

Charlton - Cllr ELIZABETH EYRE County Council Report January 2025

Structural Change

16 December 2024, the Government wrote to Local Authorities outlining the English Devolution White Paper and the Government's ambition. The Government signalled the end of two-tier governance in the English Devolution White Paper. This is not optional; the Government could not be clearer.

District and County Councils are to be abolished. This is not a consultation.

The criteria set out by the Government identifies the viable size of a unitary, to ensure a sustainable future, as around 550,000 residents.

Over 80% of the total local authority spend is already at a County-wide level. Worcestershire County Council delivers key services such as Children's & Adults' Social Care, Education, Highways and waste disposal. Disaggregating these would negate any economies of scale looked for by the government, add to complexity and cost, and reduce the impact of service.

A Unitary appears to be only a building block. Once a unitary is established, a second stage is suggested by the Government: the creation of a Strategic Authority (around 1.5 million residents) with a mayoral lead "to ensure our residents benefit from devolution." We have also begun engagement with partners, including discussions with potential Strategic Authority partners.

WCC have requested the Government postpone the elections, scheduled for May, as it is of the opinion that it would not be in the public interest to hold elections, which incur significant costs, to elect members to a body, where the main agenda item is to abolish that body.

I understand WCC was given 10 working days to respond. County and Districts are required to move to a Unitary structure in a relatively short timescale. WCC will now focus on working with partners and stakeholders to work up proposals to implement the change.

A full submission is to be made, at pace, by March 2025.

The ambitious timescale seeks a new "shadow authority" by May 2026 and for all the current councils in Worcestershire to end in 2027. This timescale will shorten the period of instability and disruption for our staff, partners, residents, and stakeholders.

On the matter of the Budget, WCC will get a one-year settlement. This year's settlement is dire, it gives us nothing from the recovery fund – no County Council is getting resources, resources are being directed to Mets and Urban areas.

Local Issues

For information – relate to your neighbour Crophorne.

Proposed development of three sites in Middle Lane / Field Barn Lane: discussions on going on re traffic, no place for pedestrians along FBL, lack of bus services and access to a bus service for older residents, need for improved passing places along FBL mitigation measures if the proposal was to come forward. May impact Charlton residents.

Enquiry 773 Crophorne /Charlton Cemetery Bridge to Jubilee Bridge – due to the cost the Charlton Bridge to Jubilee Bridge road collapse issue which is not easy to fix will be a 2025/6 resolution per BB.

Enquiry 3204 - Field Barn Lane passing places – 2 are WCC, rest informal due to need especially when flooding, requested 2 more. This is linked to **Enquiry 7480 Orchard Row** - the creation of a passing place for safety reasons and the discussions re the development of sites in Crophorne.

Looked at the B4084 near Haselor Lane and the route more widely between Crophorne and Hampton. The PIA records show 2 KSI and 1 slight injury in the past 3 years. One, as we know, was the tragic death of a pedestrian. The other 2 were attributed to poor turning manoeuvres at Haselor Lane (1 right turn in and 1 right turn out). Excess speed was not deemed a significant contributory factor in any of the accidents.

Based on current Department for Transport criteria/guidance, the rural road network should be subject to a national speed limit. Within that, highway authorities should highlight specific hazards with the use of traffic signs and road markings to influence driver behaviour. This is considered to be the best way to alert motorists to isolated hazards rather than a blanket speed limit, which if inappropriate will quickly fall into disrepute and potentially create other issues such as erratic overtaking etc.

In view of the above, and in accordance with previous reviews, the B4084 at this location would not meet current DfT criteria for a reduced speed limit, as requested by Crophorne. I've also discussed the matter with the Road Safety Team at West Mercia Police – they agree

Signage and markings as recommended by Bob Haynes to Kieran and requested implementation. The cost will be met by WECC funds for road safety. Chased

Charlton issues

Silt before and after and under Bridge - Concern from Torr House, WR10 3 LJ, adjacent to the brook re-flooding garden and house. Build-up of silt/debris at the entrance and exit of the culverts and under the bridge responsibility of PC. Under the bridge the responsibility of the WCC Structures Team. Spoke to BB who felt the profile was suitable.

Smells Boston Lane – difficult unacceptable issue for some residents – 6 known.

- Not regulatory Services
- Not EA
- Severn Trent came out on Monday 16 September - Job 20066716766 – note this is a private system matter.
- As it was also a dry weather problem it does not seem to be a highway gully issue.
- **Need now in February to set up meeting with Evesham Caravan Park and Chairman and self. No response to the letter.**

Drainage Report - Reference #57260 CANADA BANK blocked gully(under yellow bush - photo) reported 15 July 2024. WCC is aware of the issue. Issues with roots in the piping which require a specialised unit to remove. The location is on the list for the unit to attend and clear the roots. ~~Need to check no confusion with the Dovecote area.~~

Enquiry 259 BB's response to Clerk re footway refurbishment 11/10/24 BB's response *attended here with Engineers from our Depot. A possible plan for remedial works has been put forward but there is still concern regarding the tree roots.* Work will not disturb roots – levelling – so may need doing in a year or three.

Enquiry 777/1163 March 2022 The Bight Water leaking on the road. Wychavon investigated, awaiting an update from Mark Morris WDC. **Can I ask if there were problems this winter since November ?**

Traffic Monitoring Survey on Haselor Lane: The speed data has shown - see previous Nov report- not sufficient on average and average daily traffic volumes of 202 partly due to temporary works/closure on the B4084 in Evesham, do not highlight excessive use. The average daily traffic volume on a C-class road in Worcestershire is around 3000 vehicles.

Elmley Castle / Crophorne bridleway – for walkers from Charlton - FA passed an order to contractor for the bridge to be replaced so it's currently a work in progress. Unfortunately, the ground conditions are not yet suitable for vehicular access to the site, but he will liaise with the landowners to arrange this when convenient and when we have the correct size bridge in stock. I understand we're currently waiting for a delivery which I think is imminent.

The gully at the bottom of Canada Bank with the tree roots still needs attention – Response BB to clerk 11/10/24 We have three defective gullies at the location. There's this one and a further gully and catch pit near Cherry Orchard. They are on the system but not scheduled yet.