

## **Chief Executive's Announcements**

- 16-19 SEN Free School project progressing well, with confirmation of Barrs Court Academy Trust as provider of this valuable new provision for young people with the most complex needs and disabilities, bringing significant investment into Herefordshire as part of the council's Schools Capital Investment Strategy.
- We are working with students currently at the Robert Owen Academy and their parents and carers, to ensure their education needs are met when they start their new school year in September 2018. The Academy is to close at the end of the summer.
- Our children's safeguarding service received positive feedback from the safeguarding LGA Peer Review which said "we saw good practice and solid signs of improvement in all three areas of focus.....Herefordshire is a better place to be". We also have some significant areas for improvement including ensuring practice is consistently of high quality, is recorded and that visits and assessments are taking place in a timely manner.
- Herefordshire has successfully converted all statements of special educational needs (SEN) into Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans. We now have 884 EHC Plans of our own plus 40 EHC plans from other councils, where pupils attend Herefordshire schools. This has been a huge endeavour involving children, parents / carers, early years settings, schools, colleges and a range of council professionals.
- Following Cabinet's decision to extend Herefordshire's commitment to resettlement of refugees in December 2017, we will be welcoming the first such refugee families during June (4 families-18 people).
- One of the biggest issues in social care is the recruitment and retention of care workers - our Care Heroes campaign will be launched over the summer with the aim to raise the profile of care work and attract more people into the sector.
- A new apprenticeship programme has been established to grow our project management capability within the council. The training will be done in conjunction with Riverside Training (Hereford) with the final qualification being with the Association of Project Management (APM) – a highly regarded industry standard qualification.
- Over 196,000 people visited Poppies: Weeping Window, when it was displayed at Hereford Cathedral between 14 March and 29 April.
- Herefordshire Council's broadband delivery project, Fastershire, has been shortlisted for the Connected Britain Awards 2018 (recognizing innovation and achievement). According to the latest independent data, 85% of the county's homes and businesses now access superfast broadband speeds, (only 0.6% of properties in 2012). The county has four times higher than national average of new optimum fibre technology deployed in rural areas and this is set to continue with fibre deployment direct to the home as part of the new contract with Gigaclear. Awards will be made in mid-June.
- Congratulations to Rachel Jones, Economic Development Officer, presented with a Gold Award for 'outstanding contribution to the work of Young Enterprise' at the Herefordshire Young Enterprise finals.
- Our new children's wellbeing Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Liz Elgar, starts with us in June 2018.