

### **Additional money from Rural Services Delivery Grant**

Herefordshire Council will receive an extra £1.6 million next year in the Local Government Finance Settlement, which is much needed and will help Herefordshire Council deliver rural services and Adult Social Care in our County. The Rural Services Delivery Grant is a pool of money which is provided to the most rural and sparsely populated local authorities in order to help face the challenges of delivering vital services to large, less well connected areas.

Bill Wiggin reports that he discussed with Ministers the difficulties faced by a rural local authority in providing services to all areas of our extremely rural and sparsely populated County, and they have listened and increased the amount of overall funding for the Rural Services Delivery Grant by £16 million across the whole of the UK. I am delighted that we in Herefordshire will receive £1 million of this extra funding. In addition, the Government has provided for £0.6 million extra for Herefordshire's increased Adult Social Care needs."

### **Peer challenges feedback**

Herefordshire Council commissioned a Peer Challenge from the Local Government Association to get an independent consideration of how they are performing. A Peer challenge is a proven tool for improvement. It is a process commissioned by a council and involves a small team of local government officers and councillors spending time at the council as peers to provide challenge and share learning.

The principle of independent scrutiny has received high levels of support from councils who overwhelmingly endorse the key principles on which it is based:

- councils are responsible for their own performance
- stronger local accountability leads to further improvement
- councils have a sense of collective responsibility for performance in the sector as a whole
- the role of the Local Government Association (LGA) is to help councils by providing the necessary support.

For a week officers and a chief executive from others authorities carried out the review. They interviewed members of the cabinet, the chief executive and senior officers. The report may be found at:

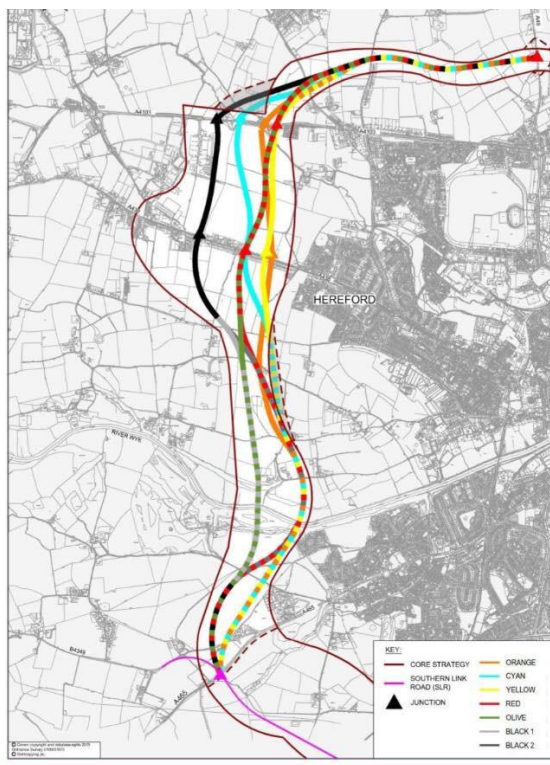
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13362/peer\\_challenge\\_2018](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13362/peer_challenge_2018)

### **Herefordshire Council Meeting & new Leader.**

The Council will formally set the Budget and precept for the next financial year at its meeting on 9th March and the bills will go out later in the month. As I outlined in last month's update Herefordshire Council's share will increase by 4.9% including a 2% social care charge. The bill will thus include the West Mercia Police, Fire and Parish precepts.

At the same meeting Cllr Tony Johnson will be standing down as the Leader of the Council. Tony from Colwall has been Leader for nearly five years and has lead the council through some difficult budget reductions. The nomination to replace him is Cllr Jonathan Lester. Jonathan was elected to Bromyard Town Council 20 years ago and to HCC in 2011 and has been cabinet member for Children's services. He is 45 years old, married with one daughter and works for Worcester City Council.

## Hereford Bypass



As reported last month but I urge you to add your voice to the debate – do you want a bypass for Hereford or not? The consultation continues on the proposed routes at the County Library in Broad street Hereford till 20th March and online. In the meantime the opposition from locals affected by the routing is understandably strong. If you have driven down the Kings Arce road you will see the various coloured ribbons on the trees denoting where the road would cross.

If you consider that Hereford needs a bypass then now is the time to speak up or another 30 years will go by. Go and registered your preferred route and in particular your strong support for the by-pass. The proposal is in the Core Planning strategy therefore the route will be protected in law. Like all cities Hereford will grow in the future and the traffic situation will only get worse unless we tackle this issue.

I have always supported the building of a bypass for Hereford. Herefordshire has the support of the Welsh Assembly and the leaders of the neighbouring Welsh

and English authorities.

The routes cross the river between Clechonger and Belmont, pass Breinton through Kings Arce road, go by the new Livestock Market before turning east to go back to A49, north of the new large housing development opposite the racecourse.

