

April Ward Report – Old Gore Ward

Parishes of: Brampton Abbots with Sollers Hope and Yatton, Brockhampton with Much Fawley, Foy (East), Foy (West), How Caple, Kings Caple, Much Marcle, Upton Bishop and Woolhope

From your local County Councillor: Barry Durkin

bdurkin@herefordshire.gov.uk

Dear Residents

I hope you are having a good Easter. We have had a mild but very wet winter with a big impact on our highways leaving potholes, section failings, verges badly damaged and ditches pushed in. So much of my caseload time is spent on highway maintenance issues particularly the delay in and quality of repairing potholes. With over 2,000 miles of highway and large number of heavy traffic it will never be easy for us to get on top of the issue with limited resources. The Government has announced an extra 106 million for resurfacing over the next eight years and we will need to have to ensure that the funding is spent well and to improved standards. This is my first ward report for a year due to my protracted illness and hopefully my recovery continues and I shall be back to full repair in the not too distant future. I wanted with this ward report to thank all my colleagues and friends who have given me positive messages and been there for me – Thank You all!

Home Energy Savers



Thinking about doing some changes, improvements or renovations to your home this summer? Want to bring down your heating bills but not sure which improvements would be best for your home? Home Energy Savers can help! Get set for next winter with Home Energy Savers

This new support scheme will deliver a free home survey and a comprehensive improvement plan for your home. You can then chose which measures to install that suit your budget.

The free survey is provided with no obligation to proceed, but if you do wish to upgrade the energy efficiency of your home, there is also funding that will contribute towards the overall cost. The initiative is available across Herefordshire and is targeting households with an income above £36,000 per annum. These households are usually not eligible for other support. Call the YES team at Keep

Herefordshire Warm on Freephone number

0800 677 1432 available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm or visit or

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing-3/home-energy/3>

Herefordshire Children's Services

Ofsted's fourth monitoring visit since Herefordshire Children's Services were judged inadequate in July 2022 focused on older young people in care aged 16 and 17 and care leavers aged 18 to 25.

Whilst there were some positive findings, overall the content of the report is disappointing. The Inspectors acknowledged that improvements continue to be made at the service, but the pace of change needs to improve and that the quality of service remains inconsistent.

The Director of Children's services has left the Council and a new Director of Children's services will be appointed with interim arrangements in hand. . A revised Improvement Plan will be tabled at the cabinet meeting on 25 April. The speed of our improvements must increase and ensure the quality of our services are consistent throughout. We are continuing to work in partnership with Leeds Council children team and with the Children's Commissioner.

It remain the number one priority for the council to improve the service and the life chances of some of our most vulnerable people.

Renewal of BIN Contract

I was pleased to see the award of the **Recyclables and Waste Collection Contract to FCC Environment**, our existing contractors, following a thorough and robust procurement process was announced.



As an elected member I get very view complaints about the waste collection contract and I am confident they'll continue to provide an excellent service of alternative green or black weekly collections. All the contents of the black bins goes to the incinerator at Hartlebury in Worcestershire where it is burnt to generate electricity with the small residue deposited in landfill. The green bin waste is sent to the recycling plant next to the Worcestershire Parkway railway station.

The new contract, which starts on 1 September for an initial term of eight years, represents continuity of service for residents and businesses. Although there won't be any changes to collections initially, the new arrangements include a number of innovations, enhancements and the flexibility to respond to changes over the term of the contract.

This includes the introduction of two fully electric collection vehicles primarily to serve Hereford City Centre, which is a step towards the Council and FCC's Net Zero goal.

Future building development

The Council is currently consulting on the next Core Planning Strategy which will determine where house building will be allowed up to 2041.

In the planned twenty year period 5,320 houses will be built outside the City and market towns in rural areas - with 2,311 already granted awaiting construction.

Effectively outside designated villages the whole of the remaining parishes are designated as open countryside which means development is strictly limited to conversions of existing structures or Agricultural/ business dwellings subject to financial and function tests. The consultation proposals probably mean the lowest level of house building in our rural areas since 1945.

I have concerns about meeting the needs of the economically active particularly in a low wage economy like Herefordshire, and the need for more housing to address our aging population. After the consultation and as the plan starts to mature where development has been identified then the Neighbourhood Plans will need to be renewed with clear local engagement on where and what limited housing should take place. Until the new plan reaches significant maturity probably mid 2025 at the earliest, the existing plan remains the important legal document to determine planning applications alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and Neighbourhood Plans.

Details found on council website [Draft Herefordshire Local Plan \(Regulation 18\) consultation – Herefordshire Consultations](#)

Mural painting in Hereford

There have been some eight Murals painted on buildings in Hereford City. Below are two of them. Whether you approve or not it must be acknowledged the skill and indeed artistry that these painters possess.



New Road Strategy for Hereford City.

