

Much Birch Parish council

Ward member report, January 2018

I've been off for a couple of weeks now which has given me time to reflect on our recent achievements. It is easy to forget all the good things that have been happening so please take time to work through these bullet points and see what you think:

Our Economy, Corporate and Communities' Services

- In financial management, the council is on target to reduce expenditure by the equivalent of £97 mill by 2020.
- This is historically one of the greatest challenges for local authorities across the UK
- Herefordshire Council's delivery on these most challenging goals, described by the external auditor in 2017 as a "fantastic achievement"
- Plans for a new city bypass – ending 40 years of debate.
- £47mill funding through the LEP, enabling the link road stages to commence.
- City link built on time, on budget.
- Southern link road now being scheduled.
- A major new retail centre, Old Market, the 5th fastest rising in the UK.
- 4 of the regional LEP's top 6 business cases for future growth bid funding.
- Energy-from-Waste plant, built in partnership with Worcestershire, on time, on budget.
- All residual household waste now mainly converted to energy, rather than taken to land-fill.
- Plans developed with Police, Fire and Rescue for a new One Herefordshire Hub.
- Integrated services with the DWP, deliver better services to residents in one place.
- Public realm improvements being delivered to Hereford centre, with plans to continue through High Town.
- A successful new relationship with Balfour Beatty/ BBLP maintaining and improving our road network.
- Successfully bid for £5mill of national road improvement 'pot', with major road improvement programme moved forward from Sept'17.
- Filled over 250,000 pot-holes across the county.
- Resurfaced 328 miles of county roads – 19% of entire network.
- Won most improved Council award for road network, at the LGA awards.
- Rolling out Fastershire broadband to over 80% of county.
- Core Strategy and LTP adopted – setting out the framework for economic growth.
- Sold over 50 buildings/sites, moved towards sustainable council accommodation at much lower cost.
- Enterprise zone established, now a highly successful development.
- Successful government award of £2.8mill for new Centre for Cyber Security in the Enterprise Zone.
- Joint University Development Board of council and external lead partner, produced Business Case for new university.
- Now awarded £23mill funding from government, for the first new university in 21 years in England.
- Launched Economic Vision, with Invest Herefordshire, spearheading drive for inward investment.
- Success in major legal cases, including Amey, of high value to the council and residents.
- HARC - Investment by the authority in purpose built archive and record centre.
- Brings archive, archaeology unit, historic environment record, biological records and land searches together in one building.
- Masters House in Ledbury: Restoration, development as a historic building in Ledbury.
- Created a multi-use centre of activity: Winner of regional RIBA award for 2016.
- Replacement Street Lights - completed replacement of all 12,000 street lights, now LED.
- Digital adoption – services available on-line as convenient, cost effective way for residents/ businesses to access services.

- Includes payments on-line - 24/7.
- New website launched to increase ease of access for residents – easier functionality, navigation. Won a national award.
- Libraries - retained the county network, investing in self-serve and with new models of delivery including community run libraries.
- Awarded £335,000 for one Public Estate bid, 2017.
- Successful joint bid (EEC and AWB) from Herefordshire and Northamptonshire for £796,000 to support Aged Veterans and their families.

Our Children's Wellbeing Services

- Helped to keep thousands of children, and young adults safe – around 750 children every single day of the year.
- Around 300 children kept safe in our Looked After system.
- Since Ofsted removed council from special measures in 2014, the council has made Children's Wellbeing our highest priority.
- We have monitored progress through peer reviews, showing improvements, positive direction and ambition for our services.
- Positive Ofsted inspection of Adult & Community Learning in 2016.
- 2016 Ofsted inspection for Special Educational Needs and Children with Disabilities – very positive.
- Supported 3 year rise in pupil attainment across all Key Stages: Herefordshire now above the England average – we were below it.
- Early years' outcomes for children have improved from among the lowest in England, to the top quartile.
- Established school capital investment strategy - £100m public/private investment over 20 years, securing £8m within the first year.
- Sharing funding of new school build with the Education Funding Agency which frees up monies for other developments.
- Built new school at Colwall Primary, in record time against urgent need – and received our full capital bid from DfE for £3.2mill.
- Developed New Horizons to enable young adults with learning disabilities to stay in Herefordshire to build their independence rather than have to go to out of county residential colleges
- Developed with Action for Children an intensive placement support service to reduce the need for children with complex care needs to be placed in out of county residential provision
- Increased the number of local foster carers by 9%, against a national backdrop of reducing numbers
- Reduced agency staffing in last year by 50% - and in last 3 years from 60 to 16 in children's social care. Around 85% of staff now permanent.
- Collaboration with Design Council on service development with communities.
- Introduction of first Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub in West Mercia.
- Development of new approach to provide housing for vulnerable young adults.
- Commitment to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children despite wider financial pressures.
- Reduction in number of children at risk of significant harm within the county.
- Development of family based short breaks for children with a disability to give parents more choice.

Our Adults' Wellbeing Services

- Helped to keep thousands of vulnerable older people and people with learning disabilities safe and well.
- We support around 3,000 older citizens every day of the year.
- In national social care quality of life survey, we're now fifth best in England.
- Overall client satisfaction greatly improved and we've jumped to fourteenth out of all of England's 152 top tier local councils.
- Now in top half of English councils in 73% of national adult social care outcomes measures, top quartile for 36% - a huge step forward.
- We achieved the nationally highest specific target for reduction in Delayed Transfer of Care.

- Our direct payment rates have jumped from 23% in 2014/15 to 33% in 2015/16, an improvement which makes us 43rd nationally.
- Our permanent admissions into residential and nursing care for clients aged 65 and over drastically fell from 655 in 2014/15 to 416 in 2015/16, an improvement which moved us to 18th nationally.
- Trusted Care's recent national review of CQC rated care homes has ranked Herefordshire as having the highest average rating in England.
- Successful re-establishment of the council as commissioner of adult social care, building a modern social work approach, with staff back from the NHS in 2013.
- This set us in a direction of controlling delivery of our core services and a determination to keep getting better at it.
- Reduction in spend of around 9%, despite pressure from demographic trends/ increasing unit costs delivering care (nat living wage, stakeholder pensions etc)
- Smooth pick up of responsibility for Health Visiting, School Nursing from NHS
- Approval of a new housing strategy and housing allocations policy, in a context of major national system change
- Development of a new blueprint for social care, transforming our relationship with service users, providers, and VCS stakeholders
- Conversion of telecare from a service cost serving a small number, to a self-funding service supporting a large number of vulnerable people
- Peer Review 2014, with clear conclusions that directorate is improving and on right trajectory.
- Transforming culture of social care both in the council and in the community.
- Playing leading role in developing an influential new relationship with the NHS in Herefordshire.
- Council successfully taken on all public health functions transferred to it in 2013, including the Health Visiting service in 2016.
- Childhood immunisation rates at herd immunity levels of 95% coverage for all programmes, reducing risk of serious illness to local children.
- Joint work is under way with local businesses to improve the health and wellbeing of employees.
- Health care associated infections at lowest levels in hospital/ community settings through joint work of AWB, NHS and public health.
- The County was chosen as a national pilot site for diabetes prevention programme that is funded by the Department of Health.
- Herefordshire is rated as having one of the lowest rates in the country for premature death rates.