Herefordshire Council

Title of report: Q3 Performance Report

Meeting: **Scrutiny Management Board**

Meeting date: **26 March 2025**

Cabinet member: **Cabinet member finance and corporate services**

Report by: **Director of Strategy and Transformation**

Report author: **Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence**

Classification
Open

Decision type
Non-key

Wards affected
(All Wards);

Purpose
To review performance for Quarter 3 (Q3) 2024/25 and to report the performance position across all Directorates for this period.

Recommendation(s)
That Scrutiny Management Board:

a) review performance for Q3 2024/25

Alternative options
Scrutiny Management Board may choose to review delivery and operational performance more or less frequently; or request alternative actions to address any identified areas of underperformance, including referral to the relevant scrutiny committee.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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Key considerations

1. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the associated annual Delivery Plan for the 2024/25 financial year. It provides a summary of the activities undertaken to deliver the key priorities and goals in Q3, and highlights the key performance indicators (KPIs). Appendix A provides the full breakdown of the Q3 updates on the Delivery Plan milestones that are due to be in progress by Q3. 140 out of 179 milestones (78%) that were due to be in progress by Q3 under the new Delivery Plan for 2024/25 were completed or are on track to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

2. Beyond the Delivery Plan, the council has achieved many successes in Q3 of 2024/25.

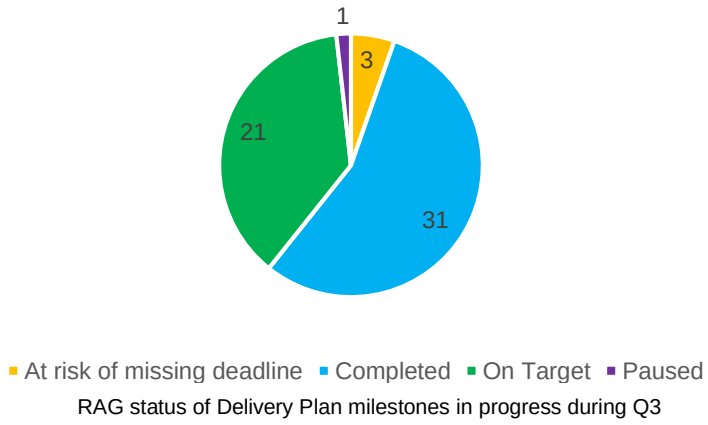
Quarter 3 highlights

3. The council has continued to deliver on its Capital Investment Programme. The following table presents some of the highlights for Quarter 3.

Project	Investment	Where are we…
Barrs Court Phase 2	£225,000 grant funding	Completed in Q3. A remodelled teaching kitchen, together with widening a number of doors so that pupils can access the outdoor spaces at the Symonds Street site.
Withington Primary School	£200,000 corporate borrowing	Extension and internal alterations to improve accessibility.
Improvements to schools under the Schools Capital Maintenance Programme	£250,000 corporate borrowing	5 completed projects in Q3 under the Schools Capital Maintenance Programme. Example project: Drainage and Flooding works at Almely Primary School – The school has suffered from flooding into the building due to issues with gutters and downpipes not being able to cope in heavy downpours along with insufficient drainage capacity for water run-off. The project has delivered upgrades to the drainage systems and guttering/ downpipes to eliminate water ingress and protect the school building.
Section 106 Delivery Programme	£160,000 Section 106 funding	4 completed projects in Q3 under the Section 106 programme. Example project: Infilling of former swimming pool area at Bishop of Herefords Bluecoat School – as phase 1 of a wider project, the scheme has created additional outdoor social and recreational space for pupils in a previously unused area.
Estates Capital Improvement Programme	£280,000 corporate borrowing	3 completed projects in Q3 under the Estates Capital Investment programme. Example project: Roofing and external works at Three Elms Trading Estate - Replacement roof and external maintenance improvements to enhance the life expectancy of corporate asset which is leased out.

