

## HEREFORDSHIRE 2020

### Foreword

Welcome to Herefordshire Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2016 – 2020. The plan records our progress to date, reaffirms our priorities and sets out our ambitions for the next four years.

Herefordshire Council continues to deliver against bold and ambitious plans and, by working with our local and national partners, we will continue to improve the quality of life for the county's residents.

By the end of the decade we will:

- Be even more focused on delivering good core services across the children's wellbeing, adults wellbeing and economy, communities and corporate directorates.
- Have encouraged and supported even more local services to be run by communities themselves.
- Have improved skills and educational attainment within our communities to address the problem of low wages in the county.
- Have enabled the development of new economic activity and external investment to introduce better and better-paid jobs.
- Have delivered new infrastructure to support economic growth and the provision of more good quality affordable homes across the county.
- Have delivered high speed broadband to all who need it.
- Have worked closely with central government as it transforms the ways in which local authorities are funded.
- Have developed and be well on the way to implementing a county wide Economic Masterplan prepared in partnership with business and communities.
- Have further embraced digital technology to save costs, to improve mobile-working and to offer residents 24/7 access to always on services.

In common with local authorities across the country, Herefordshire Council is facing significant financial challenges as central government strives to balance its budget. We are at the 6 year point of a 10 year 'austerity period' during which the council will face increasing demands on the services it provides whilst simultaneously making savings totalling £91 million.

Over the last five years the council's performance has improved across a wide range of services.

Building the foundations for a successful economy has been, and will continue to be, a key priority. We have enabled major improvements including the delivery of flood relief schemes; a new livestock market; a privately funded retail and leisure development on the site of the old livestock market; access to superfast broadband; an Enterprise Zone in Rotherwas, Hereford; improved leisure facilities across the county and improvements to the highway network. We have also put in place a Core Strategy that will provide a blueprint for developing the county over the period to 2031.

The council recognises that it is in the unique position of acting as a hub for the public sector, the private sector and the 3rd sector and accepts the responsibility to work with our partners and to provide leadership through the essential process of change in these most challenging of times.

Alongside delivering essential services, we will continue to build the infrastructure, encourage inward investment and create a business friendly environment to enable the economic growth that will ensure Herefordshire prospers in the future.

These are challenging times, but the council will meet the challenges whilst continuing to build bold and ambitious plans for the future.

## Herefordshire: an introduction

Herefordshire Council provides a wide range of services that combine to make a difference to residents' lives on a daily basis, including education, social care, highways and transport, planning, culture, waste management, environmental health and trading standards.

The council is funded by a combination of grants from central government, local council tax, local business rates and charges for some council provided services. The economic downturn has led to significant reductions in the funding we receive from central government. At the same time, there has been increased demand for some of our most important services, in particular those that protect vulnerable children and adults. We have been proactive in meeting that challenge, recognising that we need to radically change the way we work, in order that we can continue to deliver high quality services to the residents of the county.

This plan outlines our strategy for the next four years. It sets out how we will reshape services and become more efficient.

The plan focuses on the following four strategic priorities:

- Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives
- Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
- Support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work
- Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

## Setting the scene

- Herefordshire's population is about 186,100, having grown by six per cent (10,000 people) since 2001 (compared to nine per cent in England and Wales overall). About one-third of the population lives in Hereford city, a third in the market towns and a third in rural areas.
- Herefordshire is a popular destination for visitors, those with holiday homes and second homes and, in some areas, for out-of-county commuters.
- The county's population has a considerably older age profile than that for England and Wales, with 23 per cent of the population aged 65 years or above, compared with 17 per cent nationally. This includes 5,700 people aged 85 years or above. There are 25 per cent more people aged 65 years or over than there were in 2001, compared with a 19 per cent increase nationally. There is a similar proportion of under-16s as nationally (17 compared to 19 per cent).
- Herefordshire has a lower proportion of younger working age adults (aged 16 to early forties) compared with England and Wales as a whole, but has a higher proportion of older working age adults (mid-forties to 64).
- As a whole, Herefordshire has relatively low levels of multiple deprivation. In general people are healthy, live longer compared with nationally, and have positive experiences of the things that affect their lives and well-being. However, some areas of south Hereford, Leominster and Ross are amongst the 25 per cent most deprived in England. Although the government's 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks Herefordshire 145<sup>th</sup> out of 326 local authorities, there are areas of significant poverty and deprivation within the county.
- Average wages in the county are significantly below both the regional and national averages. Average house prices are high compared with elsewhere in the region. The affordable housing ratio is the worst in the West Midlands, with houses at the lower end of the market, costing around 8.6 times the annual wage of the lowest earners.
- Unemployment in the county is low. Both agriculture and tourism are a more important source of jobs in the county than elsewhere in the West Midlands. Self-employment is more common in Herefordshire than in the rest of the UK.

