



1. Supplement to the agenda for

Cabinet

Thursday 5 February 2026

3.00 pm

**Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane
Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

	Pages
7. 2026/27 BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - REVENUE	3 - 138
Appendices E, G and H	
9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES – 2025/26	139 - 148
-	



EARMARKED RESERVE BALANCES TO 31 MARCH 2027

Reserve	Type	Audited Balance at 31/03/2025 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2026 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2027 £m
Business rates risk	Liabilities and risk	13.3	10.2	8.9
Waste	Budget resilience	7.1	4.8	0.1
Budget resilience	Budget resilience	7.0	4.2	-
Enterprise zone business rates growth	Strategic Priorities	3.0	2.7	-
Fastershire	Strategic Priorities	2.7	2.7	2.7
Financial resilience	Liabilities and risk	2.3	2.3	2.3
Settlement monies	Strategic Priorities	2.0	1.7	0.1
Whitcross school PFI	Accounting reserves	1.8	2.1	2.1
Public realm project	Strategic Priorities	1.6	0.9	-
RNC campus	Liabilities and risk	1.2	0.2	0.2
Unused grants carried forward	Grants and contributions	18.0	13.6	7.3
Other reserves individually under £1m	Grants and contributions	9.0	8.1	6.2
Total reserves excluding schools		69.0	53.5	29.9
Schools' balances	Schools	11.7	11.7	11.7
Total earmarked reserves		80.7	65.2	41.6
General fund balance		10.1	10.1	10.1
Total earmarked reserves and general fund		90.8	75.3	51.7

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses**Scrutiny Committee: Scrutiny Management Board 23 January 2026**

Recommendation 1	The executive should conclude an exercise to identify recurrent savings for the medium-term financial strategy period by the end of September 2026.			
Executive Response	Activity planned to address the estimated funding gap in future years is identified at para 3.4 of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Cabinet will work to resolve the funding gap with immediate focus from April 2026 and will continue to develop proposals to balance the 2027/28 Revenue Budget over the budget setting period to recommend a balanced budget to Council in February 2027.			
Action –	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
No action required. Activity already planned.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Recommendation 2	Medium-term financial strategy risks should reflect the most current financial information known to the executive at the time of publication and should include savings known to be at risk.			
Executive Response	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes the risk of potential overspend and non-delivery of savings required to balance the budget and identifies the mitigations in place to manage this risk. The Draft Revenue Budget presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 23 January and 5 February includes an update on the delivery of savings at Quarter 2 of 2025/26 in paras 105 to 107. This represents the most current financial position reported to Cabinet.			
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
No action required.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Recommendation 3	The medium-term financial strategy should report what scenario planning has been undertaken and highlight the key sensitivities in the medium-term position.			
Response	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes sensitivity analysis at para 6.2 and quantifies the potential full year impact of 1% movement in assumptions for council tax, employee related costs, inflation, demand and interest on borrowing. The Strategy has been reviewed by External Audit as part of their Value for Money work and no weaknesses in arrangements for financial planning have been identified. The Budget Report notes that the MTFS will be updated to reflect the impact for the council of the multi-year Settlement and in-year funding allocations as further information is released and proposals to mitigate the funding gap are developed.			

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
No action required.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Recommendation 4	The executive should report separately savings, initiatives funded from reserves and grants, and planned additional income.
Executive Response	<p>Appendix B: Savings Proposals including detailed activity plans identifies saving £3 within the Economy & Environment Proposed Savings as funded from reserves. “Reallocation of directorate reserves: to maintain expenditure for Public Rights of Way (£250k), Drainage (£445k) and Lengthsman Scheme (£250k) added to base budget in 2024/25 on receipt of additional funding at Final Local Government Settlement.”</p> <p>Following additional government funding in the 2024/25 Final Settlement, additional expenditure for Public Rights of Way (£250k), Drainage (£445k) and Lengthsman Scheme (£250k) was approved by Council. In 2025/26, the council's funding allocation did not include these additional amounts. Despite this, Cabinet committed to maintain expenditure to support these priorities in the 2025/26 revenue budget.</p> <p>In 2026/27, it is proposed that expenditure will be maintained for a further year, funded from the reallocation of Directorate reserve balances. This is a one-off measure to support one-off expenditure in 2026/27. Commitments in future years will be subject to a growth bid as part of the budget setting process to be considered in the context of future funding and strategic priorities.</p>
Action	Owner
No action required.	N/A

Recommendation 5	The executive should report income and expenditure at sub-directorate level in the Directorate Budget Position Statements.
Executive Response	The Directorate Budget Statements present the gross expenditure, income and earmarked reserves by Service for 2026/27 (Appendix A included in each of the individual Appendix C Directorate Budget Position Statements). Cabinet will continue to develop the Directorate Budget Position Statements throughout 2026/27 as part of continuous improvements in the budget setting process. Revisions to the statements will be made to add value to users.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Cabinet will review the format of Directorate Budget Position Statements for the 2027/28 budget.	Cllr Stoddart	February 2027	Updated 2027/28 Statements	



Appendix H

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

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How many answers are “yes”?:

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4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

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4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Leeona Marsh

Directorate: Community Wellbeing

Name of lead person for this activity:

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Manny Jhawar-Gill

Date assessment completed: 12.12.2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Transformation of Shaw Healthcare services and contract to align them to commissioning priorities, compliance requirements and longer-term needs of the residents of Herefordshire residents.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The Council has a 30-year contract with Shaw Healthcare (Shaw) which started 1 August 2004 and ends 31 July 2034. The contract covers multiple services, including residential care, extra care flats, domiciliary care hours and day care across six homes.

It was established to modernise care for older people and is regularly reviewed for compliance and efficiency.

The Shaw transformation refers to a major service redesign initiative involving Shaw and Herefordshire Council. It focuses on reviewing and restructuring Shaw Healthcare's existing contracts to align to current commissioning priorities and compliance requirements, including up to date service level agreements, equality impact assessments and data sharing agreements that were previously missed or are now out of date. Since the start of the contract the Equalities Act 2010, Care Act 2014 GDPR 2018 have all come into force and will need to be accounted for in terms of how services will be delivered.

Financial and operational efficiency in the contract is key. The on-going service must meet current needs as well as be sustainable financially.

