

Meeting:	Council
Meeting date:	Friday 13 July 2018
Title of report:	Leader's report to Council
Report by:	Leader of the Council

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To provide an update on the work of the Cabinet since the previous meeting of the Council and an annual report on the priorities of the Cabinet and progress made in meeting those priorities.

A brief summary of decisions taken by the executive is provided at appendix 1 and all decision reports and notices are available on the council's [website](#) .

The report provides a summary of progress made against the areas of focus identified in the last annual report. More detail about the council's performance and how that is reported is available on the [performance management](#) page of the council's website.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the report be noted.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options; the constitution requires the Leader to provide Council with reports on the activities of the executive.

Key considerations

- 1 I am pleased to provide to Council my first report as Leader of this council. It is not merely a constitutional requirement, it is an important route by which all members can be reminded of the many positive achievements of this council, and of the challenges we must work together to meet in the interests of Herefordshire.
- 2 A list of the decisions taken by cabinet and cabinet members since the last report to Council (covering the period between 26 February and 27 June 2018) is provided at appendix 1. Details of all these decisions, and of those taken by officers under delegated authority, are published on the councillors and democracy pages of the council's website. One key decision was taken under the general exception provisions (giving more than five but less than 28 days' notice) as identified in appendix 1. None were taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice) or were subject to call in.
- 3 To ensure that progress towards achieving our corporate plan priorities is reported transparently we will again be publishing an annual report on the council website. The report will set out our areas of focus for the coming year and greater detail is provided in the [corporate delivery plan](#) agreed by cabinet in April.
- 4 The following table provides a brief summary of the council's progress against the areas of focus identified in last year's annual report.

We said we would...	We have...
Further develop the Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire (WISH) website to offer a broad range of local wellbeing support and care options to help people find activities and services in their area	<p>Redesigned and developed the WISH website and seen a positive improvement in the quality of information, advice and guidance at the adult social care 'front door'.</p> <p>This is an excellent resource, and I would encourage any organisation offering services or activities to sign up – it's free and a very easy way to ensure that people can find out what is available.</p>
Continue to develop our short term care pathways in adult social care to ensure appropriate support is put in place at the right time and people are enabled to regain independence quickly. This will include utilising community support where available and practical.	<p>Redesigned the short term and other adult social care pathways and developed the model of community brokers. Our improvement work in adult social care has resulted in improved outcomes and customer satisfaction, reduced the rate of older people needing permanent placement in residential and nursing care homes and significantly reduced the number of people waiting for an occupational therapy assessment.</p> <p>We need to maintain this focus and in particular improve the effectiveness of our rehabilitation and reablement services to prevent readmissions.</p>
Work with providers to understand and seek new ways to address the	Implemented a Care Workforce Development Project which looks to support our providers

challenge of recruitment and retention within the social care workforce	and the caring workforce. This includes the development of a new website providing information for providers, reducing their administrative burdens around recruitment and hosting the 'Care Heroes Rewards scheme'.
Implement our assistive technology programme to support people with learning disabilities to live in the community rather than in residential care.	Used £85k grant funding to provide adaptations and assistive technology in 14 properties across the county supporting 81 people with learning disabilities to live more independently and improve the quality of their lives
Publish a new carers strategy and plan which will be jointly developed with carers and partners	Approved a new carers strategy, co-produced with carers, and focussing on access to universal services, information and advice, and mutual support and networking. We have developed and implemented an in-house service for young carers and are working with local provider organisations to ensure their services are able to support achievement of the outcomes anticipated by the new strategy.
Ensure children and their families get the right help at the right time	<p>Strengthened our approach to early help by being clearer about what is available, how to access (including using WISH), and how we work together with partners. Our early help approach was complimented by the LGA peer review but we also know that it is a service that is at full stretch and we need to see what more can be done.</p> <p>Maintained our strong performance for applications to the local family justice system which continue to conclude within the statutory timescale of 26 weeks meaning that children are not kept waiting for decisions on their future.</p> <p>Significant challenges remain, particularly in the number of children and young people who become looked after, as well as the caseloads of some of our social workers. We will focus on these in the coming year informed by the findings of the recent Local Government Association Peer Review and Ofsted inspection.</p>
Improve education outcomes so that we are in the top 25% nationally	Improved outcomes so that the county now ranks in the top or second quartile of council area performance for a number of key assessment indicators, from the early years to the end of the secondary phase. We have raised standards for vulnerable groups, particularly disadvantaged children and young people and those eligible for free school meals,

