

Much Birch Parish council

Ward member report, October 2016

This decade UK government / public spending is forecast to fall by 1/5th as a % of GDP which means that there will be a profound adjustment between local authorities, the individual and the state.

Herefordshire Council's solution is to focus its endeavours on both public sector reform & economic growth – this can be a positive story!

Public sector reform – We need to change our perception from state as provider to a new deal with citizens. Our ambition is to provide the best possible care for the vulnerable be they old or young and to work with voluntary sector as much as possible (as we do locally with OWL).

We will seek to drive savings in the public sector where possible, ideas include:

Police/fire & rescue – One Herefordshire hub with a joint site and possibly multi skilled teams.

Work & pensions – Investment from DWP to integrate services and therefore better services for less.

Health – Joint commissioning of health and social care.

Education - Herefordshire Council support for university project has been crucial. Will drive ambition, skills and inward investment.

Communities – Re-balancing relationship between council and community.

Economic development - Herefordshire Council is leading economic development in the county, examples include:

Leading with the LEP – We have an excellent track record of securing funds from the LEP, the most recent growth deal includes 4 Herefordshire projects in the top 7 for the three counties.

Leading with economic plan – We will be publishing a 15 year plan focussing on major projects which will drive the county's economy, this will be for the market towns as well as Hereford.

Leading with the local plan – The bypass will allow us to deliver 16,500 new homes and will help to support 6,000 jobs, it will also deliver health and environmental benefits.

Public investment including £32M on Fastershire, £10M on the livestock market, £23M on the energy for waste plant (going live in Spring 17), over £60M on roads as part of £160M investment in the county's infrastructure.

We need to make these investments for the economic development of the county leading to better skills and better jobs and then to more business rates which are needed to support our services.

The aim of this piece is to briefly summarise our strategic direction of travel with the council driving change focussing on:

1. Reforming the public sector to deliver good, sustainable services in an era of severe cuts
2. Driving economic development & investment through strong plans
3. Recognising that public services and a strong economy are interlinked – business rates will replace central government's RSG

Trams

You may have read articles in the press suggesting that a tram system is being considered for Hereford city – this is not currently an option. Our infrastructure strategy is clearly explained at www.hereford2020.com – we are not saying that a tram could never be an option but we have to do one thing at a time and our clear priority is to deliver the bypass. When completed this will alleviate many of the worst traffic delays for people from this area either getting into Hereford or wanting to bypass the city.

New logo for Herefordshire Council

There has been some comment in the press and on social media suggesting that Herefordshire Council has wasted considerable sums on a new logo. The facts are as follows:

- We are re-designing the council website as the existing site is no longer up to scratch
- The new site which goes live this winter will make it easier for more residents to find what they are looking for and transact online. By helping people to go online Herefordshire Council will save money on customer services.
- The 'new' logo is the familiar apple but has changed from a green apple to a black apple!
- The work was done in house and will save on printing costs.
- The new branding will therefore save us money rather than waste money as has been suggested in some local publications!

Pest control

I recently went out for the day with Herefordshire Council's pest control service and can vouch for the fact that they offer a first class service. Details are available online.

University

Herefordshire Council has been heavily involved in writing the business case for the proposed NMITE university in town, as Cabinet member for the Economy I have attended the regular meetings and can report encouraging progress. We expect to have feedback from Westminster before Christmas.