The intended outcome is to modernise the contract and service provision delivered by Shaw, improve governance and deliver better outcomes to a greater number of individuals. This will involve changes to existing services with a view to improving more services to be more sustainable to the future.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

A full review has been completed of the contract, operational activity and outcomes being achieved against spend and commissioning intentions. This work has concluded there is a requirement for the services to be modernised.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Commissioners have been working with Shaw for some time on an on-going basis and have identified several key areas for improvement. Comparison of care delivery in other Council's has provided further evidence for the need to change the current provision.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

Commissioners have been working with Shaw for some time on an on-going basis. Shaw are aware of the need to modernise their services. Further engagement and formal consultation is being planned for January 2026 and each service area of the contract will be looked at systematically.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

The modernisation of Shaw services aims to improve service provision for the people who are assessed as needing care and support under the Care Act 2024. Consultation with people who currently access services and their families will help shape the future service.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modernisation of the Shaw contract will support older adults to have improved service experience and outcomes. This contract does not impact children and working age adults.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modernisation of the Shaw contract will support older adults with disabilities to have improved service experience and outcomes. This contract does not impact children.
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will benefit people regardless of their gender reassignment.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
(include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)				However, where people's gender has been reassigned Shaw Healthcare will be expected to provide appropriate care and support and be able to cater for individual need.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will not be impacted by people's marital nor civil partnership status.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is unlikely due to the age profile of people receiving services from Shaw that there will be direct impact on this characteristic. However, the modernisation of the Shaw contract will not be impacted by people's pregnancy or maternity status.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will enable commissioners to revise expectations under the Equalities Act and ensure people's race is accounted for when services are delivered to them e.g. meal choices and communication.
Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will enable commissioners to revise expectations under of how people are supported to acquire or maintain religion and beliefs.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of "sex")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will not be impacted by sex.
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will not be impacted by sexual orientation. It is envisaged commissioners will revise expectations of Shaw to meet people's care and support needs in a way that does not discriminate them on these grounds.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care leavers and homeless people are not impacted by the Shaw contract. Those people below the financial threshold for paying for care will not be required to pay the full cost of care, and those with low incomes will be means tested for the ability to contribute towards the cost of their care.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The modernisation of the Shaw contract will consider people's health conditions and make clear expectations of Shaw and the role of health and public health services in the delivery of care and support.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

No negative impacts have been identified.

When will you review this EIA?

Whilst no negative impacts have been identified, a review of the EIA following consultation is required to address any risks identified. This is likely to be in Feb/Mar 2026.

The EIA will be reviewed following consultation.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA



Date signed

12.12.2025

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.

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5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

3

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

6

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Leeona Marsh

Directorate: Community Wellbeing

Name of lead person for this activity:

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Manny Jhawar-Gill

Date assessment completed: 12.12.2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Administration charges for people who self-fund their care.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The aim of this activity is to review the charges to self-funders when Herefordshire Council arranges their care and support. There are opportunities for the Council to bring in income and added value.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Self-funders are currently charged a set up fee of £100.00 when Herefordshire Council arranges their care and support, and £9.50 monthly administration fee for managing care and support contracts on the person's behalf. These fees have not changed since 2024 and are discretionary i.e. there is no legislation determining minimum or maximum charges. However, the Council must exercise good judgement, reasonableness and act with care when determining charges.

A benchmarking exercise has determined that Herefordshire is an outlier in terms of fees and charges and could benefit from making charges to increase potential income.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Planning for consultation is underway with a view to provisionally start formal consultation in January 2026.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

Benchmarking against other Local Authorities has shown Herefordshire Council charges significantly lower. For example, Bridgend County Council charge £500 per year on cost neutral basis compared to £100 set up fee and £9.50 monthly administration charged by Herefordshire Council.

Findings from the consultation will be reported once consultation has concluded.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

After the needs assessment, the local authority decides if the individual's care needs meet national eligibility criteria under the Care Act. If eligible, the local authority performs a means test to assess the person's financial situation. Thresholds for self-funders are determined nationally. Current threshold for England in 2025/26 show an upper capital limit of £23,250. Anyone requiring care who either has savings or assets greater than £23,250 or those people who do not wish to declare their savings and assets are liable for the full cost of their care. Therefore, any changes to self-funders fees for the setting up and administration of their care will need to be met by the self-funder until such time as their savings and assets fall below the threshold. There is no additional discrimination against this group by the Council if there are changes to the fees.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale.

Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group.

Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A child cannot be charged for social care services under current statutory and local policy frameworks. Children's services are funded through public provision and are exempt from the charging rules that apply to adults. Adults requiring care who are required to contribute towards the cost of their care may see an increase in charges. However, should their savings fall below the thresholds then the Council would be responsible for arranging their care and charges would move to contributions towards care, rather than administrative charges.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adults requiring care who are required to contribute towards the cost of their care may see an increase in charges. However, should their savings fall below the thresholds then the Council would be responsible for arranging their care and charges

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
				would move to contributions towards care, rather than administrative charges.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of their gender or gender reassignment.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of whether they are pregnant. Maternity is not impacted.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of race and ethnicity.
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of religion and beliefs.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of "sex")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of sex.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of sexual orientation.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Care leavers and homeless people are not likely to meet thresholds for self-funding. Family members or friends providing unpaid care are entitled to a carer's assessments to review their ability to care and to identify their support needs. They do not undergo a financial assessment when receiving support through a carer's assessment.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charges will be applied to all self-funders regardless of their health conditions.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Age	Consultation will include groups and individuals of a variety of ages and with those who advocate for age groups who cannot advocate for themselves e.g. children, to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Disability	Consultation will include groups and individuals with a variety of disabilities to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026
Health inequality	Consultation will include groups and individuals with carrying health condition to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

A full report of the consultation findings will be written and will include perceived impacts as reported by individual impacted by any changes to self-funder charges.

When will you review this EIA?

A review of the EIA will take place following the consultation and when self-funder charges are agreed to understand the impacts.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA



Date signed

12.12.2025

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

1

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

5

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Leeona Marsh

Directorate: Community Wellbeing

Name of lead person for this activity:

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Manny Jhawar-Gill

Date assessment completed: 12.12.2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Review of Fees and Charging across the full spectrum of services in the Community Wellbeing Directorate.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The aim of this activity is to review fees and charging to ensure the Council has set appropriate rates. There are opportunities for the Council to bring in income and added value as it moves to being commercially minded.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Current fees and charges from across the Community Wellbeing Directorate have been collated ranging from fee rates for care and support, to entrance fees to museums, library fines, room hire and permits. This data has been collected for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Benchmarking across other Local Authority rates will support the Herefordshire Council to understand how local fees and charges compare regionally and with our neighbouring authorities.

