

Weekly Update Warwickshire County Council

Alcester Division

Local updates

New Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Operating Model:

Following a review of how WFRS use their resources, a public consultation took place earlier this year on a proposed delivery model that would help the service to better align their resources to the risks and demands across all parts of Warwickshire. The feedback from the 1,300 responses that were received has been used to shape a revised model known as Model A.

This new way of working offers a number of improvements on the current operating model. This includes:

- Guaranteeing 14 fire engines during the day, when activity is highest, and 13 at night, when the risk is lower. This is a significant improvement from the current guaranteed 11 engines during the day and 8 at night.
- Providing WFRS with a 27% increase in capacity to conduct prevention work, helping to stop fires and incidents before they occur.
- Improving average response times for the most urgent incidents across the county by 58 seconds to under 10 minutes, ensuring quicker assistance when and where it is needed the most. It also improves the average response time for a second engine when this is needed.

It is worth noting a further £1.75M has been allocated to fund this new operating model. Which goes some way to dissuade negative responses to the proposal that it was being proposed to save money rather than improve service.

Following this decision, WFRS will enter into a formal consultation process with their staff and discussions with representative bodies. Any subsequent changes required to the Community Risk Management Plan will be considered by WCC's Council later this year, with full implementation expected to take up to 18 months and a review of the impact of the new operating model taking place a year after completion.

For our area this sees Alcester move to a Wholetime day (7 am to 7 pm) fire appliance and Bidford to retaining a contractual night time on-call appliance (7 pm to 7 am) with a 5 minute turn in time. Stratford will continue to have 24/7 operations.

To read the report in full please visit:

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/s37627/WFRS%20Future%20Operating%20Model%20-%20Report%20and%20Combined%20Appendices%201-5.pdf>

Additional funding for school places:

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has recommended allocating over £20 million from the Council's Capital Investment Fund to deliver new school places over the next five years.

The additional funding will be targeted towards providing a further 2,000 places where need has been identified as well as making adaptations to buildings to enable children and young people with SEND to be educated at a mainstream setting in line with the principles behind the Delivering Better Values programme.

Warwickshire's school aged population has grown significantly in recent years, with a near 7% increase between 2011 and 2021. This growth has required substantial investment in education infrastructure. Over the past ten years, the council has delivered over 10,000 new permanent school places through numerous school expansions and the opening of 12 new schools.

Despite these concerted efforts, the continued rise in pupil numbers and the increasing cost of delivering new school places has created a funding gap. Traditional sources of funding, such as Basic Need Grants and developer contributions, have not kept pace with the rising costs. To address this gap, the council's Cabinet has recommended allocating additional funding from the Capital Investment Fund.

New measures to reduce unauthorised school absence:

The updated code reflects a new National Framework introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) which comes into effect on 19 August 2024.

Warwickshire County Council has already begun preparing schools for the changes by contacting school leaders regarding the National Framework and local processes and discussing the changes with Headteacher representatives.

The council recognises that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners work collaboratively with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and ensuring that the right support is in place.

Key changes under the National Framework include:

- A single national threshold for considering a penalty notice: 10 sessions (usually 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- Schools will make a case-by-case assessment on whether a penalty notice is appropriate when the threshold is met.
- Introduction of a Notice to Improve option for cases where support is deemed suitable but not being engaged with.
- Increased penalty notice rates: £160 if paid within 28 days, £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A national limit of two penalty notices issued to a parent for the same child within a three-year period.

Marvellous Makers Summer Reading Challenge at Alcester Library:

A popular annual activity in the library calendar, the Summer Reading Challenge encourages children to borrow and read six books of their choice, which can include eBook and eAudio formats, over the course of the summer holidays.

To get involved, children can sign up now through Alcester library to receive a collector's poster and track their progress towards their chosen reading goal. All children who successfully complete the challenge are presented with a certificate and medal.

In addition to the reading challenge, Warwickshire libraries are hosting free weekly Marvellous Maker themed activities throughout the summer, including interactive 'Myths and Masks' storytelling sessions with Pyn Stockman, and more music and craft activities.

No need to book just drop in throughout the day between 10am-4pm for a different craft activity each week:

- Making Music 25/07
- Arts and Crafts 01/08
- Marvellous Myths 08/08
- Model Marvels 15/08
- Adventures with Words 22/08
- Cartoons and Puppets 29/08

Don't forget to report highway issues:

Warwickshire County Council is urging residents to report any Highways faults that they encounter while driving or walking in the county via its website. This includes flooding issues such as blocked drains.

Highways faults that can be reported online include:

- Potholes;
- Street light problems;
- Rights of way problems;
- Faulty traffic lights; and
- Roadwork problems
- Blocked drains

By reporting these issues, residents can help ensure that Warwickshire's roads, footpaths, rights of way and cycleways remain safe and well-maintained for everyone. This encouragement comes as Warwickshire moves into periods of warmer weather which allow for more remedial road improvements, particularly the repair of potholes, to take place. Also it has a further £2.87M of funding from Government to spend.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reportit>

Updates:

Please be aware that we post regular updates to /AmazingAlcester/ – but we are also keen to share good news. If you have any stories that you want us to share, please let us know.

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