

Agenda

Scrutiny Management Board

Date: **Monday 12 October 2026**

Time: **2.00 pm**

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

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Tel: 01432 260659

Email: Danial.Webb@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer on 01432 260659 or e-mail Danial.Webb@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board

Membership

Chairperson	Councillor Ben Proctor
Vice-chairperson	Councillor Louis Stark

Councillor Jenny Bartlett
Councillor Simeon Cole
Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Councillor Pauline Crockett
Councillor Dave Davies
Councillor Toni Fagan
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Ed O'Driscoll
Councillor Richard Thomas
Councillor Rob Williams

Agenda

		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2.	NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the board.	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of interests from members of the board in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.	MINUTES To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 06 July 2026.	9 - 14
HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS		
The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Tuesday 06 October 2026.		
Questions can be submitted via the Online questions portal Further information and guidance is available at Get involved - Herefordshire Council		
Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting.		
Full details about asking questions and the deadlines at public meetings can be found here: constitution of the council .		
Guidance for questions being submitted for scrutiny can be found here		
5.	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public.	
6.	QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS To receive any written questions from councillors.	
7.	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION To provide Scrutiny Management Board with a clear, evidence-led account of how temporary accommodation works in Herefordshire, why demand and costs are increasing, the effect on residents, identified gaps in provision, and the action being taken to improve outcomes and value for money.	15 - 36
8.	COMMERCIALISATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT To provide Scrutiny Management Board with the findings of its Commercialisation and Income Generation working group.	37 - 52
9.	ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS	

	To provide Scrutiny Management Board with the annual review of effectiveness report. [Papers to follow]	
10.	HOOPLE SPOTLIGHT REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE To provide the committee with draft terms of reference for a proposed spotlight review of Hoople Ltd.	53 - 60
11.	WORK PROGRAMME The report: • Provides the committee with a draft work programme for the committee, for approval. • Provides the committee with a copy of the council's forward plan of key decisions to assist the committee in deciding its programme of work. • Lists the recommendations made by the committee since January 2025, and any responses to these recommendations.	61 - 104
12.	DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING Tuesday 1 December 2026, 2pm	

The public's rights to information and attendance at meetings

You have a right to:

- Attend all council, cabinet, committee and sub-committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings
- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all councillors with details of the membership of cabinet and of all committees and sub-committees. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the council, cabinet, committees and sub-committees and to inspect documents.

Recording of meetings

Please note that filming, photography and recording of this meeting is permitted provided that it does not disrupt the business of the meeting.

Members of the public are advised that if you do not wish to be filmed or photographed you should let the governance support team know before the meeting starts so that anyone who intends filming or photographing the meeting can be made aware.

The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

The council may make a recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such videos are made available for members of the public via the council's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@HerefordshireCouncil/streams

Public transport links

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station.

Bus maps are available here: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/78/bus_maps

The seven principles of public life

(Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Management Board held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 6 July 2026 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor Ben Proctor (chairperson)
Councillor Louis Stark (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Jenny Bartlett, Simeon Cole, Dave Davies, Toni Fagan, Ed O'Driscoll, Diana Toynbee and Rebecca Tully.

In attendance: Councillors: Carole Gandy (Cabinet Member Adults Health and Wellbeing), Ivan Powell (Children and Young People) and Councillor Peter Stoddart (Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services).

Officers: Simon Cann (Committee Clerk), Stacey Carter (Head of Strategic Finance), Emma Evans (Head of Delivery and Improvement), Liz Farr (Service Director Education, Skills and Learning), Hilary Hall (Corporate Director Community Wellbeing), Quentin Mee (Head of Educational Development), Rachael Sanders (Director of Finance) and Danial Webb (Statutory Scrutiny Officer).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Pauline Crockett and Councillor Liz Harvey.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Rebecca Tully was substituting for Councillor Pauline Crockett.
Councillor Diana Toynbee was substituting for Councillor Liz Harvey.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No questions had been received from councillors.

7. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT HIGH NEEDS BLOCK DEFICIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. The Committee received an update on the DSG High Needs Block Deficit Management Plan. Demand for SEND support, particularly EHCPs, continued to place significant pressure on resources. The projected cumulative deficit at the end of 2025/26 was £36.3 million, reflecting an improvement from previous forecasts.
2. Members were advised that the SEND Reform Plan and Deficit Management Plan served different functions. The reform plan focuses on inclusion and earlier support within mainstream settings, while the deficit plan remains necessary to manage costs and financial sustainability.
3. The projected deficit has reduced from around £40 million to £36.3 million following management actions. Officers reported that Herefordshire's SEND Reform Plan has been positively received and was considered advanced compared with many authorities.
4. Approval of the reform plan could make the council eligible for High Needs Stability Funding, covering approximately 90% of the current deficit. Members were advised that financial controls would still be required throughout the planned three-year transition period.
5. Discussion acknowledged continuing national funding pressures. Officers highlighted ongoing efforts to contain costs through increasing local provision, reducing reliance on out-of-county placements and promoting inclusion within mainstream education.
6. Members noted significant shortages in specialist provision. Existing special schools were operating at capacity and the loss of government funding for a proposed special free school was recognised as a setback. Planned expansion projects, including Westfield School and alternative provision schemes, were intended to increase capacity.
7. Questions were raised regarding increasing numbers of children qualifying for support. Officers advised that reforms would place greater emphasis on inclusion and early intervention, although demand for specialist placements would remain for children with complex needs.
8. Officers confirmed that the reform programme was supported by five-year financial modelling. Forecasts took account of future demand, expenditure trends and the need for both systems to operate during transition.
9. It was clarified that stability funding could only be used to address the deficit. Expansion of provision relied on separate capital funding streams, which were supporting projects across specialist and alternative provision.
10. Officers advised that a new standalone special school was currently unaffordable. The council was therefore exploring more cost-effective options using existing buildings and continued to pursue future government funding opportunities.
11. Members discussed the balance of capital investment priorities. Existing capital commitments included funding for alternative provision and pupil referral developments alongside wider SEND expansion plans.
12. Officers advised that the priority was ensuring appropriate specialist provision existed within the county, recognising that schools were generally designed to meet specific categories of need rather than provide identical services in every

locality. While increased local provision might reduce some transport costs, officers cautioned that many pupils with complex needs would continue to require transport support.

13. The Committee welcomed progress in reducing the deficit while recognising continued financial and operational risks. Assurance was provided that both the deficit and wider SEND reforms remained under close review. Members also noted the importance of ongoing co-production with parents and carers in shaping future SEND services.

8. ADULT SOCIAL CARE

1. The Director of Adult Social Care explained that the CQC assessment, published in May, resulted in an overall rating of *Requires Improvement*. While strengths were identified in safeguarding and partnership working, the assessment highlighted several areas requiring further development. Officers stated that the findings broadly aligned with the council's own self-assessment, providing confidence that improvement efforts were focused on the correct priorities.
2. Members sought assurance that the improvement plan focused on the right priorities and would deliver meaningful improvements. Officers advised that the plan drew upon both the self-assessment and themes emerging from the CQC process. Priorities including strengthening the front door, supporting carers, improving occupational therapy services and managing demand more effectively had already been identified locally before the inspection.
3. Concerns were raised about the absence of measurable outcomes and performance indicators. Officers acknowledged that the published plan was a high-level document and confirmed that a more detailed action plan was being developed, incorporating performance measures, evidence of impact and resident feedback to enable more rigorous monitoring.
4. Members questioned whether the narrative nature of the CQC report provided sufficient evidence to support the selected priorities. Officers accepted limitations within the report but emphasised that priorities had also been informed by operational performance information and local intelligence.
5. Discussion turned to the relationship between service improvement and financial sustainability. Officers explained that many improvement initiatives focused on prevention, reablement and early intervention, which could both improve outcomes and reduce future demand for more costly services.
6. Questions were asked about progress against the improvement plan. Officers reported that many actions were already underway before the inspection and that progress was being monitored monthly through established governance arrangements.
7. The Committee explored the role of data and performance information in supporting improvement. Officers outlined developments including improved reablement tracking, enhanced case monitoring and better oversight of referrals through the front door. These arrangements aimed to strengthen evidence of outcomes and support decision making.
8. Members examined the effectiveness of the front-door approach and the ability to track individuals signposted to alternative services. Officers advised that return contacts could be monitored but further work was underway to capture information on destinations and outcomes for those directed elsewhere.