Each service within Community Wellbeing will review their respective fees and charges and bring the information together into one report.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Planning for consultation is underway with a view to provisionally start formal consultation in January 2026.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

Upon comparison of fees and charges from 2024/25 to 2025/26 some rates have not been uplifted and therefore the Council has not been maximising its income generation to invest in services. In addition, Herefordshire Council's fees and charges are broadly lower than the region. Findings from the consultation will be reported once consultation has concluded.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

There are a broad range of services within scope for this review. Equality can be promoted by offering discounts to people with protected characteristics. However, charging for care and support is also necessary.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale.

Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group.

Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges applied may differ depending upon age. Differentiation for children (0-18yrs) and people aged over 65 may be applied for entry fees to venues. Impact may be seen by working aged adults. A child cannot be charged for social care services under current statutory and local policy frameworks Children's services are funded through public provision and are exempt from the charging rules that apply to adults.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges for people accessing social care services may see a difference in what they are charged for administration e.g. charges for arranging care for self-funders. At the same time, charges for entry to public venues may enable disabled people to have concessions.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of gender, gender identity or gender reassignment and there will be no adverse effects.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of marital or civil partnership status and there will be no adverse effects.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of pregnancy and maternity status and there will be no adverse effects.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of race and there will be no adverse effects.
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of religion and belief and there will be no adverse effects.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of "sex")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of sex and there will be no adverse effects.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be applied regardless of sexual orientation and there will be no adverse effects.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges will be taken into account for Carers and Care Leavers, homeless people and people whose incomes will be low. These groups will generally not be charged or have a reduction in charges.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fees and charges for people accessing services may see a difference in what they are charged for. At the same time, charges for entry to public venues may enable people who are disabled by their health condition to have concessions.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Age	Consultation will include groups and individuals of a variety of ages and with those who advocate for age groups who cannot advocate for themselves e.g. children, to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026
Disability	Consultation will include groups and individuals with a variety of disabilities to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026
Health inequality	Consultation will include groups and individuals with carrying health condition to understand impacts.	Head of Service – Ageing Well	Jan-Feb 2026

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

A project plan has been developed which includes timeframes for planning and delivering the consultation. A full report of the consultation findings will be written which will include perceived impacts as reported by individuals impacted.

Impacts will be discussed with senior leaders before decisions are made on changes to fees and sharing structures.

When will you review this EIA?

A review of the EIA will take place following the consultation and when new fees and charges are agreed to understand the impacts.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA



Date signed

12.12.2025

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

2

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what [equality factors](#) you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full [EIA](#) is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Add up the “yes” column:

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How many answers are “yes”?:

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Emily Lowe, Head of Communities

Directorate: Community Wellbeing

Name of lead person for this activity: Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health

Individual(s) completing this assessment: Emily Lowe

Date assessment completed: 16/01/2026

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Talk Community service restructure and staffing savings proposal

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

To deliver required budget savings while maintaining a viable, prevention-focused community service aligned to the Talk Community Strategy.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: VCSE groups

Is this:

Review of an existing activity/policy
 New activity/policy
 Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Talk Community Strategy 2024–27, internal service usage and engagement data; workforce and service delivery information; local demographic and needs evidence (including JSNA); and ongoing feedback and intelligence from community and voluntary sector engagement.

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

This EIA is being undertaken in advance of formal staff consultation and prior to any final decisions being made.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

As the proposals are subject to formal consultation, detailed equality impacts cannot yet be fully evidenced and will be informed by consultation feedback

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

The proposals do not intentionally discriminate and will be implemented through fair and transparent consultation and HR processes. There is potential sensitivity for staff and communities which could affect perceptions and relationships if not well managed. This will be mitigated through meaningful consultation, clear communication, and engagement with trade unions and stakeholders.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale.

Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group.

Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Older people, children and young families may be indirectly affected if community capacity is reduced. Mitigated by prioritising highest-need groups.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of “sex”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No specific differential impact identified at this stage.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People experiencing deprivation may rely more heavily on prevention services. Mitigated through prioritisation and targeted delivery.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reduced capacity may affect preventative work addressing health inequalities. Mitigated through prioritisation and targeted delivery.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Unintended equality impacts on staff arising from proposed restructure	Undertake formal consultation in line with the process and review equality impacts as part of decision-making	HOS/ HR	During consultation
Reduced service capacity affecting communities experiencing inequality	Prioritise needs-led delivery and review service impacts following implementation	HOS	Post implementation
Equality impacts not fully evidenced at pre-consultation stage	Update this EIA using consultation feedback and any additional evidence gathered	HOS	Post consultation

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

Actions will be monitored through the formal consultation process, feedback from staff and trade unions, HR oversight of Management of Change processes, and ongoing service performance and delivery monitoring following implementation.

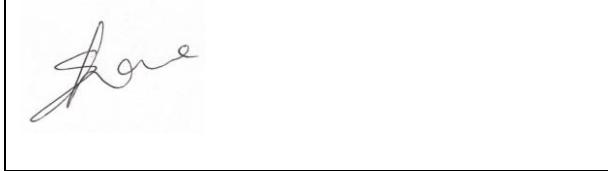
When will you review this EIA?

Following the conclusion of the consultation and updated as necessary prior to implementation, with a further review post-implementation to assess any realised equality impacts.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA



Date signed

16/01/2026

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.

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8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

2

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

1

How many answers are “yes”?:

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1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

1

How many answers are “yes”?:

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4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: David Land
 Directorate: Environment and Economy
 Name of lead person for this activity: Michael Barnes
 Individual(s) completing this assessment: David Land
 Date assessment completed: 15/1/26

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Review of parking tariffs

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

Introducing a free pop and shop parking option in council car parks
 Uplift some parking tariffs in Herefordshire

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Review of parking tariffs compared with inflation

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Parking tariff changes are regulated nationally and through the Council's financial policy. Local Authorities are required to publish Notification of variation in local newspaper for 21 days. We will respond to any feedback received during this period.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

TBC following notification responses

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex (consider issues of safety, sexual violence, part-time work, and single-sex provision – especially in light of the legal definition of “sex”)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Potential impact on careers and people on low income that own a car. Carers due to needing to park regularly so impact might be greater, and people on low income for any increase in charging.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Negative impact on carers due to potential high need for parking and additional charges having more impact	Availability of permits at a reduced rate for all council car parks to be promoted to carers.	Parking team	Ongoing
Negative impact on people with low income of charge increase	Introduction of a 30 min pop and shop free parking period will offer a free alternative which doesn't currently exist	Parking team	Implementation in April 2026
Impact on carers visiting clients or family on regular occasion	Virtual parking permits made available carers in area that have resident parking schemes	Parking team	Implementation of virtual parking permits is due in 2026.

