

## **2. Supplement to the agenda for**

# **Cabinet**

**Thursday 18 December 2025**

**2.30 pm**

**Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane  
Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

### **3. DRAFT MINUTES – CABINET 20 NOVEMBER 2025**

**Pages**

**3 - 20**



Herefordshire Council

# **Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 20 November 2025 at 2.30 pm**

<b>Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting:</b>	<p><b>Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)</b>  <b>Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)</b></p> <p><b>Councillors Graham Biggs, Barry Durkin, Carole Gandy, Dan Hurcomb, Philip Price and Pete Stoddart</b></p>
<b>Cabinet Members in remote attendance</b>	<p><b>None</b></p> <p><i>Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.</i></p>

Group leaders / representatives in attendance	Councillors Clare Davies, Liz Harvey, Ben Proctor (substitute for Terry James), Stef Simmons (substitute for Diana Toynbee)
Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance	Councillors Pauline Crockett, Toni Fagan, Louis Stark
Other councillors in attendance:	R Allonby, G Dando, F Horton, H Hall, J Hobbs, C Porter, T Russell, R Sanders, D Thornton and P Walker

Officers in attendance:

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies from Councillors Bramer and Powell

Other councillors:

There were apologies from Councillors James and Toynbee

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **3. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

## **4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 11 - 18)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

## **5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

There were no questions from councillors.

## **6. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

There were no reports from scrutiny committees for consideration at this meeting.

## **7. Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. It was noted that Appendix A provided a full breakdown of the Quarter 2 updates on the Delivery Plan milestones, with 206 out of 240 milestones (85.8%) being completed or on track to be delivered by the end of the financial year. The quarter 2 highlights were noted at paragraph 3 which included the Hereford Transport Hub, Holme Lacy Road Active Travel Improvements, Hereford By-Pass, Phosphate Mitigation Integrated Wetlands, Employment Land in Herefordshire, Peterchurch Primary School New Build, Aylestone School, Schools Capital Maintenance Programme and Hampton Dene Primary School.

For the first of the Council Plan themes of People it was confirmed that out of 87 milestones, 39 were on track, 22 were completed, 15 were at risk of missing their deadline, 10 had not yet started and 1 was discontinued. Regarding children and young people, it was noted that a new alternative provision was being developed to support children who required additional assistance to remain or return to mainstream education. Work with Talk Community was progressing to implement a targeted support offer for children and families. Work was also progressing in establishing a framework of commissioned providers to deliver alternative curriculum provision for children unable to attend school or requiring additional support. Also, new approaches were being developed regarding commissioning and managing daytime, community based short breaks for children and families.

Regarding Adult Services, it was noted that the development of a new care facility for adults with complex needs was being investigated. A review of all Supported Living services was also being carried out.

Regarding Economy and Environment, it was noted that five businesses at the Hereford Enterprise Zone were being supported to develop employer travel plans, which furthered the council's commitment to support residents lead healthy lives.

For the second Council Plan theme of Place, it was confirmed that out of 89 milestones, 60 were on target, 10 were at risk of missing a deadline, 12 had been completed, 4 had not yet started and 3 were paused. It was noted that delays within the Environment Agency had led to the Nutrient Management Plan delivery being delayed. A review of the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership was underway and consultation findings of the new service vision for the new Herefordshire Library Strategy was being shared with staff and stakeholders. The final strategy document was progressing in parallel.

For the third Council Plan theme of Growth, it was confirmed that out of the 39 milestones, 31 were on target, 1 was at risk of missing a deadline, 6 had been completed and 1 had not started. The viability of a new railway station was being explored with partners at the Golden Valley Parkway Task Force. It was noted that a range of measures was being used to help prevent homelessness which included the provision of transitional accommodation.

For the last Council Plan theme of Transformation, it was confirmed out of the 40 milestones, 28 were on target, 3 were at risk of missing a deadline, 8 were completed and 1 was paused. A review of the council's commissioning approach was underway alongside the development of a new Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Strategy. It was noted that the council was building a data and performance driven culture to support informed decision making to improve efficiency and demand.

It was noted that the council was working on a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) new Local Government Outcomes Framework. The new outcomes framework will be shared once it was completed. In the interim, the council would continue to report on the top ten indicators previously stated and outlined in paragraph 23 of the report.

It was noted that Appendix A set out a completed updated status of Quarter 2 Council Plan Delivery Plan.

Comments from cabinet members. It was noted that the number of individual rough sleepers continued to fluctuate and this was a snapshot at the time of the month. However, a number have no recourse to actual funds which limits ability to help with supported accommodation and the council's team were actively supporting these individuals. There has also been a rise in people with no local connection to Herefordshire and this will continue to be monitored.

