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## Warwickshire County Council

### Feldon Division report

Feb 25

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#### **Council issues**

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The County Council is proposing a 4.99% increase in Council tax, comprising 2.99% increase in general services plus a 2% increase in the adult social care surcharge.

The overall spend for the Council in 2025/26 is budgeted to be £424.8 million. This compares to a budget of £386.7 million in 2024/25. The largest element of the budget remains social care and support which is £250.2 million (24/25 £225.0 million) or 59%.

WCC has responded to the Devolution white paper indicating that WCC are prepared to work with Central Government to look at options to move forward with their government's agenda for devolution. The Government has made it clear that it is their intention that all two-tier authorities will disappear and will be replaced by single tier unitary authorities over the next three years.

As such, the Government has indicated it may well postpone County Council Elections until the structure for the new unitary authority is determined. Elections for that new authority will take place in twelve months time.

As noted previously, the unitary authorities would then become part of a wider area combined authority. Warwickshire is currently an associate, but not a full, member of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

#### **LGPS**

The Council is awaiting the Government's response to the consultation for the overhaul of the management of the LGPS.

#### **Flooding**

##### ***County wide***

Following heavy rainfall and snow melt at the beginning of January, there was widespread flooding across the county impacting Warwickshire communities. Emergency services and partners are calling on the public to take care when driving or walking near flood water.

WFRS's fire control received 45 emergency calls in 24 hours and our firefighters have rescued 12 people from flood-related incidents.

Flood advice and support is available for Warwickshire residents and businesses at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/flooding/#respond>

You can check which rivers have flood alerts or flood warnings in place by visiting <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>

If you see flooding of public drains and roads please report it to

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reportit> You should also call the Environment Agency Floodline on 0345 988 1188 if you see flooding from collapsed or badly damaged riverbanks, or unusual changes in river flow.

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## **Division issues**

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### **Drains**

I have paid, through my delegated budget for drainage hotspots, where flooding was occurring, to be jetted. These comprised eight gulleys in Harbury, Priors Marston and Fenny Compton.

Work was completed in January but unfortunately, one drain was not properly cleared and, following concerns from residents, contractors were told to revisit the site. This has now been done and the work properly completed.

I have asked for, and officers have agreed to a review of how such work is monitored in future.

### **Potholes**

I attach a leaflet from the Highways team about potholes the causes and repairs. In summary:

Commonly used pothole treatments

#### ***Permanent***

Whenever possible we use a permanent 'first time fix' approach to repairing potholes. This is where we saw cut the surrounding area around the pothole with straight joints. The area is then excavated and filled with a hot material. This is the most robust pothole repair.

#### ***Temporary***

Where it is not possible to undertake a permanent repair, perhaps due to the fact that that the pothole needs to be repaired urgently to keep the road in a safe condition or because carrying out the repair may damage the structural condition of the surrounding surfaces, then a temporary repair is undertaken.

#### ***Find and fix gangs.***

Our pothole response has been supplemented by a Find and Fix gang which is currently working five days a week with increased budget available through additional government funding. They work systematically around the county, aligning with the areas covered by Highway Area Surveyors, identifying and repairing

potholes on the move, using hot tarmac, exclusively covering the county's Category C and Unclassified network. From October 2023 to December 2024, they have fixed 5,600 defects.

## **Local Roads**

### ***Delegated budget***

I have now almost used up my discretionary budget for 2024/5 with works still to be completed in Fenny Compton and Farnborough. Further funding should be available that meet WCC Highways criteria in the new financial year.

## **HS2**

Councillors have met with HS2 three times in January to review ongoing works and the impact on communities. There remains a significant gulf, in certain areas, between the needs of residents and the impact of HS2 works on the highway networks.

HS2 has in certain circumstances agreed to vary works to reduce the impact on residents. Notably certain long-term closures do appear to be being scheduled to take less time than previously announced.

## **Schools.**

The application deadline for children's 2025 Reception or Junior School places closed on 15 January.

Andy Crump and I have now met with senior officers at WCC to discuss the performance of certain schools, particularly in relation to children with EHCP and SEND issues and schools' exclusion policies.

This is now going to result in further reviews by officers.

## **White gates**

I am awaiting a response and hope to update you verbally later.

### **Wholetime firefighter recruitment (X and Facebook)**

Applications are now open for wholetime firefighters with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Read Firefighter Peter's story about what it's like to work with the service here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5921/a-new-career-is-waiting-for-you-at-warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service>



### **Residents offered support with financial concerns (X and Facebook)**

January, and into the New Year, can be a time of financial anxiety for some.

If you are feeling concerned about money and the cost of living, support is available.