	<p>and we continue to focus on delivering further improvement in outcomes for these groups.</p> <p>We have invested in improvements to our school buildings including the opening of a new building for Colwall Primary school and approved funding for the expansion of Marlbrook school – the right educational environment is an important element of supporting improvements in educational outcomes.</p>
Ensure that children looked after by the council thrive	<p>Continued to provide stable placements for our looked after children. Progress and attainment of our looked after children taking GCSEs was above the national average for looked after children and all remain in education, employment or training, some of them in apprenticeships provided by the Council – we should be very proud of their achievements.</p> <p>When I was elected as Leader I undertook to look at what assistance we could provide to reduce the costs of council tax for our looked after children and I am pleased to advise that a decision on this issue being taken this month.</p>
Ensure that we support families to care for their own children, so that we only care for children who cannot stay with their own family	<p>Focussed work on this area so that the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan are now moving back down towards more expected numbers compared to our statistical neighbours. This area continues to be one of priority focus for sustained improvement and consistent application of thresholds to ensure the right children receive the right service at the right time. It is important to ensure we do not intervene unnecessarily in children and families lives but do offer support through Early Help if appropriate.</p>
Launch the Invest Herefordshire Economic Vision and engage key stakeholders and partners across the county and commence working on delivery of shared priorities	<p>Launched the Economic Vision at Eastnor Castle and worked with key stakeholders to establish a Herefordshire Investment Partnership to oversee the delivery of the vision. The vision and its investment pitchbook were promoted at MIPIM, an international property and investment conference, raising the profile of the county. A number of projects are being progressed and will come forward for approval in the coming year.</p> <p>Our successful Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas continues to thrive and we have worked with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, NMiTE team and University of Wolverhampton</p>

	to bring forward further development schemes on this site.
Deliver the Local Transport Plan programme providing an enhanced, accessible, safe and integrated transport network supporting economic growth and minimise the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on our roads	<p>Supported economic growth in the region by investing in transport routes leading to Herefordshire's Skylon Park Enterprise Zone. The road maintenance works included a specific focus on the Midlands Connect strategic economic corridors which comprise the A4103 Hereford to Worcester road, (works completed this year), the A465 Hereford to Abergavenny road, and the A438 Hereford to Brecon road (works planned).</p> <p>Numbers of people killed and seriously injured on our roads decreased, but not by as much as we would like; this will continue to be an area of focus for us.</p>
Support the City of Culture bid	Been proud to be able to provide support for Herefordshire's bid. Although not selected the process of developing the bid has generated a strong focus on the value of culture to both wellbeing of residents and the economy of the county. We continue to work with partners on the development of a cultural strategy for the county.
Develop housing sites across the county	<p>Been proactive both as the planning authority and as a landowner.</p> <p>Planning approval has been given for sustainable urban extensions in Hereford, Ross, and Ledbury.</p> <p>The council has entered into long term development partnership arrangements to progress both housing and regeneration development. Sites in the council's ownership are being progressed including the old depot site at Bromyard and Station Approach in Hereford.</p>
Support the New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMiTE) university	<p>Helped NMiTE to secure £23m of public funding and we continue to support this exciting development by acting as accountable body for this public funding.</p> <p>Our partners at NMiTE are fully engaged in the development of the Hereford Area Plan and we work closely with them to ensure that, where there is a business case to do so, our property assets can further the development of the university.</p>