Regarding Highways for structural attention and surface dressing 58 miles had been completed for 2025/26 and 36 miles had been completed for resurfacing. Thanks were extended to the officers and contractors.

It was noted that whilst Peterchurch Primary School had flooded again with the recent bad weather, it was noted that when the school is rebuilt it will include flood defences. It was also positively noted that officers who attended properties that experienced flooding did a great job.

It was highlighted there was a positive skills conference in October 2025 with a 100 business and skills providers present and congratulations were extended to the team in organising it. It was also highlighted that the council has a 'small sparks fund' which is aimed to benefit small community groups and makes a difference to the county's marginalised families. The Talk Community newsletter also included notice of small grants which had been identified.

Thoughts were with residents impacted by the recent flooding. It was noted that the council has £1m already invested in the flood risk response programme but there was more to do in Quarters 3 and 4.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. It was welcomed to see so many green performance targets. Regarding the 'Alternative Provision' for children requiring support to return to mainstream education it was queried if the deliverables should be red rather than amber, as the report stated that a proposal would be considered as part of the council's capital programme for the next financial year and it wasn't being delivered this year. It was also raised if local organisations would be supported in bidding for this framework rather than larger out of county providers.

It was raised whether the amount and condition of the accommodation for rough sleepers was adequate to meet the reality of the demand. And assurance was sought that cabinet was managing the spike in rough sleepers.

It was queried if the promised workshop on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy would take place.

It was raised that the report didn't comment about the impact and if the report could show trend data.

In response to group leaders, it was noted that the Alternative Provision milestones related to developing and discussing with prospective providers, it was right for it to join up with the capital programme and it was confirmed that it remained a key priority for cabinet.

Regarding the outputs, it was confirmed these had to align with the MGCLG outcomes framework, paragraphs 18-22. Once these are confirmed, then the outcomes will be aligned

It was noted that the trend data and formatting of the document would be looked at.

Regarding the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, it was noted that agreement of Natural England was required before it could be shared more widely with all members and the public. It was envisaged that by end of January 2026 further consultation can take place. Regarding a Political Group Consultation and/or an all member briefing it was asked which would be preferred. However, it was raised that the issue was regarding engagement with Local Parishes and wards and that was the reason for requesting consultation on the document in advance. It was noted that some work had occurred with some Local Parishes, but it was perhaps a case that it could be revisited and doing more.

In respect of hospital discharges, it was confirmed that the council had no control over this as it depended on the individual and their needs.

Regarding rough sleepers it was noted that a spike was always present in the summer months. It was commented that the accommodation was believed to be sufficient, it accommodated 16 men and 4 women.

**Councillor Stoddart proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:**

**That Cabinet:**

**a) review performance for Q2 2025/26**

## **8. Q2 2025/26 BUDGET REPORT**

The member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. It was noted Quarter 2 was being presented in a different external environment compared to three months ago. Following preparatory steps for the 26/27 budget setting the council's initial assessment of the Government's fair funding review indicated there was a potential gap between the council's income and expenditure of £27.3m.

The Quarter 2 revenue outturn position showed a net overspend of £7m, with planned management action this would reduce to £3.7m. The forecast outturn position for 25/26 by directorate was set out at Table 1 of the report. The report highlighted the continuing budget pressures to support increase in demand across social care budgets, temporary accommodation and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport services.

Recovery actions expected to reduce the forecast overspend in Quarter 4 included; £2.8 million allocation of the Budget Resilience Reserve to mitigate the impact of cost pressures and volatility in demand in Directorate Budgets; continued review of the council's contract arrangements and shareholding in Hoople Ltd; additional cost pressures in the Community Wellbeing Directorate emerging in Quarter 2 will be subject to further review and challenge in Quarter 3 before additional allocation from the budget resilience reserve is approved; and challenge of forecast expenditure over the remainder of the financial year through Directorate expenditure control panels.

In the financial year ended 2024/25, £4m of the Budget Resilience Reserve was applied to cost pressures in the Community Wellbeing Budget which reduced the balance carried forward to the current financial year to £7m.

It was noted that Expenditure controls remained in place to support recovery activity and robust control over expenditure in 2025/26. Directorate panels would continue to review expenditure on goods and services as well as changes in staffing arrangements to

maintain the increased level of rigour and challenge over expenditure for the remainder of the financial year.

Table 2 sets out the updated financial position for 25/26 and the projected overspend of £3.7m.

Council approved £3.9 million of savings for 2025/26 Children & Young People Directorate. A review of the delivery and status of the approved savings had been undertaken and confirmed that £1.6m (40%) of the total approved savings target for the year had been delivered at Quarter 2. A further £2.3m (60%) had been assessed as 'on target/in progress' for the year. No savings were currently assessed as 'at risk'.