9. The Committee considered how resident feedback was being used to shape services. Officers explained that existing feedback mechanisms would be expanded to gather views from residents at different stages of their journey, including those accessing alternative forms of support.
10. A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of stronger corporate data and analytical capability. Members suggested improved investment in these areas would support service improvement across the council. Officers agreed and confirmed that performance and intelligence functions formed an important component of the programme.
11. Members discussed prevention, community support and the role of Community Connectors. Officers reported that Community Connectors were increasingly providing practical assistance to residents as well as signposting, helping individuals engage with services and reducing barriers to access.
12. Significant attention was given to Occupational Therapy services and waiting lists. Officers cited workforce shortages, rising demand and historical data issues as contributing factors. Work was ongoing to improve assessment pathways, waiting-list management and triage arrangements.
13. Members sought reassurance that a stronger focus on prevention would not increase risks for vulnerable residents. Officers emphasised that waiting lists were actively monitored, needs regularly reviewed and prevention was intended to delay or reduce need where appropriate rather than restrict access to care.
14. The Committee explored broader demand pressures affecting Adult Social Care. Officers highlighted the continuing impact of Covid-19, increasing complexity of need and higher demand levels, although growth was beginning to stabilise.
15. Members examined partnership working and questioned how external organisations were involved in the improvement plan. Officers confirmed that NHS and voluntary-sector partners were engaged through established arrangements, including the One Herefordshire Partnership, although this could have been reflected more clearly within the documentation.
16. Discussion broadened to the role of the voluntary and community sector in prevention and early intervention. Officers stressed that community organisations should be supported rather than expected to replace statutory services and highlighted work exploring more flexible commissioning arrangements.
17. The Cabinet Member highlighted loneliness and social isolation as significant underlying factors affecting wellbeing and service demand. Members questioned whether this was sufficiently addressed within the improvement plan. Officers confirmed that a wider prevention strategy was being developed and agreed to consider strengthening references to loneliness within that work.

Budget and Financial Sustainability

18. Members asked how confidence could be established that Adult Social Care was receiving sufficient funding. Finance officers explained that budgets were based on activity trends, demand forecasts and performance information, although future demand could never be predicted with complete certainty.
19. Members queried whether recurring overspends suggested budgets had been set too low. Officers responded that budgeting relied on informed assumptions

and that changes in demand and operational pressures could create in-year variations.

20. The Committee explored links between savings plans and the improvement programme. Officers advised that both had been developed alongside one another and were intended to be mutually supportive. Detailed monitoring arrangements were in place and early indications showed several planned savings had already been achieved.
21. The importance of maintaining a balanced budget was emphasised. Cabinet Members argued that financial discipline was essential to maintaining long-term service sustainability.
22. Members also explored opportunities to use capital investment to reduce future revenue costs. Officers highlighted Disabled Facilities Grants, care-home improvements and housing initiatives that supported independence and reduced long-term care requirements.
23. Questions were asked about external funding and specialist support for the improvement programme. Officers advised that although significant new funding streams were limited, regional bodies such as ADASS could provide expertise in areas including transformation, data and performance.
24. The Committee concluded by considering benchmarking and partnership arrangements. Officers advised that Adult Social Care expenditure was broadly in line with comparable authorities and highlighted ongoing work with health partners on Continuing Healthcare funding and integrated service delivery.
25. In closing, members recognised the scale of the improvement programme and noted that data capability, performance management, partnership working and prevention had emerged as key themes for ongoing scrutiny.

9. COMMERCIALISATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP FINAL REPORT

The committee heard that the report was largely written, but there had been a delay in publishing it. It was agreed that a draft copy of the report would be circulated with members ahead of the next committee meeting in October -- when the final report would be published.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

1. Members agreed that the Scrutiny Management Board should add a longer-term work programme item to explore how the council's capital programme could better support improvements in adult social care and help reduce associated costs.
2. The Board also noted the forthcoming Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting on major capital infrastructure projects and recognised the relevance of these schemes to SMB's oversight of organisational performance and capital delivery.
3. Concerns were raised regarding the delivery of major capital projects, including issues experienced on significant schemes, prompting discussion about whether the council's current approach to planning and managing its capital programme remains effective. Members suggested this could become a future scrutiny work programme item.

11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Listed as Tuesday 1 December 2026, 2pm, but October 2026 to be confirmed..

The meeting ended at 16:55

Chairperson



Title: Temporary Accommodation - Scrutiny Management Board Briefing Report

Meeting: Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 12th October 2026

Report by: Hayley Crane, Head of Service, Housing

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide Scrutiny Management Board with a clear, evidence-led account of how temporary accommodation works in Herefordshire, why demand and costs are increasing, the effect on residents, identified gaps in provision, and the action being taken to improve outcomes and value for money.

Background

1. Temporary accommodation has come to scrutiny because demand, cost and complexity have increased significantly in recent years. The report explains the statutory duties that require the council to provide accommodation in specific circumstances, the pressures affecting supply and move-on, and the local and national actions needed to reduce reliance on emergency provision.

Meeting objectives

2. To understand what temporary accommodation is and when the council has a legal duty to provide it.
3. To consider the local drivers of demand, cost and service pressure.
4. To review the impact of temporary accommodation on residents, including families, young people, care leavers, veterans and households with complex needs.
5. To consider the actions being taken locally to improve supply, strengthen prevention, reduce spend and support move-on.
6. To identify where national policy, subsidy and housing supply decisions affect local temporary accommodation pressures.

Report information

7. This section brings together the detailed evidence requested by Scrutiny Management Board: what temporary accommodation is, how households enter and leave it, what drives demand, who is affected, how the service is funded, where the gaps are, and which actions are likely to reduce cost and improve outcomes.

Executive Summary

8. Preventing homelessness is at the heart of Herefordshire Council's Housing Service and is one of the most effective ways of supporting vulnerable residents whilst reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and emergency interventions. Prevention means working with individuals and families at the earliest possible opportunity when there is a risk that they may lose their home, rather than waiting until a housing crisis occurs. The aim is to help people remain safely housed wherever possible, maintain stability for families, and avoid the significant personal, social and financial impacts associated with homelessness. Early intervention is not only better for residents, but also represents better value for the public purse by reducing the need for costly temporary accommodation placements and crisis support.
9. Prevention activity is delivered through a combination of Housing Solutions and Talk Community services, working closely with partner organisations, landlords, registered providers and community groups. Prevention Officers identify households at risk of homelessness at the earliest stage and provide practical support tailored to individual circumstances. This includes negotiating with landlords to prevent eviction, mediating between family members where relationship breakdown threatens accommodation, assisting residents to access welfare benefits and debt advice, and helping people resolve issues before they escalate into homelessness. The service also works proactively with households facing financial hardship, including those experiencing rent arrears, mortgage arrears or other housing-related debts.
10. A range of financial tools are used to sustain existing accommodation and secure alternative housing where necessary. These include rent deposit and bond schemes, rent in advance payments, discretionary goodwill payments, interest-free loans, and support to access charitable funding and other sources of financial assistance. In many cases, relatively small interventions such as clearing rent arrears, resolving a debt issue, or providing a deposit can prevent a household from becoming homeless. Housing Solutions Officers also work with families and support networks to explore options that allow people to remain in suitable accommodation, extending notice periods or agreeing realistic repayment plans where appropriate.
11. Prevention is therefore much more than responding to homelessness applications. It involves identifying risk early, understanding the underlying causes of housing instability, and coordinating support that enables households to remain safely in their homes. Through this approach, Herefordshire Council seeks to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring, ensuring that residents receive the right support at the right time while reducing the demand for temporary accommodation and crisis services.
12. Herefordshire's prevention-led approach is also beginning to attract wider interest and recognition beyond the county. The service's emphasis on early identification, community-based prevention, partnership working through Talk Community, use of prevention tools, and a clear aim to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring aligns strongly with emerging national policy direction and best practice. This includes engagement and interest from central government and the Centre for Homelessness Impact in relation to prevention-focused models, as well as peer interest from Salford Council, whose work is linked to the wider Greater Manchester approach championed by the Prime Minister. This external interest is important because it demonstrates that Herefordshire is not simply responding to

crisis, but is developing a proactive, evidence-led model that others are looking to learn from. It also provides an opportunity for the council to influence wider policy thinking, share rural learning, and ensure that national homelessness prevention approaches recognise the specific challenges faced by areas such as Herefordshire.

