

A YEAR IN PICTURES...

OUR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2014/15

As well as day to day services, like collecting bins and council tax, we provide many other services that may not be so obvious but make the district a better place to live, work and visit. Here you can see and read about some of the highlights which delivered real benefits to local people and businesses over the past 12 months.



Ensure that there are good things for me to do, see and visit

Help me to have access to a good quality and affordable home

Make good development happen

Support me to run a successful business

Invest in giving people the skills to do the job

Help me improve my health and well-being

Give me a voice

Celebrating good performance

PLACE

More than 168,000 visitors to Bewdley Museum during the 2014/15 season produced an all time high for visitor numbers. The Museum is officially a top attraction according to reviewers on Trip Advisor prompting a Certificate of Excellence for 2014.

The new Wyre Forest Leisure Centre project was awarded £2 million of National Lottery funding from Sport England. This means there will be extra facilities at the centre including a climbing wall. Once complete and open for business, the new leisure centre is predicted to save tax payers and the council around half a million pounds per year.

Work started on the exciting £2 million improvement Scheme in Kidderminster Town Centre. The scheme will revamp Vicar Street, Exchange Street and High Street with new high quality paving and street furniture, combined with the creation of a new public square called Exchange Place, outside Kidderminster Town Hall.

Residents and visitors loved the wonderful wild flower beds which bloomed around the district throughout the summer. Brinton Park's stunning flower beds commemorated World War One with symbolic red poppies representing the fallen and cornflowers to symbolise those who fought for France.

HOUSING

458 new homes were built in the Wyre Forest district – the highest total since 1996 – including 148 affordable homes.

Evidence gathering work has begun for the 2015 review of the Local Plan and to develop the strategic approach to future housing growth and location. We continue to be on target to deliver the new home allocation set out in our current Local Plan.

Local people looking to move to quality affordable housing are being supported thanks to the Council's adoption of a new planning policy document. This provides clear guidance to applicants on the amount and quality of affordable housing that is expected to be delivered within the District.

PLANNING

Phase 2 of the Hoo Brook Link Road is due to start in 2015/16, with Phase 1 already completed.

609 new planning applications were received and of the 571 planning applications determined during the year, 534 (93.5%) were approved.

40,000 square feet of new business floor space worth £8m is to be built on South Kidderminster Enterprise Park without the need for planning permission thanks to The Local Development Order.

BUSINESS

We beat off strong competition from other areas to attract new investors into Kidderminster. Over the last 12 months, our NWedR team has co-ordinated incentive packages that successfully attracted three major companies into the area; Amtek UK, Specsavers and NTM-GB, between them investing almost £35 million and creating over 800 new jobs.

Our SPACE business centre at Hoo Farm Industrial Estate has been very popular with start-up and growing businesses since its launch in November 2013. The 7,000sq ft of workspace is divided into workshops and offices with outside storage and free parking.

To celebrate five years of the ReWyre Regeneration initiative, the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR) team hosted a Rewyre Renewed conference held at Spring Grove House at West Midlands Safari Park. Local and regional business leaders pledged their commitment to regeneration and put forward ideas to fulfil the vision for the area.

PEOPLE

Chaddesley Corbett residents made history after voting 'YES' in a referendum on its Neighbourhood Plan. It is the first area in Worcestershire to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum which gives residents greater influence over what development is carried out in the locality in the future.

Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group and our partners, we supported more than 1700 people including local residents, employees and local business to improve their health and wellbeing.

We hosted a Tackling Poverty event where 30 organisations got together to discuss how they can work together to address this issue and help local people.

A Green Energy Fair at Kidderminster Town Hall promoted energy saving and innovative ways of living lightly in the present and future.

ENABLING OTHERS TO DO WHAT THEY NEED TO DO

We continued to secure external funding which has benefitted residents across the district. A total of £2,842,843 has been attracted for projects and activities including the Leisure Centre, countryside & conservation, community safety, art, sports, and community events.

Our Data Management Officer picked up double Gold awards for the second year running. Mark Tipper, Business Improvement Officer – Data Management and Transformation, won the 'Best in Region' Award and a Gold Award for Address Data from Exemplar.

A few more...



We achieved the Worcestershire Works Well Level 2 Accreditation in September 2014. The award highlighted the work being done to promote good health and well-being.



Councillor Stephen Williams, Chairman of Wyre Forest District Council, held a special civic service at St Mary and All Saints Church in Kidderminster to commemorate the centenary of the start of hostilities in World War I.

Our Parks team received accolades for their inspirational flower bed at the bottom of Comberton Hill to mark this historic occasion.



1st April 2014 marked our 40th anniversary as a District Council serving Kidderminster, Bewdley, Stourport on Severn and the surrounding rural areas.



We are planning to create an interactive Music Heritage Trail which will celebrate and promote Kidderminster's musical heritage. The trail will be launched at Kidderminster Arts Festival (KAF) in August 2016.



During 2014/15, our followers on social media increased by more than 25%.