Road resurfacing across the county	£10m in total, £5m in 2024/25 and £5m in 2025/2026	All of the A and B-road resurfacing targets for 2024/25 are either completed or in motion and scheduled to be completed during January, accounting for full spend of the £5m in-year allocation. Planning and scoping is now under way to prepare for the next phase in 2025/26.
Safer Streets 5	£150k grant funding	All new CCTV cameras and external lighting to the targeted areas completed ahead of schedule in Q3.
Integrated Wetlands	£4.76m grant funding	Detailed design phase has begun for the second wetland scheme in Tarrington, and final terms have now been agreed with both landowners in connection with a third site, aiming to complete acquisition during Q4.
Transport Hub	£10.5m, of which £6.3m is LUF grant funding	Detailed design phase completed and tenders for appointment of a contractor are now live, due to close in January. Complex legal agreements with Network Rail, Transport for Wales and MFA Bowl are nearing conclusion.

Performance: People



RAG status of Delivery Plan milestones in progress during Q3

Children and Young People

4. Significant work has been underway to support young people into employment, including the opening of the Youth Employment Hub in Q3. Since the opening, 90 referrals were received, and Career and Employment coaches are working directly with the young people either from the hub or in the wider community.

5. Key activities to drive further improvements in the care and support of children and young people have been completed in Q3, which includes the Participation Strategy, Education Strategy, and the development of 'Locality' delivery model. These strategies provide a clear plan of action to address the challenges and seize the opportunities to improve the overall quality of life for Herefordshire's children and young people.

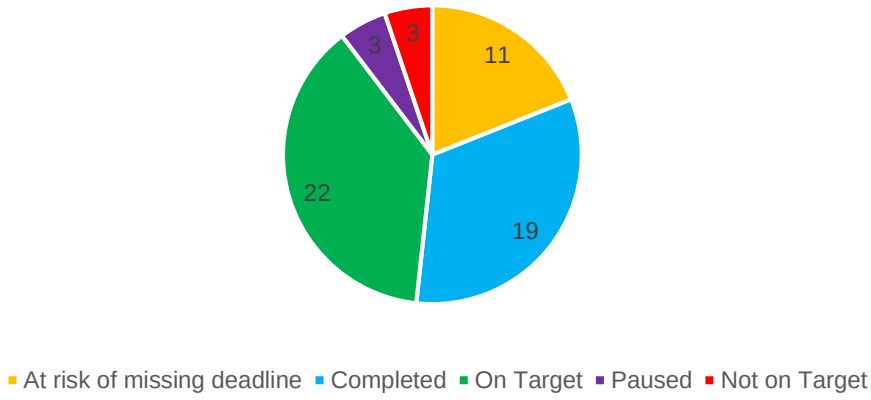
Adult services

6. 13 providers for new work opportunities have signed up for the community activities framework in adult services. The framework includes an innovation lot to allow for the development of new opportunities which will enable us to support people with disabilities into work.

All Age Carers

7. Further progress has been made in relation to the support provided to unpaid carers of all ages in Herefordshire. The newly formed Carers Partnership Board is in the process of agreeing the implementation plan which reflects the key priorities identified within the All Age Carers Strategy 2024-29. Further to this, events are being planned to explore carers' views on respite provision across the county.

Performance: Place



RAG status of Delivery Plan milestones in progress during Q3

8. Q3 data shows that the council is slightly off target in relation to reducing carbon emissions by 1.8%. Waste fleet partners have reduced diesel consumption and there are further reductions expected as the new waste collection fleet was introduced this financial year, including the two electric refuse collection vehicles. Work is ongoing on the council's next Carbon Management Plan to reach our aim of net zero by 2030.

9. The heat decarbonisation plans for the corporate estate are expected to be carried over to the beginning of the next financial year. Six properties have been identified and a procurement framework is now in place.

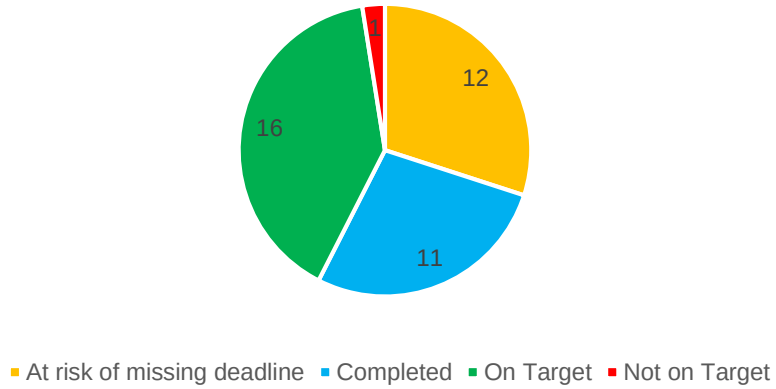
10. The Herefordshire's Natural Flood Management (NFM) project aims to reduce flood risk to the community and a key activity to enable this is ensuring that the community is kept informed and are engaged. This has included the live update of the NFM webpages; seasonal NFM Newsletter; attending multiple events throughout Q3, such as the Wye Catchment Partnership Meeting, Herefordshire Rural Business Advice Day and the Council's Rivers Conference. Work will continue into the next quarter, such as the council supporting the event run by Severn Rivers Trust which will focus on how NFM can increase farm productivity.