13. The Early Homeless Prevention Team has already demonstrated the value of this approach. During Quarter 1 of 2026/27, the team supported 77 individuals and households, achieved 17 successful early homelessness interventions and supported 72 cases through partnership working. This shows the practical impact of upstream prevention: resolving housing issues earlier, reducing escalation into homelessness applications and helping to manage demand for temporary accommodation.

Temporary accommodation and legal duties – What is Temporary Accommodation?

Definitions

14. **Prevention Duty S195** - The Prevention Duty requires a local authority to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help them keep their current accommodation or find alternative housing before they become homeless.
15. **Relief Duty S189B** - A statutory duty requiring councils to take reasonable steps to help eligible households who are already homeless to secure suitable accommodation and end their homelessness.
16. **Interim Duty S188** - A statutory duty requiring councils to secure temporary accommodation for eligible applicants where there is reason to believe they may be homeless and in priority need, pending a full homelessness assessment.
17. **Main Duty S193** - A statutory duty requiring councils to secure suitable accommodation for eligible homeless households who are in priority need and not intentionally homeless.
18. **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** - The rate used to calculate housing support for households renting in the private sector, based on local rent levels and the size of the household. In many areas actual rents are higher than LHA rates, creating affordability challenges for households on low incomes.
19. Herefordshire Council does not decide whether to provide temporary accommodation by choice or discretion alone. Each case is assessed against homelessness legislation, mainly Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This means officers must consider whether the person is eligible for assistance, homeless or at risk of homelessness, and in priority need, before deciding what legal duty is owed. Depending on the circumstances, the council may have a prevention duty, a relief duty, an interim accommodation duty while enquiries are made, or a main housing duty to secure suitable accommodation.
20. Temporary accommodation is housing arranged by a local authority for eligible homeless households in specified circumstances. It can include self-contained, council or registered provider accommodation, privately leased homes, supported settings, hostels, hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation. It is not necessarily a single building or tenure.
21. Temporary accommodation can therefore be provided quickly where the statutory threshold is met, including under the interim duty to accommodate, commonly referred to as Section 188. This duty applies where the council has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. It is a deliberately low threshold, meaning the council does not need to complete all enquiries before providing accommodation where immediate safety is required. Priority need can include households

with dependent children, pregnant women, 16- and 17-year-olds, care leavers under 25, people vulnerable due to disability or institutional experience, and people fleeing domestic abuse.

22. In practice, temporary accommodation is a legal safeguard rather than a general entitlement. A household may be accommodated while the council investigates the homelessness application, and accommodation may then continue under the relief duty or main housing duty until a suitable longer-term solution is secured or the temporary accommodation duty comes to an end.

Homelessness and rough sleeping

23. A household does not need to have slept rough to be homeless or to qualify for homelessness assistance. Many families enter temporary accommodation following loss of a tenancy, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, financial hardship or another housing crisis.
24. However, equally someone sleeping rough can make a homeless application and the exact same legislation and eligibility will be used.

Rough sleeping	Homelessness
A visible form of homelessness where a person sleeps outside or somewhere not designed for habitation.	A broader legal and practical concept. It can include rough sleeping, sofa surfing, living in insecure or unsuitable accommodation, and households placed in temporary accommodation.

How the temporary accommodation service works

Stage	What happens	Timescale
1. Approach	A household contacts Housing Solutions because it is homeless or threatened with homelessness.	Same day
2. Initial triage	Immediate safety, eligibility and homelessness risk are checked so urgent cases are prioritised.	1 working day
3. Assessment	Eligibility, homelessness, priority need and circumstances are assessed; a personalised housing plan is developed where required.	Up to 10 working days
4. Prevention or relief	Officers work to keep the existing home or secure another option, including private rented or supported housing.	Up to 56 days
5. Interim or emergency placement	Accommodation is secured where the statutory threshold is met.	Same day where required
6. Temporary accommodation management	The team manages placements, charges, benefit claims, property issues and support or referrals.	Ongoing, with regular review
7. Move-on	Households move to social housing, private rented housing, supported housing or another settled option.	As soon as suitable accommodation is available

25. Households can access temporary accommodation through several routes. This includes presenting in person at Blueschool House, contacting the Housing Solutions Team by telephone, referrals from emergency services, hospitals or social care, domestic abuse referral routes, charity and voluntary sector support, and the council's out-of-hours service where someone is facing homelessness outside normal working hours. In each case, the council assesses whether the person is homeless or threatened with homelessness, eligible for assistance and potentially in priority need before deciding whether interim or temporary accommodation is required.
26. The Temporary Accommodation Team was subject to an independent review by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) in March 2025. The audit highlighted that the risk level for the service is low, and the control environment is strong, confirming that sound arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control are in place and operating effectively. The review found no high or medium priority recommendations and identified only one low priority recommendation relating to the further development of rent and recharge monitoring processes. The software for a rent account is currently being developed to record the rental income and address this recommendation. The audit recognised the strength of the service's governance arrangements, budget monitoring, placement management processes, performance monitoring framework, and up-to-date housing and homelessness policies and procedures. It also acknowledged the proactive work being undertaken to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and increase the availability of more suitable housing options through service development and asset acquisition. The findings provide independent assurance that the service is well-managed, continuously improving, and focused on delivering effective outcomes for households experiencing homelessness.

Demand for temporary accommodation

27. Trend Data

Measure	Aug-20	Aug-21	Aug-22	Aug-23	Aug-24	Aug-25	Aug-26
Total Households	49	66	79	130	137	153	184
Percentage change from previous August		34.7%	19.7%	64.6%	5.4%	11.7%	20.3%

28. Since 2020, the August data shows a sharp and sustained increase in total households in temporary accommodation, rising from 49 in August 2020 to 184 in August 2026. This is an increase of 135 households, meaning the number of households has more than tripled over the period. The biggest increase happened between August 2022 and August 2023, when the total rose from 79 to 130. The breakdown of causes are due to:
- Rising homelessness presentations** and demand.
 - Loss of private rented accommodation**, including no-fault evictions, rent increases and landlords leaving the market. **Local Housing Allowance rates falling behind private rents**, making accommodation less affordable.
 - Shortage of social and affordable housing**, reducing move-on options.
 - Longer stays in temporary accommodation**, with households unable to move through the system as quickly.
 - More complex household needs**, requiring additional support before a move to settled accommodation can be achieved.
 - Population pressures from domestic abuse, family breakdown and economic hardship.**

The largest increase occurred between **2022 and 2023**, which is significant as it aligns with a period of wider housing market and economic pressure, including:

- a. The post-pandemic withdrawal of housing protections.
- b. Significant inflation and cost-of-living pressures.
- c. Rapid increases in private sector rents.
- d. Increased pressures on the social housing sector and reduced availability of lettings.

29. Growth slowed in August 2024, but the overall trend has continued upward in August 2025 and August 2026. We are unable to exactly predict how numbers will increase but without intervention numbers in August 2027 could be as high as **221** if we use the continuation of the latest annual increase.

