

Title of report: Herefordshire All-Age Carers Strategy 2024-29 action plan working group terms of reference

Meeting: Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 17 February 2025

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All wards

Purpose

To determine whether to form a committee working group to scrutinise the action plan supporting the Herefordshire All-Age Carers' Strategy 2024-29.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The committee consider forming a working group according to the terms of reference attached as appendix 1; and**
- b) Any attending Cabinet Member(s) at the meeting be invited to identify any additional elements relevant to the terms of reference.**

Alternative options

1. The committee could make changes to the terms of reference before agreeing to form a working group.
2. It could also decide not to form the working group.

Key considerations

3. On 18 July 2024, Cabinet approved the Herefordshire All-Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029. At this meeting, Cabinet members suggested that the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee may wish to scrutinise any published action plan to support the strategy.
4. The Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee have agreed to scrutinise the action plan. They have chosen to wait for the plan to be drafted, but also for the council to appoint a lay chair to the Carers' Partnership Group to oversee delivery of the plan.
5. As the chair is a lay volunteer, and because the committee wish to scrutinise the action plan in detail, they decided to carry out this work in an informal working group. The findings and recommendations resulting from this work will be reported to the next formal meeting of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee after the working group meeting.
6. Draft terms of reference for the working group are attached as appendix 1.

Community impact

7. The scrutiny function supports community development through robust scrutiny of the council's policy framework, including the Local Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Herefordshire Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The proposed scrutiny of the action plan forms part of this work.

Environmental impact

8. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
9. All reports to scrutiny committees, as with all council committees, include appraisals of the impact of the report content on climate change. Scrutiny committee work programmes directly link to the council plan priorities, including the key priority to 'Protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire is a great place to live'.
10. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. Examples include:
 - a. Creation of an online-only briefing programme, eliminating the need to travel to Hereford for a single meeting.
 - b. Paper-free briefings and informal meetings, eliminating the need for printed paper.

Equality duty

11. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, 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.

12. 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 is primarily for information, we do not believe that accepting (or rejecting) this report will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

13. Effective scrutiny produces evidence-based recommendations. These can be informed by learning from best practice and an understanding of 'what works' at other similar local authorities, as well as developing a robust picture of what the situation is locally based on data, intelligence and insights. Where adopted, recommendations can help with the efficiency and effectiveness of services that can be delivered differently, as well as informing the development of current and new policies.
14. As this report is primarily for information, there are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

Risk management

15. Effective scrutiny is a feature of the council's governance arrangements, where the council is operating executive arrangements. There are a range of factors that could result in risks to council of not doing scrutiny effectively. These include the failure to:
 - a. challenge and hold decision makers to account
 - b. link scrutiny work to the delivery of the council's priorities and risk management
 - c. carry out thorough and appropriate research to make evidence-based recommendations
 - d. engage partners and providers
 - e. ensure that structures and models of operation are fit for purpose and match ambition and available resources
 - f. ensure that scrutiny can operate as the voice of communities and
 - g. draw on member knowledge and experience to inform policy development.
16. To mitigate, tolerate or eradicate these risks, enablers for effective scrutiny include:
 - a. operating in an apolitical manner
 - b. clarity of vision and purpose
 - c. scrutiny support availability, capability and capacity
 - d. effective engagement and commitment by members and officers at all levels, including cabinet, opposition leaders, scrutiny chairs and senior officers who play a central role in setting the tone and direction
 - e. robust work programming and prioritisation of topics with clear objectives and expected impacts
 - f. ensuring that scrutiny work will add value to the council and communities e.g. through strong links between work programme topics and the integrated strategic plans that set out the actions and timescales to deliver the priorities in the County Plan
 - g. access to and availability of robust data and intelligence and

h. good relationships with partners and providers.

Consultees

17. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Herefordshire all-age carers' strategy 2024-29 action plan working group terms of reference

Background papers

[Herefordshire All-Age Carers Strategy 2024-29](#)