

	Recommendation	Initial response
1.	<p>Articulate a longer term vision for Herefordshire including the development of a compelling narrative with your strategic partners under the banner of One Herefordshire. This will help clarify your ambition and establish your ‘USP’</p>	<p>The longer term vision for the county: <i>“People, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and well-being for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire”</i>, was originally developed with stakeholders through the sustainable community strategy process in 2010.</p> <p>Although there has not been a substantial re-testing of this overarching vision, supporting plans such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Economic Vision have been developed with stakeholders and provide further depth to the vision specifically in relation to wellbeing and economic prosperity.</p> <p>The council’s corporate plan is scheduled for review in 2019/20 and the vision will be tested more widely at that stage. Consideration will be given to including a representative residents’ survey to test alignment between residents’ priorities and those of the council.</p> <p>There is more to be done in clearly articulating how the council and partners’ activities contribute to achieving the vision and communicating the distinctiveness of Herefordshire plans. There is also more to be done in ensuring a whole council understands the ambitions for the county and how they can contribute to achieving those ambitions. This will be progressed through the existing strategic and business planning processes to ensure that members, employees, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute and challenge as appropriate. In addition a communications and engagement plan is being developed to ensure that agreed messages are clearly and consistently articulated.</p>
2.	<p>Ensure consistent delivery and follow through to turn the positive rhetoric into reality – including relationships with communities and engagement with strategic partners</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there were examples of strong place-based working using a systems approach.</p> <p>However there is more to be done to embed these approaches throughout the organisation. Through our management development programme planned for implementation in the autumn we need to promote the culture and support development of managers’ skills to ensure consistent and effective partnership working, system leadership, and community engagement.</p> <p>We have introduced a corporate project management system for capital project management. We will maintain focus on delivery against agreed outcomes and objectives through the corporate performance reporting processes.</p> <p>The scrutiny committees will have the opportunity to review and challenge savings plans relevant to their areas as part of the budget setting process and may review delivery performance of particular projects or plans as appropriate.</p>

		<p>A member development policy and programme is being developed; as part of that programme we will provide elected members with development opportunities to further build their skills in understanding and interrogating data, and in effective questioning and challenge.</p>
3.	<p>Undertake a strategic review of your finances so that the potential to resource your ambition and priorities over the medium term is maximized</p>	<p>The peer challenge team highlighted the council's successful delivery of financial savings in recent years, which, together with an increase in general and earmarked reserves has placed the council in a relatively secure financial position over the medium term and provides a platform to realise the county's ambitions.</p> <p>A review of general and earmarked reserves has been undertaken as part of the process for preparing the end of year accounts and a report proposing use of some of those reserves in order to deliver priority outcomes appears elsewhere on Cabinet's agenda today.</p> <p>The annual budget setting cycle will provide a further opportunity to review alignment of resources to strategic priorities and a more fundamental review of the council's medium term financial strategy is planned for 2019/20 alongside the planned review of the corporate plan.</p>
4.	<p>Consider expanding your presence, profile and influence on the regional stage (and beyond) using your narrative and USP</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised that the council is a well-respected player at the sub-regional level with a track record of success.</p> <p>It has been disappointing to note that consideration of Herefordshire Council's application to become a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority will not be progressed in the short term. However, both individually and as a key partner in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the council continues to actively engage in relevant regional bodies including the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connects and West Midlands Rail to secure investment and other benefits for the county and region.</p>
5.	<p>Develop a more strategic, collaborative and corporate approach to building more resilient communities</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there was evidence of effective work at a local level but there is more to be done to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to engagement and locality working.</p> <p>We are developing a communications and engagement plan which will ensure a consistent approach to engagement.</p> <p>There are a number of community or locality based initiatives already in operation across the council, but these have largely been service led – for example developing a community commissioning model for public realm service delivery; the establishment of a health and wellbeing</p>

		<p>network; the provision of Wellbeing Information and Signposting in Herefordshire (WISH); children's wellbeing local area co-ordinators, adults' wellbeing community brokers. However the benefits of a strategic approach to the development of more resilient communities are recognised. This work has been started and we have established a CPiP group tasked with identifying opportunities for bringing this work together.</p>
6.	<p>Further cultivate 'One Herefordshire' by developing a 'One Council' approach, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more space for the political and officer leadership to work together strategically • Give your managers the space to think and do • Build a 'top table' (Strategic Management Team) • Continue to strengthen your governance • Shift the strategic and operational focus from Directorates to One Council 	<p>A One Council approach is being developed through a combination of structural and cultural change.</p> <p>The political leadership (Cabinet) and managerial leadership (Chief Executive's Management Board) are reviewing their working arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to collectively develop strategic thinking.</p> <p>The employee personal performance development process has put the council's values and expected behaviours as a key component of employee development and the central importance of values and behaviours will be included in the manager development programme to be implemented in the autumn, reinforcing the whole council approach.</p> <p>New terms of reference for Management Board have been agreed which make clear the strategic nature of the board and its role in ensuring the coordination of activities and resources to maintain a coherent council-wide approach to delivering the council's priorities.</p> <p>The council's plans to strengthen governance, specifically in relation to capital project implementation and monitoring, and more widely as identified in the annual governance statement are being progressed and overseen by the Audit and Governance Committee. The council's constitution has been reviewed, following consultation with all elected members and employees, and amendments agreed by Council in May to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>The development of a corporate services centre under the leadership of the chief executive is being progressed. The structure of the directorate performance challenge sessions is being reviewed to ensure that a whole council response to performance challenges can be developed and that opportunities to secure wider benefits from service planning or delivery can be identified and realised.</p> <p>The review of the corporate plan and medium term financial strategy planned for 2019/20 will provide an opportunity for further ensuring that a whole council strategic focus.</p>

7.	Build on your success and have the confidence to work with your top team to drive and deliver your political priorities	<p>The Cabinet’s priorities have been clearly articulated in the corporate plan approved by Council and are reflected in the annual corporate delivery plan.</p> <p>The Cabinet team will continue to work with senior managers to drive and deliver these priorities and will ensure that our plans and the successes which we collectively achieve are effectively communicated.</p>
8.	Within the context of a corporate transformation programme, develop a more strategic approach to your workforce to ensure alignment with ambition and priorities	<p>The peer challenge team found that employees they met appeared happy, engaged and passionate about working for the Council and were positive and committed to the organisation and Herefordshire as a place. As the team noted these elements provide a good platform for our improvement journey, and we can be proud of the many committed individuals who work with us to achieve our ambitions for the county.</p> <p>We have recognised the need for a more co-ordinated approach to developing and deploying our workforce and already increased organisational development capacity within the human resources team.</p> <p>A workforce strategy is being developed which will provide the framework within which we will ensure that our employees have the right skills, and that capacity is in the right place within the organisation to support delivery. This will include building in flexibility and development of generic skills as well as identifying and resourcing specific skills requirements, all set within the context of the council’s values and behaviours.</p> <p>In addition an Equality in Employment action plan is being developed to help ensure that our workforce is representative of the community it serves and that our employment practices help us to meet our public sector equality duties.</p>
9.	Use your communications more proactively to build support and understanding of your vision, ambition and direction of travel	<p>The council has agreed a communications strategy and protocols and reviewed the structure of the corporate communications team to ensure resources are aligned to the strategic priorities.</p> <p>A communications and engagement plan is being developed to guide how the strategy is implemented.</p> <p>Effective communication of the council’s key messages is something that all elected members, employees and contractors can contribute to and we need to ensure they are supported in doing so, making the essential links between the vision, the outcomes, and the activity.</p>