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

Car park usage, complaints and budgets will be monitored

When will you review this EIA?

When the notification period is completed

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John'.

Date signed

16/1/2026

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Upload your EIA to the shared Teams site: [Equality Impact Assessment | General | Microsoft Teams](#)
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

3

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality impact screening checklist

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	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Add up the “yes” column:

1

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Add up the “yes” column:

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	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

2

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Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column: _____

How many answers are “yes”?:

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1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what [equality factors](#) you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full [EIA](#) is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Rachael Sanders

Directorate: Corporate Services

Name of lead person for this activity: Rachael Sanders

Individual(s) completing this assessment:

Date assessment completed: 12 December 2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Council Tax increase in 2026/27 budget setting.

The proposed draft revenue budget for 2026/27 is a balanced budget. The proposal includes a 4.99% increase in Council Tax (2.99% increase in core Council Tax and 2.00% adult social care precept). This is the maximum increase permitted without a referendum.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The council is required to set a balanced budget each year under Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Reductions in Central Government funding along with increases in budget pressures have meant that the maximum increase in Council Tax has been proposed to enable a balanced budget and to maintain financial sustainability of the council into the medium term financial strategy period.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Office for National Statistics, Census 2021 data – population, age, disability.

Office for National Statistics, unemployment data (November 2025).

Office for National Statistics, Disability pay gaps in the UK (October 2024).

Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (November 2025).

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – Council Tax support claimants (September 2025).

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – Children in Low income families (March 2025).

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

A public consultation will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process. For 2026/27, this will involve an online survey to gather feedback from residents and local businesses. The analysis of consultation results will be included in the budget setting reports for Cabinet and Council.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

Age

The 2021 Census population data shows that 26% of the population of Herefordshire are aged 65 years and over. The MHCLG data shows that 42% of Council Tax support claimants are pensioners. This indicates that older adults are likely to be disproportionately impacted by an increase in Council Tax.

Disability

The 2021 Census population data shows that 6.7% of Herefordshire residents class themselves as disabled and limited a lot, and 10.3% class themselves as disabled and limited a little. The Office for National Statistics data for disability pay gap shows median hourly pay for those limited a little at 12.7% and for those limited a lot at 17.1%. This indicates that those with a disability are likely to be disproportionately impacted by an increase in Council Tax.

Sex

The Office for National Statistics data on the gender pay gap indicates that women in Herefordshire are paid 9.9% less than men. This indicates that women are likely to be disproportionately impacted by an increase in Council Tax.

The 2021 Census population data shows that the gender split of older adults aged 65 and over in Herefordshire is approximately equal (53% and 47%). This indicates that there is no significant additional impact due to gender on use of council services for older adults.

Social/economic deprivation

The Office for National Statistics data for unemployment shows the level of unemployment in Herefordshire is 2.7%.

The DWP data for children in low income families shows that 5,272 children in Herefordshire are living in families classed as in relative absolute poverty.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

n/a

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale. Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group. Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact</p> <p>The proposed increase in Council Tax income will fund higher spend on services, including services for older people and children/younger people. Demand and complexity of demand within these services has been increasing, along with inflationary pressures as a result of general cost inflation as well as the impact of National Living Wage and employer's National Insurance increases. The increased budget for these services will support sustainability of these statutory services and will benefit this group in the longer term.</p> <p>Negative impact</p> <p>The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics. This is more likely for older adults with lower incomes and for children in low income families.</p> <p>Mitigations</p> <p>Residents on low or fixed incomes may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed increase in Council Tax. Residents in Herefordshire with lower income continue to be supported through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes.</p>
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact</p> <p>The proposed increase in Council Tax income will fund higher spend on services, including services for people with disabilities. Demand and complexity of demand within these services has been increasing, along with inflationary pressures as a result of general cost inflation as well as the impact of National Living Wage and employer's National Insurance increases. The increased budget for these services will support sustainability of these statutory services and will benefit this group in the longer term.</p> <p>Negative impact</p> <p>The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics. This is more likely for people with disabilities due to the pay gap evidence.</p> <p>Mitigations</p> <p>Residents on low or fixed incomes may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed increase in Council Tax. Residents in Herefordshire with lower income continue to be supported through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes. It is proposed that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is maintained at the maximum level as in previous years.</p>

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Negative impact</p> <p>The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics. This is more likely for those in the pregnancy/maternity group due to the potential for lower income during this period (maternity leave, part time working, etc.)</p> <p>NB. Data source outstanding.</p> <p>Mitigations</p> <p>Residents on low or fixed incomes may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed increase in Council Tax. Residents in Herefordshire with lower income continue to be supported through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes.</p>
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.
Sex (consider issues of safety and sexual violence, part-time work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Negative impact</p> <p>The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics. This is more likely for females due to the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Mitigations</p> <p>Residents on low or fixed incomes may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed increase in Council Tax. Residents in Herefordshire with lower income continue to be supported through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes. It is proposed that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is maintained at the maximum level as in previous years.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>Negative impact</u></p> <p>The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics. This is more likely for those groups with low or fixed incomes, including carers, care leavers, homeless, social/economic deprivation.</p> <p>NB. Data source outstanding.</p> <p><u>Mitigations</u></p> <p>Residents on low or fixed incomes may be disproportionately impacted by the proposed increase in Council Tax. Residents in Herefordshire with lower income continue to be supported through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes. It is proposed that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is maintained at the maximum level as in previous years.</p> <p>There are also specific Local Council Tax discounts available for foster carers and care leavers to support these groups.</p>
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed increase in Council Tax is unlikely to disproportionately impact individuals within this protected characteristic group. There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income.</p>

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
The proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.99% has the potential to negatively impact all residents of the county, including those with protected characteristics.	Mitigations are already in place through the existing Council Tax Reduction and Hardship schemes. This support will continue in 2026/27 at the maximum level as in previous years.	n/a	n/a
Groups within this EIA with potentially lower income and therefore higher impact of this policy are pregnancy/maternity, those in the other category (carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation) and veterans.	The council is reviewing data sources to provide information to evidence the potential for lower income in these groups.	Intelligence Unit Team	February 2026

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

The Council Tax Reduction scheme is considered for renewal each year by Cabinet in line with the budget setting reporting.

When will you review this EIA?