It was noted that in June 2025 a focused review of the original proposals and planned activity was undertaken during Quarter 1 and revised savings plans were developed. The revised savings of £11.9m were in Table 4. As at 30 September 2025 (Quarter 2), £6.4m (54%) of the £11.9m brought forward savings had been delivered with a further £4.1m (34%) forecast to be delivered in year; £1.4m (12%) remained at risk, with focused activity underway to resolve or mitigate in year.

It was confirmed that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was accounted for as an unusable reserve on the council's Balance Sheet, permitted by statutory instrument, which remains in place until 31 March 2028. The Quarter 2 forecast anticipated a 2025/26 in-year deficit of £17.5m based on September 2025 activity data, leading to a cumulative DSG deficit of £37.5m by 31 March 2026.

The 2025/26 approved capital budget of £155.2m had been revised to £115.1m. This revised capital budget included £11.7m of unspent project budgets brought forward from 2024/25, removal of a project valued at £6m, £14.5m additional grants and a reduction of £60.3m where budgets had been reprofiled to future years. A detailed summary was set out in Table 5 of the report.

The Quarter 2 forecast spend position was £112.1m which represented a variance of £3m against the revised capital programme budget of £115.1m. Explanations of variances by individual projects were set out in Appendix B, Table A.

The council projects with significant grant funding were set out at paragraph 28.

Comments from cabinet members. Congratulations were extended to Children's Services for being £1.4m underspent at Quarter 2 which combined with consistent improvement showed a real achievement. Regarding the increase in demand with particular pressure in domiciliary care, this was linked to hospital discharges and the service was undertaking a focused piece of work to understand the root causes, to strengthen processes and the provision for those coming out of hospital and through the front door in adult social care.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. Noted it was a challenging picture and there was an increased forecast overspend in Quarter 2 despite management action of using reserves. There was support for reducing SEN transport costs but pressures for 25/26 were also on top of last years. It was raised whether there would be any outstanding reserve amounts to be returned to reserves and if reserves were being used to meet the real cost of the service.

Query raised regarding Appendix D, Annex 2 table, an explanation was requested regarding Transformation Savings. It was raised that the MERS and Transformation targets were being replaced with a new 'Directorate Budget Efficiency' target and how that aligned with the original savings target.

Concern was raised regarding the doubling of SEND transport between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2. Assurance was sought that the forecasting was credible. Also concern that pressure in adult social care was building and if the council had sufficient understanding of this significant increase.

It was positive to see only a £3m underspend but queried the increase in risk on delivery on the capital programme. Regarding interest, more than £2.25m was expected, reassurance was sought regarding the governance and transparency arrangements for using this money.

Information was sought regarding the section 106 monies.

In response to group leaders, regarding provision of SEN, the Budget Resilience Reserve was set up to manage risk and would continue to review reserves as part of the council's ongoing work.

Regarding a review of SEN, confirmed this was part of the Quarter 1, the council remained committed to reviewing the source of the undelivered savings, including Transformation directorate area savings which had delivered recurrent savings but recognised the challenges of transformation savings as they were not 'quick wins'.

In response to the query on SEN transport, it was confirmed that the forecast at Quarter 2 represented the SEND activity data for the Autumn term and that was now difficult to predict due to national increases. It was highlighted that Herefordshire was not the only council dealing with SEN, home to school transport and adult social care issues.

Regarding interest, it was noted that cash balances were reducing over the year and any excess would be considered against the decision to borrow and cash flow requirements. The council expected to take on any additional borrowing in year which was aligned to the DSG cash flow.

Regarding current year reserve pressures, these were being considered a part of the budget setting activity for 26/27.

It was noted a written response would be provided regarding the query raised on section 106 delivery and capital projects.

Regarding adult social care the service is aware of the challenges of looking after people for longer and increased numbers in demand.

It was noted that whilst the capital of the Dedicated Schools Grant sat off the council's balance sheet, the interest on the Dedicated Schools Grant debt was around £600k per £10m. This interest sat on the council's balance sheet and was a revenue pressure of around £2.4m every year.

It was noted that this Autumn had seen an increase of 100 passengers per day for SEN transport.

**Councillor Stoddart proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:**

**That Cabinet:**

- a) Reviews the financial forecast for 2025/26, as set out in the appendices A-D, and identifies any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvements; and**



**b) Notes the management action identified to reduce the forecast outturn position for 2025/26; and**

**c) Agrees the continuation of management actions to reduce the forecast overspend as identified in this report**

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE QUARTER 2 2025-26**

The member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. The revised Corporate Risk Register were approved by Cabinet in ~~June~~ **September** [correction] 2025 and included 9 corporate risks. At Quarter 2, no additional risks had been identified for inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register. Changes to risk scores were summarised.

