

CLIFTON UPON TEME PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

05.09.19

COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

1. Council Affairs

At Cabinet today, we approved two matters of countywide importance. The first established how Worcestershire Children First (WCF) will be brought into being on October 1st. This is the wholly owned company of the county council that will look after all our children's services and education matters that are determined by the council.

Full details can be found on the council's website, but suffice to say at this stage that our most recent Ofsted inspection has demonstrated that our children's safeguarding activities have continued to improve. So they are now rated "requires improvement to be good". While WCF will continue in existence for probably 5 years, we anticipate that the service may come out of intervention in the near future.

The company will have a budget in excess of £110 million a year, and will carry our vital work with the 800 or so children taken into council care. It will remain under the supervision and scrutiny of the County Council officers and Cabinet

The other matter approved is an organisational redesign of the top three tiers of management of the County. These consist of the Chief Executive at tier 1, four strategic directors at tier 2, and thirteen assistant directors at tier 3. This will mean a saving of two posts and should make the policy forming area of the county council structure more effective and efficient.

There will then be further reorganisation at the lower tiers of management and activity, resulting in further savings and greater effectiveness.

In these circumstances, I would be very pleased to hear of any experiences of residents who have dealings with the council, so that I can know of both good and bad outcomes. The intention would be to seek ways of improving the good and eliminating the bad. Your cooperation would be welcomed.

2. Local matters

I am acutely aware of the poor broadband speeds suffered some residents in remoter parishes. Our officers are working hard with BT Openreach to ensure good coverage for the whole county and progress is being made. I am sure we all realise that there are competing claims across the country for the limited resources available to install the necessary infrastructure.

Nevertheless, I think that our performance so far has been among the best in the country. The Prime Minister's announcement of an accelerated timetable for the provision of fibre to the premises is welcome, but will require much greater resources being made available. In these circumstances, I am very keen that Worcestershire should be near the front of the queue for the extra effort.

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