Annually through the budget setting process.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

Rachael Sanders

Date signed

16 January 2026

9. Make this EIA available (and delete this section)

- Attach your EIA as an appendix to any decision reports so that decision-makers have all the equality data they need in order to make robust and fair decisions.
- Staff, trade unions, service users or members of the public may want to see this EIA, so it must be published on our website along with the decision report.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Rachael Sanders

Directorate: Corporate Services

Name of lead person for this activity: Rachael Sanders

Individual(s) completing this assessment:

Date assessment completed: 10 December 2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for Herefordshire Council is available to working age claimants (set locally by the council) and pensioner claimants (set nationally by Central Government). The local CTRS reduces Council Tax charges by 100% for claimants if they meet certain set criteria. The scheme proposed for 2026/27 is unchanged from the 2025/26 scheme.

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The scheme aims to mitigate the financial impact of increases in Council Tax as proposed in the 2026/27 draft budget by reducing the debt burden on those residents who struggle to pay their Council Tax charge.

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, e.g. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Office for National Statistics, Census 2021 data – population, age, disability.

Office for National Statistics, unemployment data (November 2025).

Office for National Statistics, Disability pay gaps in the UK (October 2024).

Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (November 2025).

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) – Council Tax support claimants (September 2025).

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – Children in Low income families (March 2025).

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

A public consultation will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process. For 2026/27, this will involve an online survey to gather feedback from residents and local businesses. The analysis of consultation results will be included in the budget setting reports for Cabinet and Council.

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) eligibility is based on level of income and savings. This policy will disproportionately positively impact those protected characteristic groups where there is evidence that they have lower income levels than average. This is because they could have a successful application to the scheme resulting in a lower/no Council Tax charge. This potentially applies to the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Pregnancy/Maternity, Sex and Social/economic deprivation.

Age

The 2021 Census population data shows that 26% of the population of Herefordshire are aged 65 years and over. The MHCLG data shows that 42% of Council Tax support claimants are pensioners. This indicates that older adults are likely to have low levels of income and would therefore be disproportionately positively impacted by the CTRS.

Disability

The 2021 Census population data shows that 6.7% of Herefordshire residents class themselves as disabled and limited a lot, and 10.3% class themselves as disabled and limited a little. The Office for National Statistics data for disability pay gap shows median hourly pay for those limited a little at 12.7% and for those limited a lot at 17.1%. This indicates that those with a disability are likely to have low levels of income and would therefore be disproportionately positively impacted by the CTRS.

Pregnancy/Maternity

There is potential for lower income for this group due to maternity leave and part time hours during this period. This indicates that those in the pregnancy/maternity group are likely to have low levels of income and would therefore be disproportionately positively impacted by the CTRS.

Sex

The Office for National Statistics data on the gender pay gap indicates that women in Herefordshire are paid 9.9% less than men. This indicates that women are likely to have low levels of income and would therefore be disproportionately positively impacted by the CTRS.

Social/economic deprivation

The Office for National Statistics data for unemployment shows the level of unemployment in Herefordshire is 2.7%.

The DWP data for children in low income families shows that 5,272 children in Herefordshire are living in families classed as in relative absolute poverty.

This indicates that this group are likely to have low levels of income and would therefore be disproportionately positively impacted by the CTRS.

Note we are unable to obtain protected characteristics data on those successful applicants to the CTRS, with the exception of Age, which is published by MHCLG.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

By minimising the financial burden on those who struggle to afford their Council Tax charges, the council is promoting financial equality of opportunity.

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale.

Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group.

Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The CTRS claimants' data shows that 42% of successful claims are made by pensioners, which is a higher proportion than the population demographics would suggest. This suggests that older adults are disproportionately positively impacted by this scheme.
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ONS data shows there is a disability pay gap which would indicate that those people with disabilities are more likely to be lower paid. This suggest that people with disabilities are disproportionately positively impacted by this scheme.
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is more likely that this group would have lower income due to maternity leave pay and potential for part time hours during this period. This suggests that the pregnancy/maternity group are disproportionately positively impacted by this scheme. NB. Data source outstanding.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.
Sex (consider issues of safety and sexual violence, part-time work)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ONS data shows there is a gender pay gap which would indicate that women are more likely to be lower paid. This suggest that women are disproportionately positively impacted by this scheme.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is more likely that this group would have lower income due to their social/economic factors. This suggests that this group are disproportionately positively impacted by this scheme. NB. Data source outstanding.

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence to suggest this group have lower income, therefore this policy is likely to impact this group in line with the general population.

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
Groups within this EIA with potentially lower income and therefore higher positive impact of this policy are pregnancy/maternity, those in the other category (carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation) and veterans.	The council is reviewing data sources to provide information to evidence the potential for lower income in these groups.	Intelligence Unit Team	February 2026

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

The Council Tax Reduction scheme is considered for renewal each year by Cabinet in line with the budget setting reporting.

When will you review this EIA?

Annually through the budget setting process.

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

Rachael Sanders

Date signed

16 January 2026

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

0

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Cost centre C06316 Council Tax collection costs:

Expenditure budgets for Council Tax discretionary awards are overspending and need to be increased from £330k to £500k. £126k of this increase is being vired from other budgets within the Central directorate, leaving £43k of increased budget requirement.

Council Tax discretionary award expenditure budget is spent on hardship relief, [Ukraine discounts, care leaver discounts](#) and foster carer discounts. This spend has been increasing over the past 3 years with a forecast of £500k in the current financial year, due in part to the decision to include foster carers who pay Council Tax to other Local Authorities.

2023/24	£309k
2024/25	£435k
2025/26	£500k (forecast)

This EIA covers the requirement to increase the expenditure budget in line with the increased spend in this area. It does not cover the original decisions to award Council Tax reliefs and discounts. Equalities Act impact would have been assessed at the point of decision.

The increase in these budgets does not directly impact service users and is therefore not anticipated to have an Equalities Act impact.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

0

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Cost centre C06318 Housing Benefit administration costs:

Expenditure budgets for computer expenditure and fees are overspending and need to be increased by £55k. This is due to increased costs of system maintenance.

The increase in these budgets does not directly impact service users and is therefore not anticipated to have an Equalities Act impact.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

0

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Cost centre C06317 NNDR administration costs:

Expenditure budget is underspent and can be reduced by £122k.

Cost centre C06318 Housing Benefit administration costs:

Income budget can be increased by £4k to match the grant income expectations.

These budgets have both been vired for 2026/27 budget setting to help support increased costs within the Council Tax discretionary award pot within cost centre C06316 Council Tax collection costs.

The reduction in these budgets does not directly impact service users and is therefore not anticipated to have an Equalities Act impact.

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

2

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

1. Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for activity being assessed: Philippa Wride
Directorate: Governance and Law

Name of lead person for this activity: Philippa Wride
Individual(s) completing this assessment: Philippa Wride
Date assessment completed: 2 December 2025

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, budget, service redesign, strategy etc.)

Service redesign within Hear Me Service (Children's Rights and Advocacy)

What is the aim, purpose, or intended outcome of this activity?

The aim is to re-align service demand with staffing requirements. The team has been recruited in excess of service need. The aim is to reduce the staffing levels from 6.3 FTE to 3.0 FTE

Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to the county
<input type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	<input type="checkbox"/> All part-time staff
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff at a particular location	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Is this:

- Review of an existing activity/policy
- New activity/policy
- Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?

3. Background information and findings

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name your sources, eg. demographic information, usage data, Census data, feedback, complaints, audits, research)

Data on the numbers of children open to Children's Services – CLA, care leavers, CP, CIN
Annual reports over last 3 years of Hear Me service showing the number of referrals to the service
Service case tracker records
Staffing establishment
Service Level Agreements 2020 and 2023

Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who you've engaged with, and how, or why do you believe this is not required)

Formal consultation will be with the staff team and key stakeholders during the course of the restructure process

Summary of relevant findings (it is possible that you will have gaps in your evidence. You must decide whether you need to fill in the gaps now, and if it is feasible to do so. It might be that collecting robust information forms part of your action plan below)

All relevant information is available and has been considered.

The 2023 SLA incorrectly assumes the size of the staffing capacity needed based on the size of the children's services population as opposed to expected referrals into the team. On this basis the team was recruited to although referrals to the service have reduced year on year.

4. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Will this activity have a positive, neutral or negative impact on our duty to:

Equality Duty	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain your rationale here, and include any ways in which you could strengthen the capacity of this activity to promote equality (remember to add anything relevant into your action planning below)

None identified

5. The impact of this activity

Consider the potential impact of this activity on each of the equality groups outlined below and explain your rationale.

Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group.

Remember to consider the impact on staff and service users (current and potential) and partner organisations. It may be useful to include data within these sections if you know the diversity make-up of the people likely to be affected.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Rationale
Age (include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability (consider attitudinal, physical, financial and social barriers, neuro-diversity, learning disability, physical and sensory impairment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are some staff who may feel anxious whilst the process takes place
Gender Reassignment (include gender identity, and consider privacy of data and harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy & Maternity (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This should not impact on staff who may pregnant
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex (consider issues of safety and sexual violence, part-time work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Equality Group	Potential positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative impact	Rationale
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Others: carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation (consider shift-patterns, caring responsibilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are some staff with potential health issues but this should not impact on them other than the anxiety that such processes can naturally cause

Where a negative impact on any of the equality groups is realised after the implementation of the activity, the activity lead will seek to minimise the impact and carry out a full review of this EIA.

6. Action planning

What actions will you take as a result of this impact assessment? (you will need to include actions to mitigate any potential negative impacts)

Potential negative impact	What action will be taken	Who will lead	Timeframe
N/A			

7. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?

N/A

When will you review this EIA?

At the end of the restructure process

8. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to how they can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of their day-to-day business. This means that they must consider, and keep reviewing, how they are promoting equality in decision-making, policies, services, procurement, staff recruitment and management.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.

Signature of person completing EIA

Philippa Wride

Date signed

2 December 2025

Equality impact screening checklist

Remember that your completed checklist will be available to decision-makers and the public, and is therefore open to challenge. Consider what evidence is in place to support your answers.

	Yes	No
1. Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for any of the protected characteristics (eg. age, sex, disability, race, religion, pregnancy, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Do/will people who have different protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or our employment practices (eg. software purchase, team restructure or relocation, HR policy)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the policy involve, or will it have an impact upon, eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, or promoting good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9. Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups or staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Add up the “yes” column:

1

How many answers are “yes”?:

0: **No impact** – the process is complete.

1-3: **Low impact** – an EIA is not required at this point (you can complete a light-touch EIA now or later if you want to – that is never wrong). But you must still indicate within your documentation and decision papers what equality factors you have considered. This is a statutory requirement, and is open to challenge and scrutiny.

4-9: **High impact** - a full EIA is required immediately. The EIA can be reviewed, re-done, or updated at any time as necessary.



Title of report: Annual review of Earmarked Reserves – 2025/26

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 5 February 2026

Report by: Leader of the Council (Section 9E)

Classification

Open

Decision type

Budget and policy framework

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

To note and review the earmarked reserves held by the council.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The earmarked reserves and balances held by the council at 31 March 2025 are reviewed and confirmed as prudent to meet future financial commitments and risks; and
- b) The Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27 is approved and forecast balances to 31 March 2027 are noted.

Alternative options

1. There is no alternative option to undertaking a review. Alternative use of earmarked funds could be proposed, this is open for Cabinet to determine. However should that mean that funds required for an earmarked purpose are no longer available an alternative method of funding would need to be secured. Not all earmarked funds may be redirected for use – for example funding received from external sources for a specified purpose may not be able to be redirected if doing so would amount to a breach of funding conditions.

Key considerations

2. Earmarked reserves represent amounts set aside for future expenditure; to support specific corporate priorities or for general contingencies and cash flow management. The General Fund balance is not allocated, or earmarked, for a specific purpose but represents a strategic reserve to be used in the event of a major incident or emergency.
3. It is considered prudent to maintain a level of reserve balances commensurate with risk and an assessment to confirm the adequacy and robustness of balances is undertaken annually by the Section 151 Officer as part of the budget setting process.
4. This Earmarked Reserves and General Policy Statement 2026/27, at Appendix 1, sets out the council's approach to maintaining appropriate levels of reserves and general balances to meet known future commitments and to mitigate against unforeseen future events
5. The Council's useable revenue reserves are split between a general reserve (the General Fund) and earmarked reserves that are held for certain purposes. Part of the Council's General Fund is held as a strategic reserve to cover emergency events such as unforeseen financial liabilities or natural disasters.
6. The General Fund reserve is maintained at a minimum level of between 3% and 5% of the net revenue budget. As at 31 March 2025 the general reserve balance totalled £10.1m, being 4.3% of the council's 2025/26 approved net revenue budget.
7. The council's earmarked reserve balances at 31 March 2025 totalled £80.7 million comprising £16.8 million of reserves held for liabilities and risk, £14.1 million held for budget resilience, £9.3 million which represent fund to support strategic priorities, £1.8 million of accounting reserves, £27.0 million in grants and contributions and £11.7 million of balances held on behalf of schools.
8. Earmarked reserve balances at 31 March 2025, detailed at Annex A of Appendix 1, include £18.0 million grant funding carried forward to 2025/26. This represents amounts of grant funding received, with no outstanding grant conditions attached, which have not yet been applied to relevant expenditure. In accordance with the principles of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and relevant accounting standards, these amounts are treated as earmarked reserves to be carried forward for application in future accounting periods.
9. Forecast earmarked reserve balances for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years are noted at Annex A, Appendix 1. At 31 March 2026, the forecast balance of earmarked reserves is £65.2 million, £41.6 million at 31 March 2027. These balances will increase as new grants are received in future accounting periods.
10. The Quarter 2 2025/26 Budget Report presented to Cabinet in November 2025 reports a forecast overspend of £7.0 million at Quarter 2, before management action estimated at £3.3 million to reduce the forecast overspend to £3.7 million. Any overspend in 2025/26 must be funded using the council's available reserves and a review of reserve balances will be undertaken as part of the process to finalise the outturn position for the year.
11. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy identifies the key financial risks that could affect the council's financial position and resilience over the medium-term period. The council's financial strategy aims to minimise the use of reserves in the medium term and to replenish them to support future sustainability, enable the council to respond to unexpected changes and to invest in the continued transformation and improvement of its services.