Risk 4 - Failure to deliver capital and major projects within identified resources and planned timeframes resulting in significant overspend and reduced project outcomes. The risk score was updated to 12 at Quarter 2.

Risk 5 - Failure to deliver a sustainable financial strategy that supported delivery of the Council Plan priorities (Including delivery of savings, commercial income, capital receipts and ensuring resources are available to deliver statutory obligations and fund organisational development and transformation). The risk score was updated to 12 at Quarter 2. This recognised the impact of risks to the council's financial sustainability as a result of the Fair Funding Review and increasing demand and cost pressures.

The council's 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan was reviewed to ensure it was aligned to the refreshed Risk Strategy and risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register. The revised Plan was approved by Audit & Governance Committee in September 2025.

Attention was drawn to corporate Risk 3, 'lack of local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, SEND placement provision to meet current and future demands'. This had a very high status and mitigating actions showed how the council was dealing with this challenging issue.

Comments from cabinet members. It was clarified that given recent weather 'risk of weather' would be kept under an open review.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. Congratulations were extended to the section 151 officer for sharpening up this process. Noted there was a split responsibility between process (Audit and Governance) and scrutinising the content (scrutiny committees and cabinet members to review the risks in their areas). Assurance was sought that cabinet members were actively involved in the management and mitigation of the risks below the top-level corporate risks on a service level. Assurances were also sought that the directorate and service level risks were being shared with the scrutiny committees.

It was noted that Risk 3 sat across DSG and SEND transport but there was only one overall scoring, it was raised whether these should be separated.

Also, assurance was sought that risks at service level were being shared with scrutiny committees.

In response to group leaders, it was confirmed that cabinet members were briefed as relevant regarding risks in their areas.

Noted there were 9 risks, as these were the risks that could threaten the delivery of the Council Plan priorities. Regarding the DSG risk, it was confirmed that more detail can be added regarding the controls in place.

The operational and risk registers could be made available to any scrutiny panel member which could, in turn, inform their work programme.

**Councillor Stoddart proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:**

**That Cabinet:**

- a) Approves the updates to the Corporate Risk Register and actions to mitigate identified risks at Quarter 2 2025/26**
- b) Notes the activity to embed the revised risk management strategy to strengthen risk management activity across the council at Corporate, Directorate and Service levels.**

## **10. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 5**

The member for transport and infrastructure introduced the report. It was highlighted that the council was required to adopt a Local Transport Plan under section 108 to 113 of the Transport Act 2003. The policies within the plan must promote safe, integrated efficient and economic transport. The Act required consultation and on adoption must be provided to the Secretary of State.

The key points that the document considered were set out. Notably, it unlocked eligibility for competitive strategic DfT funding e.g. Active Travel, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding and provided a strong business case for major infrastructure projects e.g. the Western Bypass. Additionally, the government have been progressing with a new incentivized element to the highways maintenance block with a proposed 25% funding uplift given, if councils meet certain criteria such as best practice in sustainable transport and long-term planning and asset management. It ensures infrastructure investment was targeted and evidence based. It improved the reliability and quality of bus services and reducing chronic road network delays. Provided a clear measurable framework for reducing transport emissions by 40%. It promoted public health benefits by encouraging active travel measures with engagement of Active Travel England.

It was highlighted that the adoption of the LTP5 was central to delivering the council's environmental policy commitments and achieving key success measures outlined in the County Plan. The environmental impact of all future projects within the LTP5 would be a key consideration in their respective business cases, ensuring appropriate measures were taken to minimize negative effects and maximize environmental benefit.

Financial implications, it was noted that the LTP5 was a strategic planning document and did not in itself commit the council to any immediate capital expenditure. The purpose was to provide a clear framework for future investment. Funding to support the development and initial implementation of these policies was already included within the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. All future infrastructure projects and major schemes identified in the LTP5 would be subject to a separate review and would require future funding bids including capital, program allocations and external grant opportunities.

The Council Plan 2024 to 2028 committed Herefordshire Council to develop Herefordshire as a place for growth, prosperity and communities to thrive. This year, the Delivery Plan committed the council to deliver the Local Transport Plan to ensure places can prosper and thrive with the right integrated transport networks and to seek cabinet approval to recommend the adoption of the LTP5 to council for agreement.

Risk management was laid out at paragraph 16, page 102 and clearly laid out the impacts of not adopting the LTP5. The consultation process for the Local Transport Plan

5 2025 to 2041 was highly inclusive integrating extensive public feedback to shape the final strategic documents.