A new road strategy for Hereford, including the recommendation to prioritise the progress of the development of a bypass to the west of Hereford, was agreed by Herefordshire Cabinet last month. As outlined in the Core Strategy and emerging draft Local Plan, the county needs to develop the infrastructure needed to:

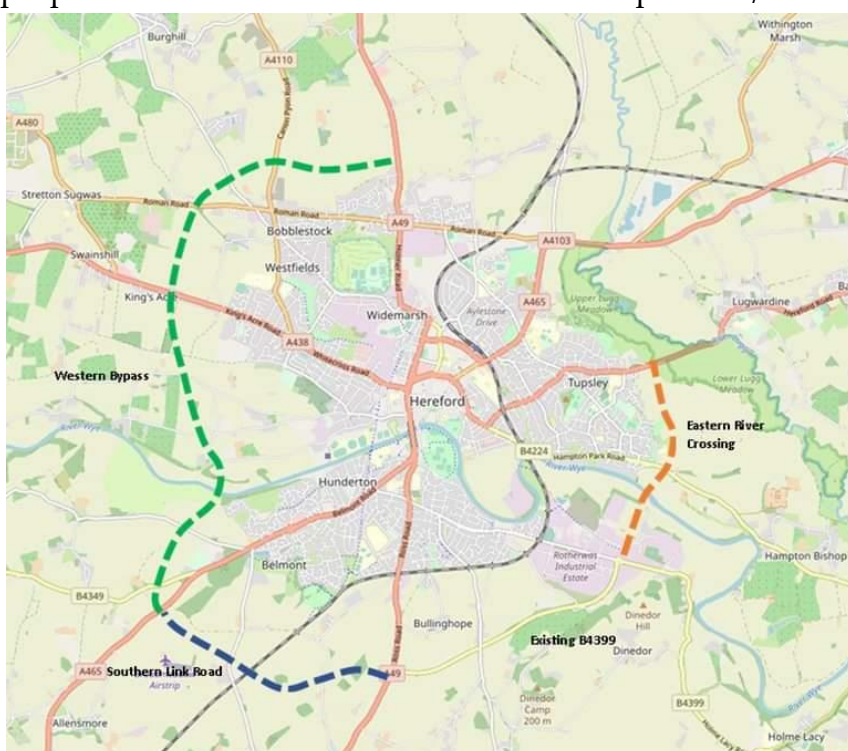
- Support growth in the county - There is a requirement to develop around 16,100 new homes in the county by 2041, with many of these being planned for Hereford. Delivering all these new homes is not possible without strengthening our local infrastructure. Reducing congestion and improving journey times will be a boost to local businesses and improve residents' access to work, education, training and services.
- Improve transport connections and strengthen the resilience of the network – Vehicles travelling north to south through the county mostly go through Hereford to cross the river. Creating another road bridge across the River Wye will reduce reliance on Greyfriars Bridge and the A49 through the city, improving journey times and improving resilience of the network.
- Promote better health and wellbeing for our residents – reducing the volume of traffic on roads in the City creates the opportunity to deliver improvements to walking, cycling and public space in the city.
- Improve local air quality and public places – reducing congestion will help improve air quality in the City making it a cleaner more attractive place to visit and spend time.

Following meetings with our Council Leader Jonathan Lester and our MP Bill Wiggin with the Minster for Roads Guy Opperman MP another 100 million is coming to Herefordshire for capital road building.

This will allow the reinstatement of the City southern link road from A49 to the A465 which was cancelled by the previous council administration even though the planning permission and funding had been secured. They sold the compulsory purchased land back in 2022 and so now this land will have to be re purchased. In 2019 150 metres of the highway was activated before the then administration cancelled the project meaning that planning permission is still valid.

This will then open up the next stage for a western bypass of the city. Hereford is due to have a large number of more homes built over the next twenty years and building a bypass/relief road will allow better movement of traffic in the city. The consultation on the plan is also on the council`s website.

Herefordians will know this is a long discussed topic complicated by debates on if we should go west or east. The fact is Hereford with a population of 60,000 and the main service centre for the county and should have had a bypass decades ago. Congestion, delay, inappropriate use of alternative roads, poor air quality, cost to the economy, environment and wellbeing of the County are consequences of the lack of proper infrastructure. In 2020 under the Independent/Green administration the



project was dropped and is now being reinstated – the coming general election will be an opportunity for candidates to be straight with the population on where they stand on this issue. The projected plans are part of a range of policies outlined in the Transport consultation.

Picture left: Blue line – southern link road: Green line -Western bypass orange line – eastern half route.

Kind Regards

Barry

The new General data protection regulations (GDPR) that supersede the Data Protection act, came into force on the 25th May 2018 and places obligations and responsibilities on any company, organisation and individual who holds and process personnel information. I make this statement that I hold a list of emails of local people that I have built up over the years which I retain and use. In seeking legal compliance I am requesting that if anyone is unhappy with me holding your email contact please advise me and I will remove you from the list. Otherwise I will retain your email contact and continue to send you monthly updates and occasional key information