30. What makes up demand:

- a. Loss of private rented accommodation or inability to secure another private tenancy. This is a key route into homelessness, particularly where a landlord serves notice, a tenancy ends, or a household cannot find another affordable private rented property before they have to leave.
- b. Shortage of social and affordable rented housing. When there are not enough affordable homes available, households have fewer realistic move-on options and may remain in temporary accommodation for longer. This is a significant issue in Herefordshire at present and is being discussed with the Registered Providers to understand how we make more affordable housing available.
- c. Rents that exceed what households can afford or what welfare support covers. Even where homes are available, they may be above Local Housing Allowance levels or unaffordable on the household's income, making it difficult to prevent homelessness or secure move-on.
- d. Relationship breakdown, domestic abuse or family exclusion. These situations can leave people with nowhere safe or suitable to stay at short notice, meaning the council may need to respond quickly to prevent rough sleeping or unsafe arrangements.
- e. Larger families requiring homes that are scarce in the social housing stock. Larger households need bigger properties, but these are limited locally, so families can wait longer for a suitable home and may be harder to place appropriately.
- f. Single people requiring lower-cost one-bedroom or supported accommodation. Demand for one-bedroom and lower-cost accommodation is high, and some people also need support alongside housing, which limits the number of suitable options available.
- g. People with accessibility, health, care or support needs who require specialist provision. Some households need adapted accommodation, support services or a particular location close to care, health services or family networks, which can make suitable placements harder to find.
- h. Low wages and limited household income. Where wages are low or insecure, households may struggle to meet private rents, deposits, rent in advance and other upfront costs, even if they are working. This increases the risk of homelessness and reduces the number of affordable move-on options.

31. Households in temporary accommodation can come from all walks of life and may be facing many different challenges. This can include young people from the age of 16, families with children, single adults, older people, people who are working but cannot afford local rents, and people with health, care, accessibility or support needs. A number of households will also have more complex circumstances that need careful assessment and management. This means the service is not simply finding any available room or property; officers must consider suitability, risk, support needs, location, household make-

up and the impact on others in the accommodation. Careful matching is important so that vulnerable or impressionable people are not placed in situations that could increase risk, cause distress or lead to placement breakdown. This adds further complexity and pressure for the team, because every placement must balance legal duties, availability, affordability, safeguarding and the individual circumstances of the household.

32. Once accommodation has been arranged, officers continue to manage the placement and support the household to move towards settled or permanent accommodation. This includes keeping in contact with the household, resolving practical issues, working with providers and landlords, supporting benefit or affordability matters, reviewing suitability, and identifying move-on options.
33. Officers also have to manage behaviour where placements are at risk, including responding to complaints, addressing damage, anti-social behaviour or other tenancy-type issues, and issuing warning or breach letters where needed. In some incidents, officers also have to move people between accommodation for their own safety or to reduce risk within a placement. This is all additional work alongside the initial homelessness assessment and placement decision, and it demonstrates the ongoing pressure on the team to keep accommodation safe, suitable and stable while also helping households move on.

Monthly flow and turnover

Measure	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26	Aug-26
Temp	57	55	59	57	63
B&B	82	76	77	89	72
Hostels	49	47	50	46	49
Total Households	188	178	186	192	184
Average days in TA	175	174	159	158	170
No. moved out	22	26	28	22	20
No. moved in	27	26	34	33	21

34. The monthly figures show not only the number of households in temporary accommodation, but also the significant amount of work taking place behind the scenes to help people move on. Between April and August 2026, the team supported more than 20 households each month to leave temporary accommodation for settled or more permanent housing solutions. This is important to recognise: every move-out represents detailed casework, housing advice, landlord or registered provider liaison, affordability checks, benefit work, support planning and practical help for the household. Although overall demand remains high, the data shows that the service is actively finding solutions every month and preventing temporary accommodation numbers from rising even further.

Accommodation currently available and how revenue offsets it

35. Current accommodation mix that the council has access to

Accommodation route	Evidence identified	Role in the pathway
Self-contained private landlord properties	35 properties secured through private landlords, ranging from smaller units to larger family accommodation.	Provides more stable temporary accommodation and reduces reliance on hotels and nightly paid provision.
HMO provision	Two HMO blocks, providing five units in each block, with shared facilities leased by the council,	Provides shared temporary accommodation for single households where self-

Accommodation route	Evidence identified	Role in the pathway
	plus one external self-contained unit.	contained options are not available.
Council-leased flats	Four blocks of self-contained studio-style flats: two blocks with six flats and two blocks with four flats, including one wheelchair-adapted unit.	Offers more suitable self-contained accommodation for households requiring stability and privacy.
Registered provider managed units	Includes one three-bedroom Stonewater property, one three-bedroom Citizen property for domestic abuse survivors with a panic room, and 15 Connexus-managed flats.	Provides partner-managed accommodation, including targeted safe accommodation for domestic abuse survivors.
B&B accommodation	Four providers offering approximately 57 units in total, including one provider used for single males.	Emergency and overflow accommodation when self-contained accommodation is unavailable.
Hostel accommodation	Four hostel providers offering approximately 49 units, plus several small external self-contained units.	Provides emergency and short-term accommodation for households who cannot immediately access self-contained provision.
Chain hotels	Used when council-controlled stock and approved providers have no vacancies or cannot meet a specific need, such as accessibility or location.	Acts as costly emergency overflow provision and is avoided where suitable alternatives are available.

36. Where availability is limited, priority is generally given to households whose needs make self-contained accommodation most important, including families with children, pregnant women, people fleeing domestic abuse and care leavers. This helps the service make the best use of limited supply while reducing inappropriate or extended use of B&B, hostel or hotel accommodation.

Revenue offsets

37. The council seeks to recover eligible accommodation costs through Housing Benefit or related subsidy arrangements. Recovery does not necessarily equal the actual cost paid, particularly for nightly paid or hotel accommodation. The difference is a net cost for the council. Rent collection, eligible service charges, void management and accurate benefit claims all affect the final revenue position.
38. For self-contained temporary accommodation, Housing Benefit subsidy does not reimburse the council for the full cost of the accommodation. The subsidy rules use a formula based on 90% of the 2011 relevant Local Housing Allowance rate, rather than the actual rent or nightly charge the council may have to pay. In simple terms, this means that even where a household is entitled to Housing Benefit, the amount the council can recover through Revenues and Benefits may be lower than the real cost of securing the accommodation.
39. This creates a financial gap for the council. The gap can be greater where accommodation costs have increased faster than subsidy rates, where the property cost is above the recoverable level, or where there are costs that cannot be claimed back, such as some management, support, void, repair or provider charges. For B&B, hostel and hotel accommodation, Housing Benefit is claimed against the cost charged by the provider, less £21.07 per week for service charges such as heating, lighting and water.

Cost pressures, affordability and future pressure

40. Expenditure trend

Financial year	Temporary accommodation spend	Nights of accommodation provided	Average Cost Per Person Per Night
2023/24	£1,675,935	47,834	£35.03
2024/25	£2,217,000	51,253	£43.25
2025/26	£2,977,970	59,792	£49.80
2026/27	£3,265,000 Forecast		

41. Costs are increasing because demand for temporary accommodation has risen and because wider inflationary pressures have increased the cost of securing and managing accommodation. This includes higher accommodation charges, increased hotel and B&B costs, repairs, void works and day-to-day housing management activity. However, the team continues to look for ways to reduce costs wherever possible, including preventing homelessness earlier, improving move-on, using accommodation more efficiently, seeking better value placements and reducing reliance on higher-cost emergency options.
42. It is also important to note that temporary accommodation is funded through a combination of council base budget, specific homelessness and temporary accommodation grants, and eligible Housing Benefit subsidy recovery. These funding sources do not always meet the full cost of provision, particularly where demand rises, placement costs increase, or the amount that can be recovered through subsidy is lower than the actual cost paid. Where the total cost of temporary accommodation exceeds the available budget, grant and recoverable subsidy, the difference creates additional financial pressure for the council.

Cost of Hotel accommodation used for Temporary Accommodation

43. Hotel accommodation is used as emergency and overflow provision when other temporary accommodation options are unavailable or unsuitable. However, hotel pricing is volatile and can change quickly depending on demand, availability and local market conditions. Prices can increase significantly when there are major events in Herefordshire or nearby areas, such as the Hay Festival or Cheltenham races, because rooms are in higher demand and the council may have fewer affordable options to choose from. This means hotel-based temporary accommodation can create unpredictable cost pressure, particularly where placements are needed at short notice or where households cannot be moved on quickly.
44. The council also must consider value for money when securing emergency accommodation. In periods where local hotel prices increase significantly, or where local availability is limited, it may be necessary to place households outside the county to keep costs down and make sure accommodation can still be secured. This is not the council's preferred option, and officers seek to avoid it wherever possible. However, where all allocated temporary accommodation has been used and available local hotel accommodation has also been exhausted, out-of-county placements may be the only practical option. In making these decisions, officers must balance suitability with the need to achieve value for money, including household circumstances, support needs, safety, transport, schooling, employment and connections to services.
45. If accommodated for a year in hotel accommodation an individual/ household could cost the local authority over £31,000.