Detailed information on the consultation undertaken can be found at appendix A. An 8-week consultation on the draft LTP5 took place over the summer 2025. The consultation utilized both in-person and online forums to maximize its reach and engage with a diverse range of residents in Herefordshire. It was primarily hosted on the council's online web page, Herefordshire Consultations. A young adult survey was also shared online and hard copies of the draft LTP5 were made available in libraries across Hereford. There were also a handful of events such as engagement with schools and colleges across the area including the Hereford Sixth Form College.

Feedback from Herefordshire Council's Connected Community Scrutiny Committee meeting of the 3rd of June had also been considered. Views expressed during the consultation period from consultees, stakeholders and strategic partners were shown at appendix A.

The draft document was published last week and an all-member briefing was held earlier this week to go through the changes to the consultation draft document following the consultation responses.

It was noted an additional recommendation was to be included which would delegate authority to the cabinet member, in consultation with the Director of Economy and Environment to make any consequential amendments to the LTP following an all-member briefing before making the recommendation to council.

There were no comments from cabinet members.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. It was raised that the LTP was not an example of best practice, as it was not sufficiently forward looking. Detailed comments were provided by political parties, but members were unable to see where those comments were included within the final report. Concern was raised that the report referred to only 5 councillors in the consultation, but there were 16 across two of the political groups who provided comments. Also it was not clear what changes/revisions were made since the report was shared with scrutiny.

There was an over reliance on one major infrastructure project to under pin the plan and not enough of other forms of transport options to achieve the modal shift.

Bus travel options in the market towns were inconsistent with Leominster and Ross being half hourly whilst they were hourly in Ledbury but constantly late. This impacted on younger people accessing educational facilities from those market towns.

There was no reference to the climate emergency. Cornwall's LTP provided an example of good practice. There were no references or links made with the council's climate adaptation plan and the risks/opportunities the plan outlined.

Members have not had sight of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which underpins the LTP. Assurance was sought that cabinet had reviewed the final SEA, reviewed the NTS and understood what the predicted environmental effect of the LTP would be before it was approved at full council.

There was positivity regarding the bypass being included but there needed to be more investment in active travel and modal shift. Noted there were only four mentions of children and an explanation was requested regarding what key aspects would contribute to a child friendly Herefordshire.

Concern remained that the LTP was being developed without alignment to the new Local Plan, meaning the document did not consider where the new housing would be in the County.

It was raised when would the consultation document be made available and would it be included in the council papers. Concern was raised that scrutiny appeared to have been bypassed since its summer consultation, and they had not considered the final version. It was raised if cabinet had reviewed the detailed document covering the consultation report and if they were content that the feedback provided had been adequately addressed and included in the final LTP. Concern was also raised that the LTP was being rushed to ensure policy cover for the council's spending on road projects.

In response to group leaders, it was noted that the bypass was cancelled at the stage it was in that moment of time, but it was this cabinet's agenda to bring that back forward. The old LTP was outdated and did not include reference to the Local Walking, Wheeling, Infrastructure Plan (LWWIP).

Noted there were numerous references to children in the LTP, and children were considered in everything the council does.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment would be included in the council agenda pack.

Regarding modal shift, it was confirmed that the LTP would not be considered in isolation and the LCWWIP would also be consulted on. It was noted the LTP was a strategic document, with the LCWWIP and BSIP following. It was confirmed that seeing all these documents combined provided different choices of transport.

Clarification would be provided when all the necessary documents would be made available prior to full council on 5 December.

**Councillor Price proposed the recommendations, and it was unanimously resolved that:**

**That:**

- a) The Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP 5) 2025 - 2041 for Herefordshire is recommended to Council for adoption.**

***Additional recommendation added:***

- b) Delegates to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Economy and Environment to make any consequential amendments to the LTP necessary as a result of a [all] member briefing before making the recommendation to Council.**

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm

**Chairperson**

#### Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1.	Mrs E Morawiecka, Hereford	<p>It has been reported that other councils, like neighbouring Shropshire, are facing bankruptcy as they recognise that delivery of “relief road” schemes are unaffordable and they seek to write off millions of public money invested in developing these road schemes.</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Register identifies capital projects among the number of high-level risks to 30.09.2025 where risks have increased since 30.06.2025. The Leader of Herefordshire Council has written to government highlighting that prudential borrowing will significantly impact the revenue Budget of this Council.</p> <p>As this administration spend £10.3million of capital receipts working up the Southern Link Road scheme, what actions are being taken by the Cabinet and Council Leadership Team to monitor and mitigate the identified risks of the capital road scheme, in particular those posed from borrowing over £30Million and risking the revenue budget of the Council?</p>	Cllr Stoddart

#### Response:

Control measures and mitigating actions to respond to Council’s Corporate Risks are identified in the Corporate Risk Register. The Corporate Risk Register is monitored and updated by the Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet on quarterly basis.