12. As funding pressures continue, the council will need to consider opportunities to replenish reserve balances, as part of the future financial strategy, to build and protect financial resilience to mitigate against future financial risks.

Community impact

13. The use of reserves demonstrates how the council is using its financial resources to best deliver the priorities within the agreed corporate plan, health and safety obligations and corporate parenting responsibilities.

Environmental Impact

14. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

Equality duty

15. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. An equality impact screening checklist will be completed for budget proposals and where necessary a full Equality Impact Assessment will be performed. Equalities will be considered during the delivery of the service to ensure that the Council has regard to any potential effects on those with protected characteristics.

Resource implications

16. The use of reserves will mean permanent depletion of those reserves unless budget is set aside to replenish those reserves or additional grant funding is received. Incurring expenditure against earmarked reserves will be subject to approval following the usual governance processes which will detail the resource implication of each proposal.
17. An assessment to confirm the adequacy and robustness of balances is undertaken annually by the Section 151 Officer as part of the budget setting process.

Legal implications

18. The council is required to set a balanced budget each year under Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which includes having regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the council tax requirement.
19. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the council to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and ensure that one of its officers (also referred to as the S151 officer) has responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
20. Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the S151 officer has a duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is setting its annual budget and council tax requirement.
21. The review of earmarked reserves does not have in itself any legal implications, using reserves to manage risks is a prudent approach.

Risk management

22. Maintaining reserves for risk mitigation and an annual review of reserve balances is recommended by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as best practice. The risks mitigated by funds held in earmarked reserves and the General Fund are highlighted in Appendix 1.

Consultees

23. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2026/27

Background papers

None identified.

EARMARKED RESERVES AND GENERAL BALANCES POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

Introduction

- 1.1 This statement sets out the council's approach to maintaining appropriate levels of reserves and general balances to meet known future commitments and to mitigate against unforeseen future events.
- 1.2 The council's earmarked reserves represent amounts set aside for future expenditure; to support specific corporate priorities or for general contingencies and cash flow management. The General Fund balance is not allocated, or earmarked, for a specific purpose but represents a strategic reserve to be used in the event of a major incident or emergency.
- 1.3 It is considered prudent to maintain a level of reserve balances commensurate with risk and an assessment to confirm the adequacy and robustness of balances is undertaken annually by the Section 151 Officer as part of the budget setting process.

Legislative Framework

- 2.1 The council is required to set a balanced budget each year under Section 31A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which includes having regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the council tax requirement.
- 2.2 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the council to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and ensure that one of its officers (also referred to as the S151 officer) has responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
- 2.3 Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the S151 officer has a duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is setting its annual budget and council tax requirement.

Assessing the adequacy of reserves

- 3.1 The council's financial strategy aims to minimise the use of reserves in the medium term and to replenish them to support future sustainability, enable the council to respond to unexpected changes and to invest in the continued transformation and improvement of its services.
- 3.2 There are robust controls in place, as part of routine budget monitoring arrangements, to monitor in-year transfers to and from reserves and resulting reserve balances and these transactions are subject to review as part of the annual audit of the statutory accounts.
- 3.3 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Resilience Index is a comparative tool to support good financial management. The index shows a council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk to highlight where additional scrutiny may be required. The data for the most recent index reflects figures obtained from the Revenue Expenditure and Financing England Outturn Report 2024/25 (RO Forms) as at 31 March 2025.
- 3.4 The reserve sustainability measure provides a measure of how long in years it will take for a council to run out of reserves if they continue to use them as they have and the

associated level of risk. This data highlights the council's reserve sustainability measure to be 'lower risk' and notes the council has average reserves relative to its nearest neighbour and other unitary authority comparator groups.

- 3.5 The risk assessment for 2026/27 has determined that a General Fund balance of £10.1 million, unchanged from 2025/26, should be maintained. This is equivalent to 4.3% of the proposed operating budget of £234.1 million for 2026/27 and equates to between two and three weeks of net expenditure. Details of this risk assessment are set out at Annex C.
- 3.6 The Quarter 2 2025/26 Budget Report presented to Cabinet in November 2025 highlights a forecast overspend of £7.0 million before management and recovery action planned in 2025/26. The variance represents in-year cost pressures of £5.6 million arising as a result of increased demand and complexity of need in adult social care budgets, temporary accommodation, and home to school transport and £1.4 million of savings targets assessed as at risk at Quarter 2 2025/26.
- 3.7 The Budget Resilience Reserve (Contingency reserve) was established in 2024/25 to mitigate against in-year cost pressures. It is proposed that £2.8 million of this reserve will be used to manage the impact of in-year cost pressures and volatility in demand across social care budgets in the Community Wellbeing Directorate in 2025/26.
- 3.8 The remaining balance of £4.2 million will be carried forward at 31 March 2026 and transferred to a centrally managed Contract Inflation Fund to manage inflationary increases which cannot be managed within Directorate budgets, with amounts transferred to Directorates through existing expenditure control processes when evidence of need has been demonstrated. At the end of the 2026/27 financial year, any unused balance will be considered as part of the annual review of earmarked reserves.