- Although Herefordshire performs better than the national average at GCSE, and those who are entered for Level 3 qualifications do well, there are relatively few people in the workforce with higher-level skills. Whilst there are a number of further education establishments throughout the county, there is limited higher education provision, and knowledge-based industries are under-represented in the county. There is net out-migration of young adults from the county in search of wider opportunities for employment and higher education.

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## Key achievements

This section highlights some of our notable achievements over the lifetime of our previous corporate plan (2013-16).

### **Economy - create and maintain a successful economy:**

- Worked with the private sector to support the development of the Old Market retail centre, bringing £90 million of private investment into the county and creating over 1,000 jobs, whilst relocating the new livestock market which is now one of the leading markets in the country;
- Made fibre broadband available to over 50 per cent of premises in the county, and over 300 businesses supported to improve digital skills;
- Developed the enterprise zone – 45 per cent let or under offer;
- Built the Connect 2 cycleway and foot bridge;
- Secured £XX million through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- Implemented a multi-million pound programme to improve the quality of Herefordshire's roads;
- Adoption of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, which will provide the basis for planning and development in the county;
- Energy from waste plant;
- Facilitated development of XX houses, of which XX were 'affordable';
- Built the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre, a cost efficient and purpose built records facility which now houses the county's archive records, archaeology unit, historic environment record, and the biological records centre together in one building;
- Invested £9 million in modernising and improving Halo Leisure run leisure facilities across the county; and
- The unemployment rate (JSA claimants) has fallen from 2.5 per cent to 0.6 percent.

### **People - enable residents to be independent and lead fulfilling lives:**

#### Children

- Exceeded the UK average for GCSE and A-level results in 2014 and 2015;
- Provided nursery placements for nearly all 3 to 4 year olds, and increased the number of places for 2 year olds, giving children a great start in life;
- Supported families to achieve better education results and better paid employment opportunities;
- Successfully participated in national developments: the New Belongings Project, significantly enhancing and improving planning, opportunities and outcomes for care leavers; SEN Direct, a new brokerage and information service for children and families with disabilities; Families First (Troubled Families);
- Increased the proportion of 16 year olds leaving statutory education that go in to further education, employment or training; and
- Improved public health outcomes for children.

#### Adults

- Provided support to 2500 of the most vulnerable people in our communities, including 750 people living in residential or nursing care homes;
- Refreshed our direct payments policy, updated our direct payment fact sheets and produced easy to read literature to make it easier for people to have choice and control with a direct payment;
- Worked closely with colleagues in the NHS, and have introduced an integrated urgent care team that work together to assess and put in place care and support at home to help people avoid going into long-term care or hospital. This team also helps to get people back home quickly following hospital admission;

- Redesigned the organisation to create a new management post to focus on prevention. This post brings together a number of services that enables people to stay at home, such as Telecare and housing adaptations, and leads our efforts to act as a catalyst to the development of strong and resilient communities that are able to support people through the difficult times in life;
- Used a grant from Sports UK to enable a project to work with those people who are currently not engaged in physical activity;
- Implemented a new information service that will support people to remain independent through signposting to relevant support and offering the ability to self-assess their needs;
- Worked with XX families and individuals seeking new housing in order to help them secure stable living arrangements, which provides the foundation for good health and wellbeing;
- Improved our safeguarding services by implementing a person-centred approach through Making Safeguarding Personal, and reviewed and launched a new Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board which provides oversight of safeguarding issues across partner organisations. We responded to XX instances where safeguarding concerns were raised;
- Improved our approach to personalisation and involved more service users and providers in developing our services by improving the Making it Real Board and appointing an engagement lead to lead this work; and
- Continued to work on our public health initiatives and are amongst the best performing local authorities in the West Midlands for the delivery of NHS Health Checks.