### **Adverse and extreme weather conditions**

There was some warning of the coming of the Beast from the East to enable additional provisions etc. to be brought in but this did not lessen the impact when it arrived – with storm Emma. Our teams have treated the priority network, working back to back to enable to us to deliver gritting/ snow clearance on a continual basis. Over the days we experienced difficult conditions, with a combination of high winds and heavy snow. This created problems across the network, particularly in more exposed areas where we have had reports from drivers of 7-8 foot snow drifts. Many parts of the network, in particular the C&U road network and much of the B road network, remain impassable or only with extreme care/ 4x4.

Our snow contractors were fully mobilised on the network with good coverage across the whole of the county. They were, in many places, supporting our teams with freeing up the ‘A’ road network. We had snow contractors and our own teams working hard to clear the road.

Most of Old Gore rural ward areas was cut off in the snow and extreme weather, as was I, and as was the whole of the rural areas of Herefordshire, which did encounter some of the most extreme weather, as reported by Sky News. Additionally, our thanks go to the army of snow contractors, farmers and local people who stepped up and helped where they could and our more vulnerable people being looked over by their neighbours.

Despite this extreme and cold weather let's hope Spring is just around the corner as clearly our roads have suffered this winter, and you will see in the update some of the struggles I have been involved with to get some action.

### **Green light for Ross Enterprise Park**

Work on the Model Farm Enterprise Park in Ross-on-Wye is set to start within the year, following today's planning application approval (Wednesday 21 February 2018) by Herefordshire Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee.

The 15 hectare site, positioned to the east of Ross-on-Wye in the Hildersley area, will provide up to 300,000 square feet of new commercial floor space and up to 1,000 jobs. The business park is also situated next to excellent road links, including immediate access to the M50 and the A449 which links to the nearby M4 corridor.

The hybrid planning application approved by the planning committee includes full plans for the access, drainage, landscaping and internal roads. Outline consent is also provided for a number of indicative plot areas that will be suitable for general and light industrial units and offices, with some limited scope for storage and distribution uses.

The planning approval follows the council's allocation of £7m funding in the capital programme, agreed by Full Council on 26 January 2018.

### **£887,000 deal will bring faster broadband to thousands more homes and businesses in Hereford**

Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council have awarded a contract to BT Group to deliver phase two of the Fastershire broadband rollout in parts of Hereford.

The £887,000 deal, which includes around £218,000 from Herefordshire Council and the Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) programme and more than £668,000 from BT Group, will see around 2200 further homes and businesses be able to benefit from superfast fibre broadband by the end of 2019.

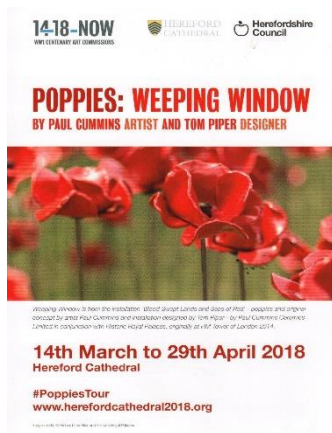
The upgrades will be carried out by engineers from Openreach, the business responsible for Britain's largest telephone and broadband network.

Phase two of the Fastershire project is building on the phase 1 rollout, also delivered by BT Group, which has already given around 35000 premises in Herefordshire access to faster broadband speeds over 30Mbps.

Further contracts to cover other parts of Herefordshire under phase 2 have been awarded to Gigaclear, which will deliver ultrafast broadband to nearly 8000 additional homes and businesses by 2020.

Residents can use the address checker on [www.fastershire.com](http://www.fastershire.com) to check faster broadband availability for their property.

## Weeping Poppies – Hereford Cathedral



Don't forget that the poppies weeping window arrives at Hereford Cathedral from 14th March to 29th April.

### News from the parishes.

To date of this monthly report I have not received any local parish information; therefore, with this monthly report there is no news from the parishes. However, I shall continue to be available for news from each parish and will publish it with my broader ranging monthly report.

### Report it

Please note that Herefordshire Council strongly encourages Balfour Beatty to promote all service requests and queries should be logged via the HC website at

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole> or call through to the call handling team on 01432 261800.

Please use the website or call the customer services call handling team. This will help ensure that everything is logged in to the operating system known as CONFIRM where it can be responded to in a timely way.

For any PROW (Public Rights of Way) maps or problems, you can report these via the following link on the Herefordshire Council's website:

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel\\_and\\_transport/248/public\\_rights\\_of\\_way\\_map](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/248/public_rights_of_way_map)

You can search for PROW information on the map using: - Footpath references, Postcodes, Addresses and Grid References e.g. 354000 254000

Barry Durkin

**Cabinet Member – Transport and Regulatory Services**

**Old Gore Ward**

February 2018