Cost period	Chain Hotel example
Night	£85 (can fluctuate)
Week	£595
Month	£2,550
Year	£31,025

46. Further pressures expected:

- a. Continued demand if affordable housing supply does not increase at the same pace. If the number of affordable homes does not grow in line with homelessness demand, more households will need temporary accommodation and fewer will be able to move on quickly. This creates pressure on both availability and cost.
- b. Additional affordable housing can be temporarily removed from the available supply when properties become void and are awaiting repair, refurbishment or re-let by Registered Providers. The speed at which these homes can be brought back into use is currently affected by wider workforce capacity issues, including shortages in skilled trades and contractors. This can delay turnaround times, reduce the number of properties available for nominations, and place further pressure on temporary accommodation and move-on pathways.
- c. Exposure to nightly hotel pricing and limited local availability. When local temporary accommodation is full, the council may have to use hotels at short notice. Hotel prices can change quickly and increase during busy periods or local events, making costs harder to predict and control.
- d. Longer stays where suitable move-on accommodation is unavailable. Where households cannot access social housing, affordable private rented accommodation, supported accommodation or adapted homes, they remain in temporary accommodation for longer. This reduces turnover and means fewer placements are available for new households in crisis.
- e. Higher repair, void and management activity as the portfolio expands. As the number of temporary accommodation units and placements increases, so does the work needed to manage them. This includes cyclical inspections, general inspections, gas/ electrical compliance checks on every placement, repairs, cleaning, void turnaround, provider liaison, rent or charge queries, complaints and general housing management activity.
- f. Greater need for adapted, large-family and supported accommodation, which can be more difficult to source. Some households need accommodation that is accessible, large enough for family size, or supported because of health, care, safeguarding or other needs. These options are more limited, so placements can take longer to arrange and may cost more.
- g. Any continuing gap between actual accommodation cost and recoverable subsidy. The council cannot always recover the full cost of temporary accommodation through Housing Benefit or subsidy arrangements. Where the amount paid for accommodation is higher than the recoverable amount, the difference becomes a net cost pressure for the council.

Affordability

47. Affordability is a key pressure within the temporary accommodation system. Many households are unable to access the private rented sector because rents, deposits and upfront costs are higher than they can reasonably afford. Even where a property is available, the rent may be above LHA levels or above what the household can sustain over time.

48. This means households can enter temporary accommodation because they cannot secure an affordable property. A current example would be:

A current 3-bed private rent example in Hereford is advertised at **£1,200 per month**, while other current 3-bed listings in Hereford are commonly around £995 to £1,300 per month. The relevant 3-bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate for Herefordshire remains **£172.60 per week**, which is approximately **£747.93 per month**.

That creates an illustrative shortfall of around **£452.07 per month** for a 3-bedroom household:

Measure	Amount
Example 3-bed private rent	£1,200 pcm
3-bed LHA rate	£747.93 pcm
Monthly shortfall	£452.07 pcm

49. In simple terms, this shows that even where a household is entitled to support through LHA, the amount available may be significantly below actual private rental costs in Hereford. This makes it much harder for households to secure private rented accommodation and increases pressure on temporary accommodation and social housing move-on options. Unfortunately they can remain in temporary accommodation for longer because suitable move-on options are limited. Affordability therefore affects both demand into the service and the speed at which households can leave.

Property size	LHA per week	LHA per month	Private rent example per month	Illustrative monthly gap
1 bedroom	£109.32	£473.72	£700	£226.28
2 bedrooms	£138.08	£598.35	£970	£371.65
3 bedrooms	£172.60	£747.93	£1,200	£452.07
4 bedrooms	£224.38	£972.31	£1,690	£717.69

The Impact of living in temporary accommodation

50. Temporary accommodation prevents immediate rooflessness and can provide safety while a longer-term solution is found. However, the quality, location, facilities and duration of a placement materially affect the household's experience.
51. The service is actively seeking to increase the supply of self-contained temporary accommodation, as this generally provides a more stable and suitable option for households than hotel or bed and breakfast placements. Self-contained accommodation gives households greater privacy, access to cooking and laundry facilities, and a better environment in which to maintain routines, family life, health, education and employment while longer-term housing options are progressed. Future purchases of accommodation for temporary accommodation use will be self-contained, supporting the council's aim to reduce reliance on less suitable and higher-cost emergency provision wherever possible.
52. When a household is placed into temporary accommodation, officers explain what facilities are available within the placement and what the household can expect during their stay. In hotel or bed and breakfast style accommodation, this may include basic room facilities such as a microwave, fridge and kettle where these can be provided or where the accommodation provider makes them available. These facilities are important because they

allow households to store food safely, prepare simple meals and hot drinks, and reduce reliance on takeaway food or other more expensive options. However, provision can vary depending on the type of accommodation, the layout of the building, fire safety requirements, provider rules and the need to manage shared spaces safely. The service therefore seeks to provide practical support and reasonable facilities wherever possible, while balancing safety, suitability, cost and the limitations of emergency accommodation.

Area	Potential impact	What good practice should test
Health and wellbeing	Stress, uncertainty and deterioration in mental or physical health.	Access to health services, support and suitable facilities.
Education	Travel disruption, reduced space for homework and instability in routines.	School continuity, transport issues and length of placement.
Employment	Difficulty maintaining work where location or childcare arrangements change.	Location decisions and support to sustain work.
Family life	Reduced privacy, lack of cooking or laundry facilities and pressure on relationships.	Self-contained placement where possible and prompt move-on.
Community connections	Distance from family, support networks and services.	Placement location and recorded reasons for out-of-area use.
Financial resilience	Storage, food and travel costs can rise while households have limited control over their circumstances.	Affordability assessment and access to advice.

53. The service seeks to make temporary accommodation as safe, suitable and comfortable as possible while households are waiting for longer-term housing. However, there are practical limits to what can be provided in some settings, particularly where accommodation is shared or where facilities have to be managed for a number of households. For example, installing or providing washing machines in shared temporary accommodation can create housing management challenges, including access and fairness where several households need to use the same facilities, responsibility for cleaning and upkeep, drying clothes safely, managing lost or damaged belongings, and ensuring communal areas are kept tidy and safe. These issues can increase the risk of complaints, disputes, damage or placement breakdown. For this reason, decisions about facilities must balance residents' comfort with safety, suitability, fairness between households and the council's ability to manage the accommodation effectively.
54. The government's minimum legal requirement is relatively narrow when delivering temporary accommodation. A council must provide accommodation that is:
 - a. Suitable for the household's needs.
 - b. Safe and in reasonable condition.
 - c. Available for occupation.
 - d. Located, where possible, so that schooling, employment, medical treatment and
 - e. support networks can be maintained.
 - f. Compliant with statutory guidance on affordability, overcrowding, safeguarding and
 - g. welfare.

The law does not require councils to provide:

- a. Self-contained accommodation.
- b. Furnished accommodation.

- c. Ongoing tenancy sustainment support.
 - d. Dedicated support workers.
 - e. Local accommodation within the authority area in every case.
 - f. Enhanced welfare, employment or health support.
55. Herefordshire Council's approach extends beyond the minimum legal duty. The service combines accommodation provision with intensive homelessness prevention, dedicated housing support, partnership working and investment in local accommodation options. This approach seeks not only to meet legal obligations but also to improve outcomes for residents by reducing the use of unsuitable accommodation, supporting household stability and helping residents move sustainably into settled housing.

Children, young people and veterans

56. Children placed with families - Herefordshire's Bed & Breakfast (B&B) elimination plan sets out how the council will reduce the use of B&B accommodation for homeless households, particularly families with children and other households for whom B&B is not suitable as anything other than a short-term emergency response. The plan addresses the main reasons households enter and remain in B&B, including high demand, limited local temporary accommodation, shortage of affordable move-on options, affordability pressures in the private rented sector, and the need for more self-contained accommodation. It was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to provide a clear, evidence-based route to reducing reliance on B&B, improving outcomes for households, and managing cost pressures. Its purpose is to strengthen prevention, increase suitable accommodation supply, improve move-on, reduce the length of time households spend in B&B, and ensure that any use of B&B is limited, monitored and only used when no more suitable option is available.
57. It is important to recognise that some families with children are currently remaining in B&B or hotel-style accommodation for longer than six weeks. This is not because the service considers this type of accommodation suitable for extended family use, but because there is not enough self-contained temporary accommodation available locally to meet current demand. These families remain a priority for the service, and officers continue to review their placements, seek move-on opportunities and prioritise self-contained accommodation as soon as it becomes available. This position reflects the wider supply gap rather than a lack of focus on families, and reinforces why increasing self-contained temporary accommodation is central to reducing the use and duration of B&B placements for households with children.

Homeless 16- and 17-year-olds

58. General temporary accommodation is not suitable for 16- and 17-year-olds. They are children in law, require appropriate safeguarding and support, and cannot usually hold a tenancy in their own right or bid independently for accommodation before they turn 18. For this reason, B&B or hostel-style accommodation should only be used in very limited emergency circumstances, while a more suitable supported option is identified.
59. Housing and Children's Services operate a joint protocol for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds. When a young person presents as homeless, both services work together to provide advice, assessment and safeguarding support, and to explain the Children's Services and Housing routes clearly so the young person can understand what each option means in practice, the voice of the young person must be heard. Any accommodation arranged through the Housing route must still reflect the young person's age, vulnerability and need for support,

with planning focused on stability, preparation for independence and a suitable longer-term housing option when they are able to hold a tenancy.

60. The council has recently varied a commissioned contract with a local support provider to create dedicated supported accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds. This provides a more appropriate alternative to general temporary accommodation, with support to help young people manage day-to-day living, engage with services, develop independent living skills and prepare for sustainable move-on. The approach recognises that young people in this cohort need both accommodation and support, and that their response must be jointly managed across Housing and Children's Services.

Care leavers and young adults up to 25

61. Care leavers have specific rights and protections under homelessness and leaving care legislation. Where a care leaver is homeless or threatened with homelessness, Housing and Children's Services must work together so that the young person receives coordinated advice, assessment and support. Care leavers aged 18, 19 or 20 who were looked after, accommodated or fostered by a local authority while aged 16 or 17 will usually have priority need under homelessness legislation. This means that, where they are eligible and homeless, the council may have a duty to secure accommodation for them. Children's Services also has ongoing leaving care responsibilities, including Personal Adviser support and pathway planning up to age 25 where applicable. In practice, this means the council must consider both homelessness duties and corporate parenting responsibilities, ensuring that care leavers are not left without safe accommodation and are supported towards suitable, sustainable housing options.

Veterans

62. Veterans are assessed under the same homelessness legislation as any other household approaching the council for assistance. This means the same statutory tests are applied, including eligibility, homelessness, priority need and any duty owed. Veterans are not treated as a separate homelessness category, but their service history and any related health, welfare or support needs are considered as part of the overall assessment and support planning process. Veterans do not need to demonstrate a local connection in the same way as other applicants where the relevant armed forces provisions apply.
63. Veterans who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can also be signposted or referred to appropriate armed forces welfare and support services where this would also assist with housing, health, wellbeing or resettlement needs.
64. Herefordshire's local context is relevant because the county has a strong military presence. Veterans can face housing instability for a range of reasons, including relationship breakdown, poor mental health, physical injury, trauma, substance misuse, financial hardship or difficulty adjusting to civilian life.
65. Specialist veterans' organisations can also support housing and welfare outcomes. These include Op FORTITUDE, Veterans Gateway, SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, Veterans Aid, Stoll and Haig Housing. Referrals or signposting to these organisations can help with emergency accommodation, tenancy sustainment, financial support, welfare advice and longer-term housing solutions.

Equality, unmet need and the housing gap

66. Groups at risk of unmet need include:

Group or need	Gap identified in council evidence	Consequence
Larger families	Fewer than ten five-bedroom social homes in the County.	Long waits and reliance on expensive or unsuitable placements.
Single households	Strong demand for one-bedroom and move-on accommodation.	Longer stays in emergency or supported settings.
Disabled households	Need for wheelchair-accessible or adapted homes.	Limited suitable placement choice.
People with complex needs	Need for self-contained, shared and solo supported options.	Placement breakdown or use of accommodation not designed for the person's needs.
Young people and care leavers	Emergency, transitional and move-on capacity constraints.	Bottlenecks and extended stays.
People fleeing domestic abuse	Need for safe, appropriate and sometimes confidential accommodation.	Reduced choice and potential location constraints.

67. Recent temporary accommodation data also shows the scale of complexity within placements. Between 1 September 2025 and 1 September 2026, 328 households placed in temporary accommodation had multiple or complex support needs. Within this group

- 185 households had a history of mental health problems
- 130 were at risk of or had experienced domestic abuse
- 34 had an offending history
- 30 had drug dependency needs
- 24 had alcohol dependency needs
- 23 were care leavers.

This demonstrates that the pressure on temporary accommodation is not only about the number of households, but also about the complexity of need and the limited availability of supported accommodation pathways.

The Wider housing gap

Indicator	Evidence
Home Point demand	1,845 households on the housing register
House price and earnings	Average house price of £283,000, median full-time earnings of £32,500 and lower-quartile earnings of £25,300.
Affordable housing delivery	Current delivery was below the requirement in the 2011-2031 local plan.
TA supply gap	Approximately 68 units of supply against demand of 177 and an average of 150.

What housing is needed

68. The council's understanding of local housing need is based on evidence gathered over a number of years through homelessness and temporary accommodation trends, housing register data, homelessness assessments, Strategic Housing Market Assessments, Disabled Facilities Grant and adaptation demand, supported housing demand, domestic abuse pathways, and the needs of young people and care leavers. The sustained increase in homelessness and temporary accommodation use, combined with shortages in specific types of accommodation, formed a key part of the business case that supported Full Council's approval of a £10 million capital programme. The programme is intended to be delivered over the period 2026 – 2029 to increase the supply of accommodation where demand significantly exceeds availability, reduce reliance on costly emergency accommodation, improve housing outcomes for residents, and address gaps in the local housing market that are contributing to homelessness and longer stays in temporary accommodation.
69. The evidence identifies a need for:
- a. Two and three-bedroom self-contained homes for families.
 - b. Four and five-bedroom homes for larger families.
 - c. Wheelchair-accessible and adaptable homes.
 - d. Supported and transitional accommodation with the right level of support.
 - e. Safe accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse.
 - f. Accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds and care leavers.
 - g. The identified need for lower-cost one-bedroom homes, family-sized self-contained homes, accessible accommodation, supported accommodation and accommodation for young people has directly informed the council's capital programme approach.

What is being done to reduce spend and improve supply

Securing more accommodation

70. Reducing temporary accommodation expenditure requires both an increase in the supply of suitable accommodation and a reduction in reliance on high-cost emergency provision. The council's approach is therefore focused on developing a more sustainable accommodation pathway by acquiring and creating additional housing, making better use of existing assets, strengthening partnerships with accommodation providers, and increasing the availability of self-contained accommodation. These measures are intended to improve outcomes for households, increase local provision, reduce placements in costly nightly-paid accommodation, and provide greater control over quality, availability and long-term costs. Alongside this, Strategic Housing continues to influence the delivery of affordable and specialist housing through the planning system to help address the underlying shortage of accommodation that contributes to homelessness and pressures within temporary accommodation.
71. In addition there is also:
- a. The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and council match funding to acquire dwellings to be used as temporary accommodation.
 - b. Progressing acquisition and refurbishment projects.
 - c. Assess the use of council assets.

- d. Increasing the supply of self-contained accommodation reduces reliance on more expensive hotel and B&B placements and provides a more suitable environment for families and vulnerable households.
- e. Council-controlled and partner-managed accommodation provides greater certainty over availability, quality standards and placement costs.
- f. Self-contained accommodation typically delivers better value for money over time, particularly for households requiring longer stays, whilst providing improved privacy, stability and independence.
- g. Greater control over accommodation supply also reduces exposure to market fluctuations, nightly rate increases and availability pressures experienced within the hotel and B&B sector.
- h. Expanding this type of provision supports improved move-on planning and enables households to remain closer to employment, education, healthcare and support networks.
- i. A new B&B and hotel framework is being procured to provide a more controlled and transparent route for securing emergency accommodation when it is required. The framework is proposed for a 10-year period with an estimated value of up to £36 million. Although the council's aim remains to reduce reliance on B&B and hotel accommodation wherever possible, having a formal framework will strengthen the council's ability to manage the market, set clearer expectations with providers, improve consistency and value for money, and forecast spend more accurately. This will also give the service better oversight of availability, pricing and usage trends, supporting more robust budget planning and reducing exposure to ad hoc nightly pricing pressures.
- j. Strategic Housing are a statutory consultee on planning applications enabling them to negotiate affordable housing on new developments, including through Section 106 agreements where applicable. This enables the council to influence the size, type, tenure and accessibility of new homes so that delivery is mindful of identified local need, rather than simply maximising unit numbers. By using evidence from the housing register, homelessness demand, temporary accommodation pressures and specialist accommodation requirements, the team can seek affordable homes that better reflect what households actually need, including one-bedroom homes, family-sized accommodation, accessible homes and supported or specialist provision where appropriate.

Delivery of new accommodation

72. Station Street, Ross-on-Wye provides a practical example of this affordable housing delivery approach. The scheme delivered four self-contained flats for 18 to 25 year olds who are at risk of homelessness, creating a more suitable and stable option than emergency accommodation. The council secured Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funding to support delivery of the scheme, helping to increase local supply for a cohort that can otherwise face limited housing options and a higher risk of repeat homelessness. This provision is particularly important for young adults linked to corporate parenting responsibilities, including care leavers, as the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduces new support for care-experienced young people and strengthens the policy direction around accommodation, prevention and local offers for care leavers. The Act also changes the homelessness framework so that relevant care leavers should not be treated as intentionally homeless in circumstances connected to their care background. This scheme therefore demonstrates how targeted affordable housing delivery can respond to identified need, support prevention, reduce reliance on emergency accommodation, and improve long-term outcomes for care leavers and other young adults at risk of homelessness.

Paying private rent and preventing homelessness

73. Private rented access can prevent accommodating a household in Temporary Accommodation or enable move-on. The Housing Team are able to pay rent in advance, deposits, cashless bonds and guarantor support, with affordability and sustainability checks. However as previously covered on affordability is an issue in the county.

Working with registered providers (RP's)

74. The housing team work closely with our preferred partner RP's to secure additional RP-managed Temporary Accommodation or leasing arrangements. Seeking direct nominations and faster move-on into affordable housing and working with them from idea to conception of affordable housing to meet the identified needs

Capital Programme

75. The £10 million capital programme agreed at Full Council provides a clear investment route to increase the supply of suitable accommodation and reduce reliance on higher-cost emergency provision. The programme is intended to support the acquisition, refurbishment and development of accommodation that better reflects identified local need, including self-contained temporary accommodation, family-sized homes, accessible accommodation, and specialist or supported provision where required. This investment is important because it gives the council a practical way to respond to rising demand, improve the quality and suitability of placements, and reduce the revenue pressure created by hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation. By increasing the number of council-controlled or partner-managed homes, the programme should also strengthen financial planning, improve value for money, and support more sustainable move-on options for households.

Lived experience and their voice

76. Strategic Housing leads on writing and reviewing the council's housing policies and strategies, but these are not developed in isolation. They are shaped through partnership working with internal services, registered providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, support providers and other key stakeholders. Importantly, they are also informed by the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness, temporary accommodation and housing need. Individuals are invited to take part in consultation activity wherever possible, and the service also draws on the conversations, feedback, complaints and practical experiences shared by people using housing services every day. This matters because officers do not only understand policy in theory; they work with this cohort directly, listen to what people say about what helps and what creates barriers, and use that learning to shape how services are designed and delivered. The voice of individuals with lived experience therefore informs the council's housing policies, service improvements and day-to-day operational response, helping the service remain person-centred, realistic and responsive to what works in practice.
77. This approach is reflected in key strategic documents, including the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the Supported Housing Strategy. These strategies set the direction for how the council responds to housing need, but the delivery is driven through action plans that turn what people tell us into practical solutions. Feedback from people with lived experience helps to identify what prevents homelessness earlier, what makes temporary accommodation difficult to live in, where move-on pathways break down, and what type of support or accommodation is missing. This evidence then informs actions such as strengthening prevention activity, improving access to supported housing, shaping the type of affordable homes sought through development, and reviewing how temporary accommodation is managed. In this way, the strategies are not just policy

documents; they are delivery plans informed by partners, operational experience and the voices of the people most affected by housing need.

78. In response to this learning, the service has strengthened its prevention model so that support can be offered much earlier, before people reach crisis point. Prevention Officers are now working upstream through Talk Community to identify and capture housing-related issues as early as possible, including concerns around affordability, tenancy insecurity, relationship breakdown, debt, rent arrears or other risks that could lead to homelessness if left unresolved. Where Talk Community cannot resolve the issue and the person then presents as homeless or threatened with homelessness, Prevention Officers within Housing Solutions continue the work by exploring practical housing solutions, negotiating with landlords or family members, supporting access to financial assistance, and looking for sustainable alternatives to temporary accommodation. This approach reflects a deliberate shift in the service: the team is trying to turn the tide from crisis response toward earlier intervention, with the aim of preventing homelessness presentations wherever possible. Homelessness is not treated simply as a process or a set of statutory steps; the team are passionate about the work they do because they understand that every approach represents a person or household facing uncertainty, stress and often crisis. People are at the heart of the service, and officers use their professional judgement, experience and compassion to find realistic solutions that give households the best chance of stability. That change has been driven by people with lived experience, whose feedback has shown that earlier advice, clearer pathways, practical help and being listened to at the right time can make the difference between homelessness being prevented and a household entering temporary accommodation.
79. A practical example of this approach is how the service responded to concerns raised about a larger temporary accommodation property. The property was an older listed building and, while it provided much-needed emergency accommodation, it was not the most modern setting and the mixed-use arrangement was not working well for all residents. Families and single people were living in the same building, with shared kitchen facilities that were not practical for the different needs and routines of each group. Complaints and feedback highlighted issues such as loud music, frequent comings and goings, and the difficulty of managing a shared environment for different household types. The Temporary Accommodation Team listened to those concerns and reviewed whether the placement model was suitable. As a result, the decision was taken to move families out of the property and change the use of the building to an all-male facility. This demonstrates that lived experience and resident feedback are not treated as isolated complaints; they are used to test whether accommodation is suitable, to adapt provision where needed, and to make practical changes that improve safety, stability and the day-to-day experience of people living in temporary accommodation.

Lived experience feedback and comments

“I was able to get a roof over my head and had support from a lot of kind people.”

“I was advised and helped every step along my journey and still receive fantastic help.”

“I was deeply involved with drugs. I had to change or die.”

“I was working and paying my rent, but when my relationship ended I could no longer afford the tenancy on my own. I never thought I would be at risk of homelessness.”

“The uncertainty was the hardest part. Not knowing where my family would be living in a few weeks affected my mental health and my children's wellbeing.”

“I spent months looking for a private rented property that I could afford. Even with support, there were very few options available to me.”

“Being threatened with homelessness affected every aspect of my life. I struggled to focus on work and felt constantly anxious about what would happen next.”

“The advice and support I received helped me keep my home. Without that intervention, I believe I would have become homeless.”