#### **Efficient and effective services:**

- Balanced the budget - cutting waste, rationalising buildings, and being innovative delivered £49 million of savings;
- Council Tax has risen by no more than 2 per cent per annum over the last XX years;
- Key frontline services have been protected;
- The responsibility for public health has been integrated into the council;
- Customer Service call response rates have improved through different ways of working and an increasing shift to the use of on-line services;
- Reviewed the council's website to enable residents and businesses to access services, make applications and make a payment;
- Increased the number of libraries run by the community;
- Piloted a Well Being function in Kington Library as a model of combining services important to local people;
- Implemented a programme of health and wellbeing initiatives for council staff, which has led to reduced levels of absence;
- Improved waste disposal and waste collection services through investing £40 million in a new energy-from-waste plant, saving taxpayers £45 million over the lifetime of the plant;
- Saved £500,000 annually by introducing a fortnightly refuse collection, and increased the recycling rate;
- Reprocurved the public realm contract;
- Rationalised and modernised the residual estate;
- Devolved a range of services to parish and community groups; and
- Utilised information technology and council premises to support better ways of working for our workforce.

## The Priorities

The council, as with any other organisation, works towards an agreed set of priorities. We have consulted widely with residents and stakeholders as we have developed this plan to ensure that we are providing appropriate services to the residents who need them. We remain committed to efficiently maximising the use of resources in order to secure better services, quality of life and value for money whilst complying with our legal duties and corporate priorities.

The corporate plan does not seek to cover everything the council does but instead focuses upon those issues and services that we have identified, with the help of residents and service users, to be the most important. From this we have developed our four priorities. We will include the detail of the actions the council will take to deliver against those priorities in our annual delivery plan, and within directorate and service plans.

The delivery plan will identify key measures to enable us to track our progress in delivering the corporate plan priorities. The council will report quarterly and annually, as appropriate, on the progress being made.

### **Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives**

**Our approach is to be proactive in helping and encouraging people to live healthier lifestyles and developing resources that offer more choice and control in remaining independent, therefore reducing or delaying the need for formal social care.**

In the next four years we will:

- Improve the provision of good information and advice to enable people to support themselves and each other, getting the right help at the right time as needs change.
- Build supportive relationships and resilient communities, acting as a catalyst for communities to become stronger.
- Build services that help people get back on track after illness and support disabled people to be independent, including through ensuring the provision of good quality housing.
- Ensure that care and support is personalised, of good quality, that it addresses mental, physical, and other forms of wellbeing and is better joined-up around individual needs and those of their carers.
- Work with the community to devolve services and assets where there is an improvement in local delivery.
- Combine the use of facilities to create a network of Health and Wellbeing Centres linked to communities.
- Ensure safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.

### **Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life**

**We want children and young people to grow up healthy, happy and safe with supportive families and carers.**

In the next four years, as highlighted in the Herefordshire children and young people's plan (CYPP), together with our partner organisations we have identified the following six priorities:

- **Early Help:** By March 2018 we will have provided early help to 600 families to help them to improve education, health and employment outcome.
- **0-5 Early Years:** There are 9,800 children aged 0-5 years in Herefordshire. We will reconfigure £3.5 million to deliver early years services including children centre services, health visiting and

school nursing to improve the health, well-being, developmental and educational outcomes of children aged 0-5 years.