Item 9 of the Agenda presents an update on the status of corporate risks at Quarter 2 2025/26. This includes:

**Corporate Risk ref. R4: Failure to deliver capital and major projects within identified resources and planned timeframes resulting in significant overspend and reduced project outcomes.** The controls and actions to manage and mitigate this risk are included at Appendix A, of the report and set out below.

Each major project has an assigned Senior Responsible Officer, a dedicated Project Management Officer Project Manager and a Project Board of relevant representatives from across the council (relevant service area, legal, finance, property services etc) to lead delivery.

Additional controls are in place to monitor expenditure in respect of capital and major projects linked to cashflow requirements via monthly Directorate Budget Boards.

A review of the council's Capital Programme is currently underway to identify opportunities to maximise resources and funding to prioritise delivery of capital projects and minimise risks to delivery and budget

**Corporate Risk ref. R5: Failure to deliver a sustainable financial strategy that supports delivery of the Council Plan priorities.** The controls and actions to manage and mitigate this risk are included at Appendix A, of the report and set out below.

Effective budget monitoring arrangements are in place via Directorate Budget Boards to monitor delivery of services against agreed budget, achievement of savings and delivery of capital and major projects. Expenditure controls have continued in 25/26 via Directorate Control Panels to challenge and reduce, defer or stop spend above £500. High quality financial reporting is achieved through additional controls to ensure forecasting is informed by reliable, timely activity data.

Additional controls are in place to monitor expenditure in respect of capital and major projects linked to cashflow requirements via monthly Directorate Budget Boards.

**Supplementary question:**

The response avoids answering my question which asked what is being done to mitigate the risks from the Southern Link Road Scheme. Agenda item 9 shows the risk of capital projects has increased from 9 to 12, a 33% increase in just three months. This indicates the council leadership team which includes the cabinet is failing to protect Herefordshire public finances. This perhaps explains the Leader's begging letter to Government to try and rescue a road scheme which adds hundreds of pounds to all Herefordshire taxpayer bills for the next 40 years. If directorate control panels are being asked to challenge, reduce, defer or stop spending above £500, why wont this cabinet reduce, defer or stop the spend of over £40 million pounds needed for the Southern Link Road to avoid the financial car crash predicted by the council Leader in his letter.

**Supplementary response:**

**Proposed response:**

The revenue impact of prudential borrowing undertaken to fund capital projects is determined through the annual budget setting process and the council's Treasury Management Strategy. Interest payable linked to project funding per the approved capital programme is included in the revenue budget and reflected in the medium-term financial strategy which requires full Council approval. Risks to individual projects, including financial risks, are identified, monitored and reported as part of the council's risk management framework.

PQ 2.	Amanda Martin, Hereford	There is no mention of Active Travel England in the list of stakeholders consulted. When Active Travel England provide significant resources to Local Authorities and grant funding for delivering active travel schemes why were they not consulted on a transport plan to cover the County for the period 2025-2041, when there is increased pressure to deliver additional housing in a sustainable way, improve health outcomes for all residents and reduce carbon emissions, and given that transport is the largest carbon emitter in the county?	Cllr Price
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>I can confirm that Active Travel England (ATE) were consulted during the development of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). They attended the stakeholder workshops held in November 2024, where their input helped shape the plan's approach to active travel and sustainable transport. In addition, ATE was provided with links to the public consultation when it went live, ensuring they had the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan.</p> <p>LTP Policy TN10 regarding design standard ensures the LTP reflects use of ATE's Design Tools, their priorities and national guidance, including the Healthy Street principles and the Department for Transport's Gear Change strategy. These underpin our commitments to improving health outcomes, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting sustainable housing growth. Transport remains the largest carbon emitter in the county, and active travel is central to addressing this challenge.</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with ATE during the implementation phase and future reviews of the LTP to ensure alignment with their funding and delivery priorities, and we will include ATE in the final version of the LTP before it is published for Council.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary question:</b></p> <p>"The answer appears to contradict the recommendation of Cabinet that "The Local Transport Plan 5 2025- 2041 for Herefordshire is recommended to Council for adoption".</p> <p>This means that there is no opportunity for any corrections as this is the final draft being recommended by the meeting. Delaying the plan, including any scrutiny and corrections, is not recommended, even for a couple of months, as apparently "momentum will be lost and delivery of priority schemes".</p>			

Unusually for a Plan, there is no list of priorities in the Local Transport Plan document, so please explain where the list of schemes ranked by priority can be found, and the implementation plan showing their capital costs, funding sources and phased delivery over the period of the plan, and which are supported by ATE, a major grant funder?"