Earmarked Reserves

- 4.1 Annex A sets out the audited earmarked reserve balances at 1 April 2025 and forecast balances at 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2027. Annex B presents the reserve balances by category, noting reserves held for liability and risk, budget resilience, accounting purposes, to fund strategic priorities and those which represent grant and other balances to be carried forward for expenditure in future years.
- 4.2 Excluding schools' balances, earmarked reserves are forecast to be £53.5 million at 31 March 2026 and £29.9 million at 31 March 2027; a reduction of £23.6 million. This reduction includes £5.8 million application of grant funding, accounted for as Earmarked Reserves which is expected to be applied to relevant expenditure in 2026/27 and £6.0 million transfer of reserve balances to establish the Contract Inflation Fund.
- 4.3 This position does not take into account the cumulative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit, accounted for as an unusable reserve as permitted by statutory instrument. Further detail in respect of the DSG deficit is included in the Draft Revenue Budget Report 2026/27 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30.
- 4.4 The General Fund Balance is forecast to be maintained at £10.1 million to 31 March 2027.
- 4.5 A description of each reserve and explanation of risks to be managed and mitigated is set out below.

Business Rates Risk Reserve: This reserve is held to manage risks in the business rate regime including the impact of changes in the level of business rates income and uncertainty over appeals.

Waste Reserve: This reserve is held to manage risks and support future costs in respect of the council's waste collection and disposal contracts.

Budget Resilience Reserve: This reserve is held to mitigate the risk to the revenue budget of excessive cost pressures and volatility in demand across social care budgets.

Fastershire Reserve: This reserve represents the balance of grant funding received in respect of the Fastershire partnership between Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire Council. This represents the council's share of grant funding received, with no grant conditions attached, which has not yet been applied to relevant expenditure. In accordance with the principles of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and relevant accounting standards, these amounts are treated as Earmarked Reserves to be carried forward for application in future accounting periods.

Financial Resilience Reserve: This reserve is held to manage financial risks across the council.

Settlement Monies Reserve: This reserve represents balances held in relation to historic settlement claims awarded to the council.

Whitecross PFI Reserve: This reserve represents the cumulative amount of unapplied funding received to date which will be utilised to finance the Schools PFI over the whole life of the project. The reserve also includes an amount to cover future Lifecycle Cost prepayments.

Unused Grants Carried Forward: This balance represents unspent grant monies, with no grant conditions attached, which has not yet been applied to relevant expenditure. In accordance with the principles of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and relevant accounting standards, these amounts are treated as Earmarked Reserves to be carried forward for application in future accounting periods.

Other Reserves individual under £1.0 million: This balance represents individual Directorate reserves, less than £1.0 million. Transfers to and from these reserve balances are monitored and reported as part of routine financial monitoring arrangements.

Schools Balances: These balances are held on behalf of schools and are not funds available to the council.

- 4.6 The use of Earmarked Reserve balances is in accordance with the council's Financial Procedure Rules, which are approved annually by the Audit & Governance Committee.
- 4.7 All reserve balances are subject to a year-end review as part of the financial closedown process to finalise the outturn position for the year. This review is undertaken by the relevant corporate Director and S151 Officer and includes an assessment of the planned future use of each reserve. The outcome of this review is confirmed annually to Cabinet as part of reporting of the financial outturn position for the year for revenue and capital budgets.

ANNEX A Earmarked Reserve Balances

Table 1 Earmarked Reserve Balances at 31 March 2025 (audited) and 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2027 (forecast)

Reserve	Type	Audited Balance at 31/03/2025 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2026 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2027 £m
Business rates risk	Liabilities and risk	13.3	10.2	8.9
Waste	Budget resilience	7.1	4.8	0.1
Budget resilience	Budget resilience	7.0	4.2	-
Enterprise zone business rates growth	Strategic Priorities	3.0	2.7	-
Fastershire	Strategic Priorities	2.7	2.7	2.7
Financial resilience	Liabilities and risk	2.3	2.3	2.3
Settlement monies	Strategic Priorities	2.0	1.7	0.1
Whitecross school PFI	Accounting reserves	1.8	2.1	2.1
Public realm project	Strategic Priorities	1.6	0.9	-
RNC campus	Liabilities and risk	1.2	0.2	0.2
Unused grants carried forward	Grants and contributions	18.0	13.6	7.3
Other reserves individually under £1m	Grants and contributions	9.0	8.1	6.2
Total reserves excluding schools		69.0	53.5	29.9
Schools' balances	Schools	11.7	11.7	11.7
Total earmarked reserves		80.7	65.2	41.6
General fund balance		10.1	10.1	10.1
Total earmarked reserves and general fund		90.8	75.3	51.7

ANNEX B Categories of reserve

Reserve	Type
Business rates risk	Liabilities and risk
Waste	Budget resilience
Budget resilience reserve	Budget resilience
Enterprise zone business rates growth	Strategic Priorities
Fastershire	Strategic Priorities
Financial resilience	Liabilities and risk
Settlement monies	Strategic Priorities
Whitecross school PFI	Accounting reserves
Public realm project	Strategic Priorities
RNC campus	Liabilities and risk
Unused grants carried forward	Grants and contributions
Other reserves individually under £1m	Grants and contributions
Schools' balances	Schools

Reserve Type	Audited Balance at 31/03/2025 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2026 £m	Forecast Balance at 31/03/2027 £m
Liabilities and risk	16.8	12.7	11.4
Budget resilience	14.1	9.0	0.1
Strategic Priorities	9.3	8.0	2.8
Accounting reserves	1.8	2.1	2.1
Grants and contributions	27.0	21.7	13.5
Schools	11.7	11.7	11.7
Total	80.7	65.2	41.6

ANNEX C Risk assessment for determining appropriate level of reserve balances 2026/27

Table 2 Risk assessed minimum level of general fund balances from 1 April 2026

Area of risk	£m	Explanation of risk/basis of assessment
Emergencies	2.3	Allowance of 1.0% of net operating budget to respond to the impact of major disaster/emergency
Service Demand/Demographics		
Adult's Social Care Services	4.5	5.0% of Community Wellbeing net budget for 2026/27
Children's Social Care Services	2.9	5.0% of Children & Young People net budget for 2026/27
	7.4	
Expenditure		
Inflation exceeds assumed increase	2.4	1.0% increase in assumed rate of inflation
Treasury Management Reserve	(0.8)	Mitigated by Treasury Management Reserve
Financial Resilience Reserve	(1.2)	Mitigated by Financial Resilience Reserve
	0.4	
Income		
Reduction in Business Rates/Council Tax income	-	Mitigated by balance maintained in business rates risk reserve
Minimum General Fund Balance	10.1	

Risk assessed level of Balances as % of net operating budget	4.3%
Net operating budget (spend per week)	£4.5m
Weeks of spend	2.2 weeks