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## Warwickshire County Council

### Feldon Division report

Jan 25

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#### **Council issues**

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The County Council has been invited to respond to two major consultations, one being into the future of local Government and the second to the future management of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Government announced in early December its intention to remove one tier of local Government creating new unitary authorities, representing a minimum of 500,000 residents, so merging the roles of County and District and Borough Councils. Warwickshire has some 600,000 residents and has two District and three Borough Councils. The unitary authorities would then become part of a wider area combined authority. Warwickshire is currently an associate, not a full, member of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The purpose behind the merger is both to reduce costs but also to create a single authority for the delivery of local services.

Warwickshire County Council is likely to indicate that it is interested in exploring this proposal.

#### **LGPS**

The Government is also consulting on an overhaul of the management of the LGPS.

Following a previous reorganisation in 2016 of the LGPS, which required the 86 local pension administering authorities to pool their investments, Warwickshire, along with 10 other authorities in 2018 founded and merged their investment fund management into the Border to Coast Pension Partnership ('B2C') based in Leeds. The aim of the B2C pool, and other Pools, was both to improve investment performance and reduce costs. B2C, one of the largest pools now manage some £52 bn of funds on behalf of 1.1 million scheme members and 3,100 local government employers.

There are eight LGPS pools in England and Wales. Each pool has a different model, including standalone investment management companies, outsourced models, and joint committee models.

B2C with a partner / shareholder model and is FCA regulated has the most formal structure of all the pools, with some others no more than investment co-operatives.

The Government wishes to improve Fund performance further and reduce and has indicated a wish to direct pension funds to invest pensioners funds in "local" schemes. Funds, which are held in Trust for scheme members are already invested to maximise the return to members, and thereby reduce the cost to local employers.

There is a risk that any proposal to require Funds to invest in local schemes that are not necessarily in a position to generate the required returns risks inflating employers pension contributions and thereby the cost to local tax payers.

## **Flooding**

Following heavy rainfall overnight there is widespread flooding across the county impacting Warwickshire communities. With further rain expected today, emergency services and partners are calling on the public to take care when driving or walking near flood water.

WFRS's fire control has received 45 emergency calls since midnight and our firefighters have rescued 12 people from flood-related incidents. A number of these incidents could have been avoided if people had not driven through flood water.

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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### **Local Roads**

I have funded from my discretionary budget the resurfacing of the pavement at the bottom end of Lakin Drive, Bishops Itchington. The works on Plough Lane and Gaydon Road, as stage one of the works for the cable connecting the Knightcote solar farm to Deppers Bridge, was completed before Christmas. The works will now continue down Knightcote Lane before contractors return for the much quicker job of pulling the cable through the conduits laid.

Whilst this is a local issue the impacts were felt across a number of different communities and the issues are more general.

### **HS2**

The HS2 saga continues with a new proposed road closure, announced without approval from WCC, and also no explanation of the need or impact, on the A425.

Following correspondence EKFB withdrew the proposal but will now be submitting a new application later in the spring. It is regrettable that EKFB seem to prefer closing roads at considerable public inconvenience rather than employing tree surgeons who have the equipment to minimise public disruption by felling trees or dismembering trees off-road rather than on the highway.

The Wormleighton / Priors' Hardwick and Priors Marston area is still worrying.

### **Bush Heath TROs.**

I have been chasing up the issue of these two TROs since the last meeting.

I challenged the senior officer on the reasons for the continuing delay and he responded as follows:

#### **“Why simple works can take months to deliver.**

Our contractor delivers all of our highways maintenance construction. All of the works which are delivered are ordered and valued against a tendered set of rates. There are over 2000 rates in total.

Our contract specification has been written to give WCC a balanced approach to service delivery and the cost of that service. In order to get value, the contract specification allows the contractor to plan and programme works, rather than WCC dictating delivery timescales. The only exception is the repair of safety defects, where we stipulate 2hr, next day, 5-day or 30-day repair timescales.

Allowing the contractor to plan and programme the works enables them to resource the contract as efficiently as possible, so that all gangs and crews are undertaking works at all times, which in turn offers WCC best value. The contractor is taking on all the financial risk, as they cannot deviate from the tendered rates.

The downside of this is that gangs and crews employed or subcontracted have a 3-6month work load already planned and programmed for them. As new works are added, these are put to the back of the 3-6month queue.

There is some scope for re-prioritisation of work along the way, but that is always at the expense of delaying another job already planned, and is generally done where risk exists e.g drainage works being accelerated if there has been property flooding from the highway.

This is not to say we have no control over how the contractor plans works. We work very closely with our contractor to agree programmes of work up to 12 months ahead for our larger works.

For residents seeing this, I can understand why it's a difficult message, as the jobs are often low in complexity, and on the face of it easy to deliver.”

**Schools.**

Parents have less than two weeks to apply for their child's 2025 Reception or Junior School place. Submit your application by 15 January to:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/primaryplace](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/primaryplace)

I am meeting shortly with senior officers at WCC to discuss the performance of schools and their exclusion policies.

**WCC Cllrs Highways Budget**

I am regularly asked and have agreed with officers to fund improvements to the highway network and still have available funds for small scale road interventions in the Division.

### Cold weather alert ❄️ (X and Facebook)

The Met Office has issued a weather warning for snow and ice, and temperatures are expected to drop. As they do, road conditions can become unpredictable.

Stay safe on your journeys with these simple tips:

🚗 **Slow Down:** Wet, icy, or frosty roads mean longer stopping distances. Reduce your speed and give yourself extra time to react.

🌀 **Check Your Tyres:** Ensure they have enough tread for good grip in wintery conditions.

💡 **Be Visible:** Use your headlights in low light and make sure all your lights are working properly.

🗓️ **Plan Ahead:** Allow extra time for your journey and avoid sudden manoeuvres.

Stay safe, drive carefully, and look out for one another on the roads this winter.



### Cold health alert (X and Facebook)

Look out for others as the temperature drops! A yellow cold-health alert is in place until Saturday 4 January. This level of #ColdWeather can affect vulnerable people and those with underlying health conditions.

Please look out for those who may need some extra support during this time such as ensuring they have adequate supplies of food and any medication they may need.

For information visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm)



### Tips to keep warm (X and Facebook)

Low indoor temperatures can have a serious impact on your health, especially if you have a medical condition or are older. Here are a few tips to keep warm:

- try to heat rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the living room or bedroom, to at least 18°C
- try to reduce draughts; you can fit draft excluders around doors cheaply
- keep your bedroom windows closed at night
- wear several layers of thinner clothing; this could keep you warmer than one thicker layer

For more information visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm)



### Fire safety – portable heaters (X and Facebook)

With the cold weather setting in, portable heaters can be a lifesaver. However, they can also be a fire hazard if not used correctly.

Here are some tips to stay safe:

- Placement is key: Keep your heater away from flammable materials like curtains, furniture, and bedding.

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- Safety features matter: Choose a heater with tip-over and overheating protection.
- Never leave it unattended: Turn it off and unplug it when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Direct plug-in: Avoid using extension cords or power strips.
- Regular checks: Inspect your heater for damage and keep it clean.
- Smoke alarms are essential: Make sure they're working properly.

Read more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/home-fire-safety-tips/safe-home-heating/2](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/home-fire-safety-tips/safe-home-heating/2)

#firesafety #wintertips #homeheating



### Be better prepared for extreme cold weather (X and Facebook)

Take a few minutes to learn how to keep your home running smoothly in cold weather. Find out how to prevent pipes from freezing, and more top tips at [www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/](http://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/)

#BetterPrepared



### Warwickshire Firefighters and Foster Carers recognised in New Year's Honours List 2025 (X and Facebook)

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Warwickshire Firefighters Rachel Streeting and Claire Wooldridge and foster carers Safeena Mohammed and Kasim Sharifi are among eleven extraordinary Warwickshire people recognised in the King's New Year's Honours list for 2025.

Find out more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5867/warwickshire-firefighters-and-foster-carers-recognised-in-new-year-s-honours-list-2025](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5867/warwickshire-firefighters-and-foster-carers-recognised-in-new-year-s-honours-list-2025)



### Winter flu vaccination (X and Facebook)

Flu is very infectious and easily spread to other people. It's important to get your winter flu vaccination if you're eligible. Getting vaccinated every year will top up your protection and reduce your risk of getting severe symptoms.

Check your eligibility via [www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/)

#FluVaccine #GetWinterStrong #FightFlu #Winterillnesses

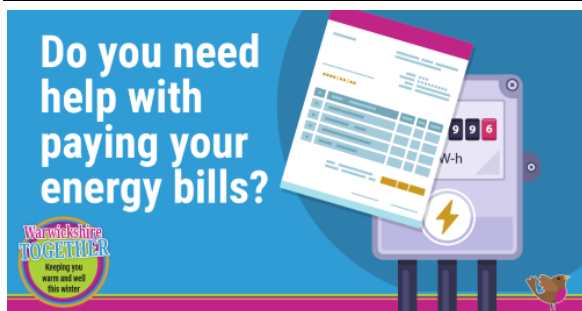


### Energy bill support available this winter (X and Facebook)

The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund to support people who may be struggling with energy bills this winter.

Learn more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter)





### **Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service helping patients to return home safely from hospital (X and Facebook)**

Find out how Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is helping hospital patients to return home safely with their Hospital to Home service:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5863/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-helping-patients-to-return-home-safely-from-hospital](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5863/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-helping-patients-to-return-home-safely-from-hospital)

## **Hospital to Home**

### **Warwickshire welcomes new Safe Accommodation Strategy for victim-survivors of Domestic Abuse (X and Facebook)**

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Warwickshire County Council and its partners has launched its Safe Accommodation Strategy.

The strategy highlights the provision in Warwickshire to provide a safe haven for victim-survivors over the next three years.

Find out more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5865/warwickshire-welcomes-new-safe-accommodation-strategy-for-victim-survivors-of-domestic-abuse](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5865/warwickshire-welcomes-new-safe-accommodation-strategy-for-victim-survivors-of-domestic-abuse)



### **Visit Judges' House ceremony venue in Warwick (X and Facebook)**

Warwickshire County Council's Registration Service is inviting prospective couples to attend the next open day at Judges' House in Warwick on Saturday 1 February between 11am and 1pm.

Find out more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5845/visit-judges-house-ceremony-venue-in-warwick-ready-to-celebrate-life-s-special-occasions](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5845/visit-judges-house-ceremony-venue-in-warwick-ready-to-celebrate-life-s-special-occasions)