**Supplementary response:**

The recommendation to Full Council is to adopt the Local Transport Plan (LTP) as the strategic framework for transport in Herefordshire for the period 2025–2041. This does not mean that the plan cannot evolve over time. The LTP is a high-level policy document, and its adoption provides the basis for developing detailed implementation plans and schemes. These will be subject to ongoing review, stakeholder engagement, and funding opportunities, including those offered by Active Travel England (ATE).

To clarify, the LTP does not include a fixed list of priority schemes or detailed costings because it is designed to set strategic objectives rather than prescribe specific projects. This approach allows flexibility to respond to emerging needs, funding streams, and community priorities over the life of the plan. The prioritisation of schemes, capital costs, funding sources, and delivery phasing will be set out in the supplementary delivery plans such as the LCWWIP, BSIP etc. The LTP will be a dynamic document, updated regularly to reflect progress and new opportunities.

An annual report on the LTP including project delivery, KPI updates and amendments required to the document to reflect local and national guidance or legislation changes will be scheduled once the document has been adopted by Full Council. This will ensure that the LTP remains up to date and what is needed to best support Herefordshire's transport network.

Active Travel England will continue to be a key partner in shaping and funding active travel schemes. Their input will be sought during the development of the Implementation Plan to ensure alignment with their priorities and design standards.

In summary, adoption of the LTP now ensures we maintain momentum on strategic objectives, while the detailed programme of schemes will be developed transparently and collaboratively in the next stage.

<b>PQ 3.</b>	<b>Will Frecknall, Hereford</b>	<b>I understand the Local Transport Plan for the period 2025 to 2041 has reached final draft and will shortly be put before full Council for approval. Can Cabinet confirm that that document has been reviewed by the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee? And if it has, why have that committee's comments not been published?</b>	<b>Cllr Price</b>
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**Response:**

The draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2025-2041 was considered by the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee on 3 June 2025. In addition the committee considered a report that outlined the council's approach to producing the plan on 8 November 2023.



Following its scrutiny on 3 June 2025, the committee made the following recommendations:

- That the draft Local Transport Plan is reviewed to ensure alignment with existing council plans and strategies.
- That the Local Transport Plan gives particular consideration to the needs of children and young people
- The duration of the Local Transport Plan is kept in alignment with the Local Plan and Transport Strategy to which it applies - namely 2016-2031.
- Herefordshire Council work to increase the number of residents taking part in the Local Transport Plan consultation as a matter of urgency, extending the consultation deadline to 30 June to all members of the public.
- The policy wording of the Local Transport Plan is tightened to ensure that it is meaningful and capable of being applied.
- The Local Transport Plan recognises the full extent of existing new developments, for example Ledbury, and the infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate this.
- The Local Transport Plan should include targets for the implementation of active travel measures.
- The Local Transport Plan recognises the inability of the power grid network to meet the needs of fast EV charging point.

The cabinet member responded to these recommendations on 6 June 2025, in doing so, agreed to:

- review the alignment of the transport plan to other key policies
- review engagement with young people in drafting the plan
- extend the consultation period of the plan and
- include targets for implementing active travel measures.

In addition to the engagement with Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee, all members can comment in full at council on 5<sup>th</sup> December. An all-member briefing took place on 18<sup>th</sup> November and additional feedback was received which is being shared with the Cabinet member.

#### **Supplementary question:**

Whilst you say councillors can comment at the Full Council meeting on the final draft of the Local Transport Plan, they will not be able to amend the plan at that point, even for corrections or issues raised today, unless Cabinet decides not to recommend adoption of the final LTP to go to full council at the meeting on 5th December.

Page 7 of the LTP says “LTP5 is a living document that will be reviewed and updated as part of a continuous process.” To enable councillors and scrutiny comments to be incorporated into this living document, when is the first review scheduled to take place to update the Local Transport Plan?

**Supplementary response:**

The first formal review is scheduled to take place within 12 months of adoption.

PQ 4.	Nigel Shaw, Bromyard	<p>On 07/07/25 you published a decision to expend up to £1.5m of capital to develop and build workspace units on the former Council Depot Site in Bromyard. The published risk considerations make no reference to the content of the memorandum sent to the Economic Development Manager by Planning Services on 31/07/18 (Ref 182239). vis:-</p> <p>“A redevelopment of the site for employment purposes would very likely increase the density of development and radically alter the appearance of the site, at this stage it is unknown what impact this would have on neighbouring uses, access arrangements, or use restrictions on the site. Consequently it is not certain at this stage whether the site would be an appropriate location for future employment use.”</p> <p>What has now changed that enables these industrial units to be built cheek by jowl with existing dwellings?</p>	Cllr Biggs
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**Response:**

The Bromyard Town Investment Plan and the Employment Land Study (completed in 2022) in support of the development of the new Local Plan indicates that there is a need for 4ha of employment land within Bromyard. The Cabinet Member decision taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (Decision - Bromyard Employment Land and Leominster Business Hub Development - Herefordshire Council) initially provides access to the funding required to appoint a design team to fully explore the potential business case for development of the site to meet this need. We are currently undertaking further work to clarify demand for the proposed business units, and gathering further evidence to support the assessment of the financial viability, prior to taking forward the design stage which will include further engagement with the planning service.