- **Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being:** There are an estimated 8,620 children and young people that require support with their mental health or emotional resilience. The CYPP will make improvements so that children, young people and their families are identified and supported to access help in a timely manner.
- **Children and Young People in Need of Safeguarding:** We will continue to develop a continuum of provision that can effectively identify and respond to safeguarding risks and needs ranging from the initial signs of the call for early help to a range of evidence-based interventions for a variety of complex situations.
- **Addressing Challenges for Adolescents:** We will develop better evidence based approaches to support young people in adolescence to ensure a more successful transition to adulthood.
- **Children and Young People with Disabilities:** There are approximately 5,000 children and young people who have a special educational need and/or disability in Herefordshire. The Partnership will promote and enable access to universal opportunities and services for children with disabilities and their families and ensure a range of provision to meet identified need.

### **Support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work**

**We believe it is important to have a strong local economy. We want Herefordshire to be a place where businesses want to settle and can flourish. We also want our town centres to be vibrant and successful and our neighbourhoods to be attractive and sustainable.**

**The county is already home to a wide range of businesses, from global companies to small enterprises. We believe we should continue to support and encourage the growth of our high value business sector and our small enterprises that are equally as important to our economy.**

**At the same time, we want to encourage a broad mix of businesses that will offer employment to local people. We also want to make sure residents, particularly young people, have the right skills needed for local employers. In doing this we want to achieve a sustainable infrastructure that protects and promotes nature, communities and the county's economy.**

In the next four years we will:

- Support economic growth and connectivity (including broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development).
- Finalise and implement plans that strengthen and diversify the economy of Herefordshire.
- Make the best use of existing land and identify new opportunities to enable existing businesses to stay and expand, and for new businesses to locate to the area
- Make Herefordshire more attractive to younger age groups for a more balanced age profile, improving local access to skills training so that everyone can benefit from economic prosperity.
- Continue to work with further and higher education to introduce and develop a new university for Hereford, identifying buildings for teaching and student accommodation.
- Have good quality housing to meet everyone's needs.
- Support the improvement in quality of our natural and built environment, bringing about quality development to enable sustainable growth, addressing the need for better business space, affordable homes and student accommodation across the county.
- Improve the county's energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint.
- Ensure that the infrastructure is in place to prevent and improve community resilience to flooding.
- Continue to work with the LEP and government with a focus on: employment creation and business support; skills; health transformation; transport; broadband; property and finance; and governance.

- Have vibrant town centres with shops, restaurants and leisure facilities that keep people spending locally.

### **Secure better services, quality of life and value for money**

**We will continue to directly deliver services where we are the best organisation to do so, as well as arranging for others to deliver services on our behalf. We will make our online services simpler, ensuring they cover the things people contact us about most.**

**The outcomes we want to achieve are to get the maximum benefit from public money; achieve cost savings through the use of shared services, outsourcing opportunities and a reduction in the use of consultants; delivery of value for money services; with a modern diverse workforce.**

In the next four years we will:

- Secure the highest possible levels of efficiency savings and value for money to maximise investment in front-line services and minimise council tax increases.
- Ensure our essential assets, including schools, other buildings, roads and ICT, are in the right condition for the long-term, cost-effective delivery of services.
- Review management of our assets in order to generate on-going revenue savings, focusing on reducing the cost of ownership of the operational property estate by rationalising the estate and by improving the quality of the buildings that are retained.
- Apply appropriate regulatory controls.
- Design services and policies that support positive engagement and interaction with residents, including the use of information technology, to improve customer experience and ability to access a range of services on-line.
- Further improve commissioning and procurement to deliver greater revenue efficiencies and savings.
- Recruit, retain and motivate high quality staff, ensuring that they are trained and developed so as to maximise their ability and performance.
- Be open, transparent and accountable about our performance.

## **Governance**

*TO BE WRITTEN*

## **Financial Strategy**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key part of the council's integrated corporate, service and financial planning cycle, which ensures that this plan has been developed in the context of available resources. The MTFS demonstrates, at a high level, how the council intends to address the financial challenges it faces in delivering the priorities.

The MTFS presents the financial position showing how the council intends to maintain financial stability, deliver efficiencies, and support investment in priority services, whilst demonstrating value for money and maintaining service quality.

*TO BE WRITTEN ALONGSIDE THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY*