

City Councillors' Report for Warndon Parish Council: meeting on Monday 8 April 2024

Electric Vehicle Feasibility Study

A joint bid by Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council has successfully secured £25,000 for an important research project to support an electric future for council vehicles.

The feasibility study will look at whether the depot at Warndon – home to the two councils' waste collection, highway maintenance and other vehicles – can be fully electrified.

The £25,000 grant funding has been provided by the Midlands Net Zero Hub to help the two councils reach their net zero ambitions.

The study will look into factors including the power requirements for running a full fleet of electric vehicles from the Warndon depot, the capacity of the power grid in the area and whether any upgrade is required, and the cost implications for a full electrification upgrade.

The City Council has set aside £40,000 for the project. This will be used to support the study at the Warndon depot and also to fund similar work at its smaller depot sites at Perdiswell, St Martin's Gate, Cripplegate Park and Astwood Crematorium. The City Council is committed to reducing its CO2 emissions under its Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

The County Council will also contribute £7,000 to the feasibility study for Warndon depot.

Local Elections

Local elections have officially begun, with candidates of all political colours hoping to secure Worcester residents' votes on Thursday May 2.

Formal notices have been published for the City Council elections, marking the official start of the contests.

Voters will, for the first time, be voting for all 35 city councillors on the same day. Previously one third of councillors were elected each year, but the Council has now moved to a system of all-out elections held once every four years.

There is also another significant change this year, with the polls being fought on a new electoral map which sees the number of wards in the city increase from 15 to 16.

Planning for New Arts Venue

Planning permission has been given to create a new multi-purpose arts venue within two historic buildings in the heart of Worcester.

Worcester City Council's Planning Committee has unanimously granted permission for the full redesign and internal refurbishment of the Scala and Corn Exchange buildings in Angel Street.

The decision is a significant step forward for the ambitious plans to create a new destination for Worcester, funded by part of the Government's Future High Streets Fund.

Once completed, the new venue will be home to three multi-use spaces, currently named The Stage, The Screen, and The Box, as well as a café that can provide additional performance space.

- The Stage will host live performances, comedy and gigs.

- The Screen will host films, including independent film festivals, immersive events, dance and workshops.
- The Box will be a space for exciting digital experiences.

The plans for the new venue have been developed by the City Council following extensive consultation and work with a consortium of leading local creative organisations: Severn Arts, Dancefest, Mobilise Arts, C&T, The Kiln, and Vestan.

Paul Sutton, from C&T, said: "On behalf of the creative consortium, I am delighted to hear this news. Our aim is to open the Scala as a welcoming hub in the heart of the city where people can come together to enjoy, imagine, and cultivate a more creative future for Worcester."

Swimming Pool Solar Panels

Worcester City Council has been awarded £195,000 from the Government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) to add solar panels to the roof of Perdiswell Leisure Centre, alongside an upgrade to the leisure facility's building management system.

The panels, to be installed by March 2025, will see carbon emissions at the leisure facility reduced by 84 tonnes a year. The panels will be installed alongside a unit that will utilise excess power produced during the summer months to heat water for the showers, fans that will recirculate warm air to reduce heating demand, and an energy-efficient water recovery system that will clean and re-use water.

The City Council was also successful in obtaining a further £59,750 from the SPSF on behalf of Worcester Citizens' Swimming Baths Association for solar panels and a building management system upgrade at the swimming pool at Lower Wick in Worcester.

Worcester City Council has been implementing its Environmental Sustainability Strategy since 2019; this latest project at Perdiswell is part of the strategy's overarching aim to decarbonise the city.

City Councillor Rota for the preparation of future reports.

Date of Meeting	Preparation Deadline	Responsible Councillor
13 May 2024	10 May 2024	
3 June 2024	31 May 2024	
1 July 2024	28 June 2024	
2 September 2024	30 August 2024	
7 October 2024	4 October 2024	
4 November 2024	1 November 2024	
2 December 2024	29 November 2024	

This concludes the City Council Report for the Warndon Parish Council meeting to be held on Monday 8 April.

Sarah Murray

5 April 2024