<p>Run a series of training, seminars and one to one advice sessions for businesses on making the most of the fast broadband speeds (Fasterbusiness)</p>	<p>Run business support programmes with 224 attendees. The project also supported 225 people with digital inclusion training. An addition 73 one to one business advice sessions were provided.</p> <p>Overall the very successful Fastershire programme has ensured that to date just over 85% of homes and businesses are able to access superfast broadband speeds, compared to only 0.6% of properties in 2012. Additionally 13% of premises have full fibre (fibre direct to the premise), compared to a national average of 3%.</p>
<p>Develop a number of transport packages including South Wye (the southern link road), Hereford (the Hereford bypass) and Hereford city centre (the city link road) and public realm improvements</p>	<p>Progressed all these vital infrastructure developments and during the year opened the new city link road on time and in budget. The road unlocks previously unseen and under-utilised inner city land for development, and plans can now be taken forward for the site to build new homes, a transport hub at the Hereford Railway Station, new public services buildings and university accommodation.</p> <p>Key stages in the development of the South Wye Transport Package, which includes the Southern Link Road, have been achieved. Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and Side Road Orders (SROs) were made in March 2018 and work on securing the land and procurement processes to appoint a contractor are being progressed.</p> <p>Significant progress has been made with taking forward the Hereford Transport Package which includes the Hereford Bypass. Technical work over the year progressed well and we approved a short list of routes for consultation in January this year; we will shortly be taking a decision to select a preferred route.</p>
<p>Manage our finances effectively to secure value for money and deliver a balanced budget, delivering agreed savings plans</p>	<p>Delivered the budget for 2017/18 with a minimal overspend of £10k – a significant achievement given the funding and service pressures that were to be overcome.</p> <p>The corporate peer challenge team’s report provided assurance that the council’s relatively secure financial position over the medium term provides a platform to realise the county’s ambitions and provided some helpful recommendations to ensure that there is more focus given to challenging and monitoring delivery of savings plans which we will be</p>

	taking forward.
Continue to dispose of our underperforming capital assets	Successfully completed the disposal of the majority of our smallholding estate with sales values achieved exceeding the guide price. We continue to review our assets to ensure that they may be used to best effect and, if no longer providing a suitable return on investment, are disposed of to enable the value they hold to be reinvested more effectively. Our capital programme includes essential investment to support schools improvement,
Lead the 'One Herefordshire' public sector reform, and work with partners to make best use of public sector land assets.	<p>Worked with our partners to ensure that public sector land assets are used to best effect. This has included, leasing of Franklin House to Wye Valley Trust to assist with their accommodation pressures, made available land at Station approach to deliver a new city GP hub; leasing office accommodation at Union Street to NMiTE, and progressing discussions with Hereford City Council regarding the Town Hall in the city.</p> <p>Our customer service hub at Blueschool House has been very successfully established as a co-located facility with the Department for Work and Pensions as the county's key Job Centre Plus, and our review of use of children's centre buildings has seen sites shared with schools, nurseries and other council services.</p> <p>These developments not only deliver greater financial efficiency but improved accessibility for our customers.</p>

- 5 We have launched our consultation on future budget priorities, details of which are available on the council's website. The support of all members in encouraging those in their wards to respond to the consultation would be appreciated.
- 6 In line with the framework for assessment agreed by the employment panel, the annual personal performance and development programme for the chief executive has been undertaken and a summary of the agreed objectives is attached at appendix 3 for information

Community impact

- 7 The community impact of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken. Reporting to Council the activities of the executive demonstrates the council's commitment to the code of corporate governance principle of implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Equality duty

8 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9 The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report provides a summary of activity undertaken, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty. However these considerations are set out in each of the relevant reports informing the decisions listed at appendix 1, and will inform any future decision making.

Resource implications

10 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The financial implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken and will inform any future decision making.

Legal implications

11 The council and committee, and cabinet rules within the constitution require the Leader to provide a report to Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last meeting of Council and, at the first meeting to follow the annual meeting of Council, on the priorities of the cabinet and (except in a year when there are ordinary elections) progress made in meeting those priorities. Appointment of cabinet members and allocation of portfolio responsibilities are responsibilities of the Leader of the Council, and the constitution requires that any changes are subsequently reported to Council. This report ensures these requirements are met.

12 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The legal implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken

Risk management

13 There are no risks arising from the recommendations of this report. The risks of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken and will inform future decision making.

Consultees

14 None.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Executive decisions taken

Appendix 2: Cabinet member portfolios

Appendix 3: Chief executive's objectives 2018/19.

Background papers

None identified.