**Supplementary question:**

Thank you for your reply which suggests that to the Bromyard Employment Land Study, completed in support of the development of the New Local Plan, is the change that has occurred. But this document also specifically discounted the development of the Depot site for employment purposes

as outlined in table E2 of that study. The report did not consider the site to be suitable. I am sure that the Cabinet member would not instruct officers to disregard evidence produced in support of the new local plan in order to deliver his own objectives?

Will the Cabinet member now reconsider their actions which go against both local wishes and the comprehensive evidence in the report provided by his own Authority?"

**Supplementary response:**

There are a number of 'changes' that have occurred in taking forward the feasibility to potentially develop employment units on the former depot site, not least the lack of other suitable sites that the council can bring forward to meet the identified local need, the site has an existing designation for employment use, and the very significant mandatory growth targets the government has imposed through the changes in National Planning Policy Framework. The increase in 30,000 new homes across the county will require the development of associated employment land, this significant change has required that we further review all sites for future development. As a result of the change to the NPPF, the Employment Land Study is about to be updated, and will further consider the depot site in light of these changing requirements.

PQ 5.	Jeremy Milln, Hereford	<p>The Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 5 (2025-41) at agenda item 10 contains scant reference to 20mph speed limits, believing them only narrowly applicable, e.g. around certain schools. In this respect the LTP as drafted fails to meet the ambition set by Herefordshire when it agreed to progress area-wide 20mph at Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Yet 20mph is now universally accepted as a defining feature of safer, more liveable streets across the UK adopted by more and more local authorities.</p> <p>What does the Cabinet member propose to do, so as not to be left behind with his stance on the matter where denial of the facts will not do?</p>	Cllr Price
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**Response:**

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) does reference 20mph speed limits and focuses on their application in locations where they deliver the greatest safety and environmental benefits, such as around schools and residential areas. This reflects current Department for Transport guidance and the evidence base for effective speed management.

The Council's resolution in March 2020 to progress area-wide 20mph limits remains an important commitment, and the LTP does not preclude wider implementation. Rather, it sets the strategic framework within which detailed policies and schemes will be developed. The next stage will involve reviewing how 20mph limits can be expanded in a way that is consistent with national standards, local priorities, and available funding.

It is important to emphasise that our approach to road safety is not limited to speed limits alone. We are focused on a comprehensive package of measures including improved crossings, traffic calming, enforcement and active travel infrastructure to create safer, more liveable streets. This ensures that we address road safety holistically rather than relying on a single intervention.

We will continue to monitor best practice and evidence from across the UK to ensure Herefordshire delivers safer streets while balancing enforcement, community support, and integration with wider transport objectives

**Supplementary question:**

It is not the case, as the response to my question about the scant reference to 20mph on page 28 of the LTP implies, that 20mph is conditional on a 'package of measures including improved crossings, traffic calming, enforcement and active travel infrastructure'. Many years ago, the whole of the St James and Bartonsham area of my ward was successfully made 20mph without any of these measures.

Referring also to page 28, where the Local Transport Plan says it will explore a possible car club scheme in Hereford, giving people a cheaper alternative to car ownership, the Cabinet member is clearly ignorant that there is already such a car club in Hereford, also based in the St James and Bartonsham area of my ward, and another based in South Hereford, both well used. How will he amend the Local Transport Plan to acknowledge this fact and encourage support?

**Supplementary response:**

On the matter of 20mph speed limits, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) does not state that 20mph is conditional on additional measures; rather, it recognises that in many locations, complementary interventions such as crossings, traffic calming, and active travel infrastructure can enhance the benefits of lower speed limits.

It is important to note that national guidance and enforcement requirements have changed significantly since the earlier 20mph schemes were introduced in areas such as St James and Bartonsham. Current Department for Transport guidance and police support now require that 20mph limits are implemented in a way that ensures compliance and safety, which often means considering supporting measures or design changes. This is to avoid creating limits that are widely ignored, which can undermine road safety objectives.

Regarding car clubs, we appreciate your clarification that Hereford already has active car club schemes operating in St James, Bartonsham, and South Hereford. The reference in the LTP to “exploring a possible car club scheme” reflects the intention to expand and promote these initiatives more widely across the county.