11. Shared community spaces play a crucial role in improving the quality of life in Herefordshire, particularly post-Covid, as well as fostering a sense of community and belonging. The new Public Realm Services operating model was approved in Q3 and the completion of public

realm improvement works also reached practical completion in December. In addition, a Library design consultant was appointed, and the interim Library was relocated to the Town Hall whilst exciting redevelopment work is underway.

12. To reflect the increased housing targets that the council has been set, the council is reviewing where these allocations will be sited around Hereford as part of the review of its Local Plan. Accommodating the growth that was not anticipated within the previous business case for the Hereford Transport Plan is likely to impact on assumptions on alignment and design of the current route of the Western Bypass as a result of changes to traffic levels and movements. As a result, this will require a comprehensive review of the business case to meet the current requirements of governments Green Book approach.

Performance: Growth



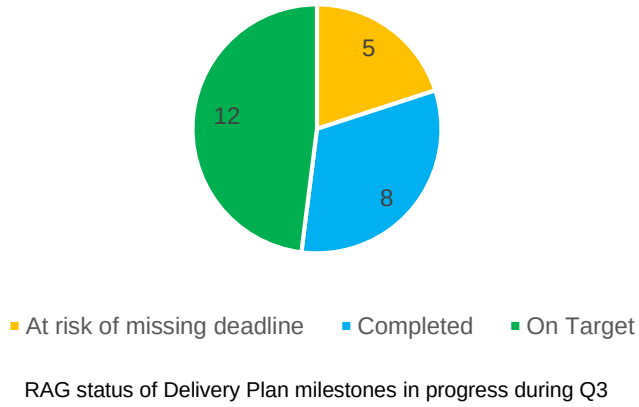
RAG status of Delivery Plan milestones in progress during Q3

13. A key mechanism to bring employment opportunities to the county is to attract businesses. A review of employment land needs and opportunities countywide is complete with commissioning work to consider feasibility of business units in Bromyard being considered, as well as business hubs in each market town. In the meantime, the plot sales in the Enterprise Zone is currently on track and current businesses continue to be supported.

14. 15 properties are being purchased through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme, specifically for young people identified at risk of homelessness. In addition, homeless prevention activity and engagement with rough sleepers to enable them to access accommodation and appropriate support is continuing with the support of partners and making additional accommodation available.

15. The business case for the proposed Golden Valley Parkway railway station is awaiting sign off of the requirements for additional professional services to carry out this work. Once agreed, the procurement of these services will commence.

Performance: Transformation



RAG status of Delivery Plan milestones in progress during Q3

16. Work is continuing at pace to develop strategic and directorate transformation programmes to support the delivery of the Transformation Strategy and the Future Council Operating Model.

17. The residents and businesses of Herefordshire are at the heart of everything we do, and there is also a recognition that the needs of our customers can vary so there is no one size fits all approach. Following consultation with a range of stakeholders, the Customer Charter and Customer Standards have been refreshed with the next phase of customer service transformation focusing on the overall operating model. The focus of the target operating model is to ensure that customers get the best possible customer experience however they choose to contact us, maximising the use of technology to create an efficient customer journey.

18. The council have engaged a new telephony system and Wide Area Network provider, and implementation of new systems will result in several strategic, operational, customer-facing benefits. These developments also ensure that the Council's network infrastructure is future-proof, secure, and able to meet the growing demands of modern service delivery.

Local Authority Data Explorer

19. The Office for Local Government (Oflog) was an office of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched in July 2023 and set up the Local Authority Data Explorer. Oflog has since closed, however the Local Authority Data Explorer continues to be maintained by the MHCLG.

20. The aim of the tool is to create an overlapping and holistic picture of local government performance, with the facility to easily view metrics across different domains.

