

Bircher Ward Report July 2023

I hope that this Ward Report finds you all well. Although the Weather has recently turned I am informed that we are due more sunshine in a few weeks so fingers crossed for a return to more summery temperatures. The council has been busy since we last met:

Council Finances

June saw the first formal Cabinet meeting of the new administration and at this meeting the quarter four financial figures were presented. The Cabinet Member for Finance has helpfully provided the following points which he has agreed I can share with you:

- *The final year end position for 2022/23 was an overspend of £5.6 million which represents 3.2% of the net budget. This overspend has been funded from the Financial Resilience Reserve and this is broadly consistent with the plan presented to Council as part of the budget in February 2023.*
- *The timely reporting of the outturn position has enabled the council to prepare and publish its annual accounts within the statutory deadline and these will now be subject to audit to receive external assurance.*
- *A number of the pressures faced by the council have been experienced nationally in 2022/23 – notably inflation and cost of living. The council has managed these pressures delivering an underspend in many Directorates. In particular, the council has faced significant pressures in the Children & Young People Directorate as a result of inflation and rising demand for placements and transport services.*
- *£10.2 million of the £11.5 million Children's Improvement Plan funding was spend in 2022/23 and the remaining £1.3 million has been carried forward to continue to support transformation and improvement in 2023/24.*

These figures represent the performance of the last administration and were tabled alongside a review of the Capital Delivery Programme (CDP). The overarching theme for the CDP is delay which appeared no less than 29 times in the report. The delay to the CDP represents a huge problem for the council as it delays much needed investment in our local infrastructure which in turn leads to rising costs and projects having to be curtailed or re-scoped to mitigate these. The current administration has identified this as a key area where progress must be made.

In addition, the Cabinet considered the move of the new Hereford Library to Maylords Orchard. The decision has been taken to pause and review the long term move of the Hereford Library to ascertain whether Maylords Orchard remains the best place for it. This review concluded in time for the July Cabinet meeting (20th July) and a decision was taken to progress the Shirehall proposal to a full business case. This pause will not delay the temporary move of the Hereford Library to Friar Street or the redevelopment of the current Hereford Library building into a state of the art museum.

Outstanding Queries

Lengthsman Scheme: I understand contracts have now been sent – please let me know if you have not received yours or if you have any queries.

Meeting with Locality Steward: I have met with the Locality Steward and mentioned the road outside the Boot as a priority locally.

Outstanding Queries

Safety measures outside the school: I am due contact from the s.106 team and I will keep the PC posted.

AOB

As always, if you have any queries however large or small then please do contact me. I am very happy to discuss issues by email, phone or in person.

Cllr D. Hurcomb

Delivered at Orleton Parish Council meeting

20th July 2023