care and support.

The plan is available online at: <https://bit.ly/2Bh0yLq>