21. At present, the Explorer covers six areas of performance. These are: waste management, planning, adult social care, roads, adult skills, corporate and finance

22. Some of the data published in this tool is historic and therefore should be interpreted with caution.

23. The following top ten indicators have, therefore, been selected to demonstrate a more meaningful indication of the latest performance:

Key Performance Indicator	**Q2 Actual**	**Q3* Projection**	**Q3* Actual**	**Q3* RAG****
Percentage of service users aged 65+ discharged from hospital into	77.2%	80%	78.75%	

Home First who are still at home 91 days after discharge				
Percentage of Children and Young People social work assessments completed within timescale (45 days)	55.9%	82%	63.5%	
Percentage of children in care who have an up-to-date review	99.5%	95%	99.5%	
Percentage of major planning applications dealt with within 13 weeks (or 16 weeks if subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment), or with an agreed extension of time *Provisional subject to DLUHC confirmation*	93%	70%	88.89%	
Percentage of non-major (minor and other) planning applications dealt with within 8 weeks, or with an agreed extension of time *Provisional subject to DLUHC confirmation*	77%	80%	77.63%	
Number of kg of waste that is not sent to reuse, recycling or composting (per household) *Provisional subject to DEFRA confirmation*	244.62kg	320kg (YTD Nov 2024)	325.08kg (YTD as at Nov 2024)	
Number of affordable homes delivered	158	199	209	
Local count of Herefordshire homelessness	10	5	5	
Value of grants awarded to businesses to support viability and enable growth through UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	£1,867,543.70	£1,600,163	£2,960,138	
Average days sickness per FTE***	9.35	9	8.04	

* year to date (April – December 2024)
** RAG (Red Amber Green) Key: Green (target met/ exceeded); Amber (within 10% threshold); Red (away from target by 10%+ in an adverse direction); Grey (not targeted/ monitoring only)
*** Amendment to the Q2 report: the Q1 outturn was 8.77. 9.10 referred to the outturn at the end of 2023/24.

24. In relation to the red outturn of the percentage of children and young people social work assessments completed within timescale, staffing pressure in managing vacancies and agency turnover have impacted on our ability in periods to manage these in a timely way. However, the service manager has worked effectively with the team managers in Assessment Teams, and in other parts of the service, to keep on top of this work which is reflected in the year to date improvement trend. We now have permanency in all four Assessment Team Manager posts, and in the new locality model there is more management capacity to support smaller teams.

Community impact

25. In accordance with the accepted code of corporate governance, the council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, and ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner.

26. Regularly reviewing performance with a view to identifying actions which will further drive improvement in outcomes or efficiencies helps ensure the council achieves its County Plan priorities.

Environmental Impact

27. This report details how progress is being made in achieving the Delivery Plan which details how the council is working to deliver the environmental ambitions set out in the County Plan. Individual projects and deliverables included within the Delivery Plan will all be subject to their own governance arrangements and assessment of environmental and ecological impact.

Equality duty

28. 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.

29. 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. Each project within the Delivery Plan will assess its equality impact individually.

30. The equality impact within each project of the Delivery Plan will assess where a decision is likely to result in detrimental impact on any group with a protected characteristic it must be justified objectively. This means that attempts to mitigate the harm will be explored. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker will balance this detrimental impact against the strength of legitimate public need to pursue the service change.

Resource implications

31. These recommendations have no direct financial implications, however cabinet may wish to consider how money is utilised in order to meet the council's objectives.

Legal implications

32. This Council is a best value authority designated under the Local Government Act 1999. It is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions. Measuring performance is a tool to evidence such improvement.

Risk management

33. The risks associated with the council's business are recorded on the relevant service risk register and escalated in accordance with the council's Performance Management Framework

and Risk Management Plan. The highest risks, i.e. those scoring greater than 16 after controls, are escalated to the council's Corporate Risk Register.

Consultees

34. None in relation to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A Q3 Council Plan Delivery Plan Updates

Background papers

Council Plan 2024-2028
Delivery Plan 2024-2025

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 13/02/2025
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 11/02/2025
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 07/02/2025
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 06/02/2025
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 10/02/2025
Procurement	Claire Powell	Date 07/02/2025
Risk	Jessica Karia	Date 05/02/2025

Approved by	Rosie Thomas-Easton	Date 13/02/2025