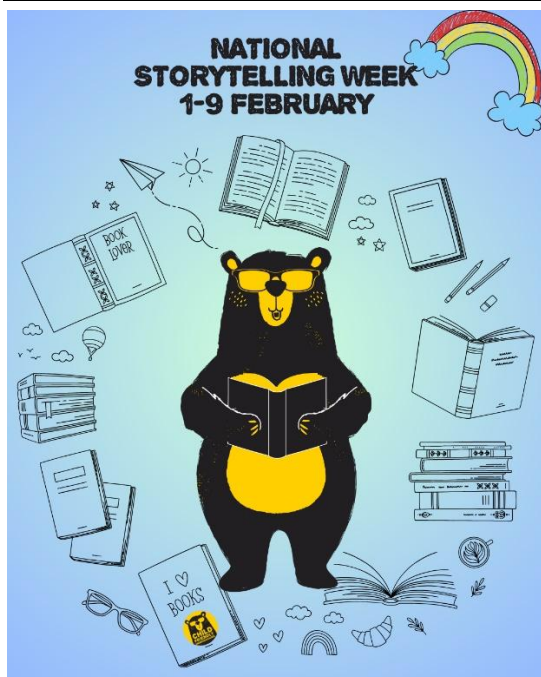
Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5931/coventry-and-warwickshire-residents-offered-support-with-financial-concerns-during-and-beyond-january>



### **Celebrating the magic of storytelling (X and Facebook)**

Warwickshire County Council is celebrating the joy of storytelling and is proud to support families and schools in inspiring children to develop their creativity and literacy skills through reading and storytelling.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5930/warwickshire-celebrates-the-magic-of-storytelling>



### Help to improve pharmacies (X and Facebook)

You are invited to complete a short online survey about your experience of pharmacy services to assess future and current needs across Coventry and Warwickshire.

Have your say: <https://ow.ly/hKfu50ULPsA>



### Flu vaccines and winter pressures (X and Facebook)

Our hospitals are experiencing high levels of attendance to A&E due to winter pressures.

To help alleviate long waiting times and pressure on the NHS, it's important to get your winter flu vaccination.

Find out more: <https://ow.ly/Mj4v50UFZx8> #FluVaccine #GetWinterStrong



### Concessionary travel companion add-on (X and Facebook)

Carers can continue to enjoy free travel on Warwickshire's buses, when accompanying eligible concessionary passholders after Warwickshire County Council confirmed the continuation of the Companion (+1) Travel Pass add-on scheme.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5928/further-free-travel-for-carers-as-companion-travel-pass-add-on-continues>



### School places in Warwickshire (X and Facebook)

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has endorsed the Annual Education Sufficiency Update (0-25) 2024, which provides a comprehensive overview of the current and future needs of children and young people in the county.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5926/warwickshire-county-council-endorses-annual-education-sufficiency-update>





### **Key funding for education (X and Facebook)**

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has approved a series of additions to its Education Capital Programme 2024/25, focusing on expanding specialist resourced provision and increasing early years places.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5925/cabinet-approves-key-funding-for-education-in-warwickshire>



### **Support for Coventry all-electric buses scheme (X and Facebook)**

Warwickshire County Council has approved plans to procure all-electric buses for cross-boundary services operating into Coventry as part of the Coventry All Electric Bus City (CEBC) Scheme.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5927/warwickshire-county-council-moves-forward-with-support-for-all-electric-bus-city-scheme>



### Public Health podcast (X and Facebook)

Learn more about the perception and concerns around body image amongst young people in the latest Warwickshire podcast:

<https://letstalkwarwickshire.podbean.com/e/warwickshire-public-health-keeping-our-teenagers-safe-and-well/>



### Warwickshire Family Information Service newsletter (X and Facebook)

Finding reliable information and support for your family is as easy as checking your email.

Thousands of Warwickshire parents and carers already subscribe to the county's Family Information Service newsletter, why not join them?

More: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5924/the-warwickshire-family-information-service-newsletter-family-support-at-your-fingertips->





### Access to health care for people who live on a boat (X and Facebook)

Healthwatch Warwickshire is conducting a survey to understand and improve access to health care services for the boating community.

If you live on a boat, or know someone who does, the survey can be found here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/4GHN7I/>



### Leamington's newest visitor attraction (X and Facebook)

WCC's infrastructure project along the A452 Ford Foundry and Queensway roundabout is attracting attention as members of the public have been visiting the construction site to admire the impressive 91-meter gabion retaining wall.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5929/gabion-retaining-wall-for-a452-ford-foundry-improvement-scheme-draws-interest-from-visitors->

