

Meeting:	Council
Meeting date:	Friday 8 March 2019
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 meeting of Council held on 12 October 2018.

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](#).

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

2. A list of the decisions taken by cabinet and cabinet members since the last report to Council (covering the period between 22 September 2018 and 14 February 2019) is 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. Two key decisions were taken under the general exception provisions (giving more than five but less than 28 days' notice). No decisions were taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice); and none were subject to call in.

3. Our work on developing budget proposals in line with the medium term financial strategy culminated in approval of the budget at the last meeting of Council. Whilst there was healthy debate about the proposed use of £2m largely non-recurrent funding secured following the continued lobbying undertaken with partners including the Local Government Association and County Councils' Network for fairer funding, the support of all political groups for the remaining £149m budget proposals was welcomed.
4. We have held two summits with parish councils from across the county. In excess of 50 parish councils were represented at each of the October and January summits. These meetings provide not only a forum for improving communications between parish councils and Herefordshire Council but also enable the sharing of ideas and good practice between parish councils. The energy and enthusiasm of those working at a parish level is one of Herefordshire's strengths – working together we can achieve so much more for the communities that we serve.
5. In support of community activity at a local level we have launched two grant schemes; the first a non-recurring fund to support communities to maintain public green spaces and the second providing resource for community groups offering support to the 2,700 young carers within the county. The public green spaces scheme closed for new applicants in January with a small number of eligible applications having been received; a further round of applications will be held after Easter. The young carers support group grant scheme remains open to applications until 22 March. The council operates a number of delegated grant schemes as well as providing advice and support to access external funding – information on all the schemes is available on the council's [website](#).
6. Since my last report, councillors have spent some time understanding and reviewing two court judgements relating to children's safeguarding services. We are very mindful of the impact poor practice has had on the children, their carers and adoptive parents and have apologised for this. The children and young people scrutiny committee has established a task and finish group and I look forward to receiving their recommendations to continue our service improvements.
7. In January, Ofsted inspectors carried out a focussed visit during which they reviewed the council's arrangements for receiving referrals about children who may be in need or at risk of significant harm, children transferring to and from early help services, the effectiveness of child protection enquiries and quality of assessments and interventions for children in need of help and protection. Ofsted recognised the improvements made since their inspection in June 2018 and the impact those improvements are having. This is a testament to the work of everyone in the service and I thank them for their dedication to improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people. The inspection highlighted areas where we need to continue to focus and we are very mindful of the need to continue to improve in the wider service areas as well. We will also work with partners to reflect on Ofsted's views of their responsibilities as well, particularly in relation to the police and health services.
8. Our schools examination results referenced in my last report have been validated and I welcome the significant improvement in educational outcomes that has taken place in Herefordshire over the past five years. We continue to invest in improving facilities for schools, and have agreed our £1.7m schools maintenance and accessibility improvement

programme for 2019/20. We have approved resources to replace mobile classrooms at Almeley primary school and to carry out feasibility work to provide a replacement building for Peterchurch primary school.

9. Members will be aware that we are currently consulting on the Hereford Transport Package walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements. These together with a Hereford bypass aim to transform the way we move around the city. The consultation ends on 11 March and I encourage everyone to submit their views on this essential development supporting growth in the county.
10. Led by Herefordshire Council, Keep Herefordshire Warm and Keep Shropshire Warm has been successful in bidding for just under £1 million of funding to pay for the installation of affordable central heating systems for households in fuel poverty. Funding will be combined with other non-council funding streams to provide £1.5 million of capital works to an estimated 300 low income private occupier households across the two counties. The funds will be targeted at those who are in poor health or at risk of ill health, those with underlying health issues, those caring for a vulnerable person, or those worried about their home being cold or damp, helping to address fuel poverty in the county.
11. In support of the council's carbon management plan we have continued to invest in measures to reduce our carbon footprint. Following on from the implementation of LED street lighting and LED lighting schemes at our Plough Lane offices and the Garrick Street car park, we have invested in LED lighting at both Maylords Orchard car park in Hereford and Unit 3, Thorn Business Park in Rotherwas. We have also installed a new solar panel array at the Kingsland depot and at Blueschool House in Hereford. In addition to reducing our carbon footprint these measures deliver financial efficiency savings meaning we can redirect those resources to service delivery.
12. In November we launched a partnership programme to support seven priority areas along the rivers Wye and Lugg to develop natural measures to improve flood management and water quality. This programme is one of only 26 supported by DEFRA and will better protect rural Herefordshire communities from the risk of flooding.
13. Our successful Broadband programme 'Fastershire' continues to deliver. Brand new fibre cabinets have been installed at a number of locations across Hereford city and are already providing access to faster broadband. While much of Fastershire's work is focused on ensuring hard to reach areas of rural Herefordshire can access faster broadband, this partnership between Fastershire and Openreach will ensure that parts of Hereford are not left behind, seeing around 2,200 additional homes and businesses in the city benefiting from superfast fibre broadband by the end of 2019.
14. A number of projects supporting achievement of our Economic Vision have made good progress since my last report. At the Hereford Enterprise Zone, construction work will soon begin on the £9m Cyber Security Centre, and a contractor has been appointed to redevelop the Shell Store to create business units and work begins on 4 March. Approval has been given to deliver student accommodation at the Station Approach site, and to being the first phase of work at Ross Enterprise Park. Feasibility work is underway in relation to redevelopment of part of the Edgar Street football ground site and consideration is being given to the options for development of the country bus station in the city. Additionally, in agreement with the Department for Education, we have enabled the transfer of the lease of the old Blackfriars site from the Robert Owen Academy to NMiTE to support the development of higher education in the county.
15. We have secured planning permission for the development of housing on the old depot site in Bromyard, and begun appraisal of the opportunities for providing housing on the

former Holme Lacy school site. We are projected to exceed our target of securing 200 additional affordable homes in the current year.

16. Our capital programme proposals approved by Council in February continue our investment in delivering the council's vision of "people, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and wellbeing for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire". In addition to the investment in schools, higher education, economic development and housing already referenced above, the programme includes investment in delivering much needed additional nursing bed capacity for adults; support for the Courtyard's plans for expansion and development; as well as improvements to our corporate estate in order to secure further efficiencies and provide a quality working environment.
17. This will be my last Leader's report before the elections in May, and therefore I would like to take this opportunity to thank my cabinet colleagues for all of their hard work, dedication and commitment. They have been a great support to me as Leader and we have worked very effectively as a team. It is this teamwork that has led to the many positive decisions that have been made. I would like to thank all elected members acting in various capacities for the role they play in helping to carry out the key democratic functions of the council. I would also like to thank all of the staff for their continuing dedication and service. The council delivers so many services that provide for the wellbeing of our citizens and I am very proud of the work they do to ensure that our plans and activities deliver on our corporate priorities.

Community impact

18. 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

19. 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.
20. 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

21. 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

22. 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; this report ensures those requirements are met.
23. 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

24. 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

25. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of executive decisions taken.

Background papers

None identified.