These quotes show the human impact of temporary accommodation: safety, support, recovery and the chance to rebuild stability.

Need for national action

80. Herefordshire can improve prevention, procurement, supply and move-on, but some pressures are shaped nationally. Official statistics reported 132,410 households in temporary accommodation in England at 30 June 2025, including 84,240 households with children. The national position was described as a record level.

Evidence source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Statutory homelessness in England: April to June 2025, published October 2025.

81. Areas that Herefordshire Council would support national action on include:

- A funding and subsidy system that better reflects the actual cost of suitable temporary accommodation.
- Sustained investment in social and genuinely affordable rented housing.
- Monitor the local impact of the Renters’ Rights Act on the private rented sector, including tenant security, landlord behaviour, supply, affordability and whether the reforms help reduce homelessness presentations linked to insecure or unaffordable private renting.
- A consistent flow of capital support for councils to acquire and convert accommodation.
- Clear long-term funding for homelessness prevention, supported housing and move-on.
- Policies that recognise rural market conditions, travel distances and limited emergency accommodation supply.
- Review of Local Housing Allowance levels so that they are in line with local private rents
- Review benefit rules for 18 to 25 year olds so they are not unintentionally penalised when trying to secure affordable rented accommodation. Current affordability limits mean that, for many young people in this age group, private rented accommodation is not affordable within the support available to them, leaving social rented housing as the only realistic sustainable option. However, the supply of social rented homes is limited, particularly smaller one-bedroom accommodation, which can leave young people stuck in temporary accommodation or unable to move on even when they are ready to do so.

The Prime Ministers “everyone in by Christmas” statement and the local response

82. The Prime Minister's national commitment to get **"everyone in by Christmas"** has renewed attention on the need to end rough sleeping and ensure that nobody is left sleeping on the streets during the winter months. The focus of the announcement is primarily on people who are rough sleeping, or at immediate risk of rough sleeping, rather

than on all households experiencing homelessness. The statement reflects the principle that rough sleeping should not be accepted as inevitable and that local authorities, government, health services, charities, faith groups and community partners all have a role in identifying people on the streets and offering accommodation, support and a route away from rough sleeping.

83. The commitment also builds on learning from the pandemic **"Everyone In"** initiative, which demonstrated that significant reductions in rough sleeping can be achieved when agencies work together with a shared purpose and sufficient resource. However, experience has shown that providing accommodation alone is not enough. Many people sleeping rough have experienced multiple forms of trauma, including adverse childhood experiences, poor mental health, substance dependency, domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, institutional care, or involvement with the criminal justice system. Sustaining accommodation often requires intensive, wrap-around support that addresses these underlying issues alongside housing need.
84. For Herefordshire, the national ambition is relevant but must be considered within the context of a large rural county, limited emergency accommodation supply, long travel distances, affordability pressures and a shortage of suitable move-on accommodation. The local response is therefore not simply about providing a bed for the night. It combines prevention activity, outreach services, emergency accommodation, winter shelter provision, housing assessments, health and wellbeing support, and planned move-on pathways. Through partnership working, the council seeks to identify people at risk of rough sleeping at the earliest opportunity, provide safe accommodation where possible, and offer the sustained support necessary to help individuals maintain housing and avoid returning to the streets. This approach recognises that ending rough sleeping requires both accommodation and the support needed to enable people to rebuild and sustain independent lives.

Consultees

- Housing Solutions Team
- Temporary Accommodation Team
- Outreach and Support Team

Appendices

None

Background papers and resources

- Housing Act 1996 (Part VII) and subsequent homelessness legislation.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Herefordshire Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Herefordshire Housing Strategy
- Herefordshire Supported Housing Strategy
- Herefordshire Temporary Accommodation and B&B Elimination Plan
- South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) Temporary Accommodation Audit Report (March 2025)
- Herefordshire Council Temporary Accommodation performance, demand and financial monitoring data (2020-2026)
- Home Point Housing Register and local housing needs evidence

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) statutory homelessness and temporary accommodation statistics for England



Title: Commercialisation Working Group - findings

Meeting: Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting date: Monday 12 October 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide Scrutiny Management Board with the findings of its Commercialisation and Income Generation working group.

Background

1. In November 2025, council's leader, Cllr Jonathan Lester, and then chief executive Paul Walker, approached the chair and vice-chair of Scrutiny Management Board to ask whether the group could undertake a rapid review of the council's fees and charges, asset management and other forms of income generation, to ascertain whether there were any opportunities to either reduce expenditure or increase the council's income. The group had already indicated it would review the draft commercialisation strategy the council had developed, noting that commercialisation is identified as a key programme of work in the council's Transformation Strategy 2025-2028.
2. The chair and vice-chair of Scrutiny Management Board agreed to carry out this work, recognising that the council's 2026-27 budget would need to be agreed by Full Council in February 2026, just four months later. Scrutiny Management Board therefore agreed informally to establish a working group of its own members to undertake the review.
3. The group's work focussed on three broad themes: the council's approach to fees and charges, the management and use of council assets, and opportunities to support the council's financial sustainability through greater commercialisation and income generation. Whilst recognising the importance of identifying opportunities to improve the council's financial position, the group also sought to understand how these activities contributed to the delivery of Council Plan priorities and wider social, economic and environmental outcomes for Herefordshire.

Meeting objectives

4. To note the report's findings and recommendations.

Report information

5. In undertaking its review, the group considered information and evidence provided by council officers, including data relating to fees and charges, income generation and asset management. The group reviewed the council's current arrangements for setting fees and charges, examined the principles underpinning the management of the council's property and land portfolio, and members of the group met with senior officers to better understand how the council acquires, manages and disposes of assets and how these activities support corporate objectives.
6. The review also drew upon previous work undertaken in this area. This included reviews of fees and charges completed by PwC in 2011-12 and 2022-23, together with the recommendations of the 2011-12 [Income and Charging Task and Finish Group](#). The group considered the extent to which observations and recommendations from these earlier reviews remained relevant and whether opportunities identified previously had been implemented.
7. To inform its thinking on commercialisation and income generation, the group also examined examples from elsewhere in local government, including authorities that had adopted more commercial approaches to asset management, service delivery and investment. The group reviewed both successful and unsuccessful examples from across the sector to better understand the opportunities, risks and organisational requirements associated with commercial activity. Particular attention was paid to issues of governance, organisational culture, commercial capability and financial resilience.
8. The group was not able to examine all potential opportunities for income generation and commercialisation in detail. In particular, the group identified several areas that merit further consideration but were outside the scope of this review. These included opportunities to bring additional income into the public realm through closer working with parish councils and the wider parish tier, and opportunities to work differently with the voluntary and community sector to support access to funding streams that are not available directly to the council. The group recognised that this latter area may require consideration of alternative commissioning approaches and a different approach to the management of risk and partnership working.
9. The group also identified traded services as an area that warrants further examination. This includes consideration of services currently delivered through Hoople Ltd and other arrangements, as well as opportunities to provide services to, or procure services from, other local authorities and public bodies. However, the group noted that many of these matters are expected to be explored in greater detail through the forthcoming spotlight review of Hoople Ltd. The group therefore considered it appropriate to avoid duplicating that work and to focus this review on fees and charges, asset management and broader commercialisation opportunities.
10. The group's conclusions and recommendations are therefore based on a combination of evidence provided by officers, analysis of council policy and financial information, consideration of previous reviews and recommendations, and learning drawn from practices elsewhere in local government.
11. The report makes three recommendations:
 - i. Herefordshire Council's annual review of fees and charges includes (a) a calculation of the cost to provide the service (b) the service fee required to cover the cost of the service and (c) a link for any subsidy to an objective of the Herefordshire Council Plan.
 - b. Herefordshire Council adopts a commercialisation strategy, supported by appropriate governance arrangements, workforce development and

organisational culture change, to enable the council to pursue commercial opportunities in a manner that supports the delivery of Council Plan objectives while maintaining effective oversight and management of risk.

- c. Herefordshire Council adopts an asset management framework which requires all assets to support a Council Plan priority, achieve at least revenue neutrality where practicable, and clearly identify and justify any subsidy. Assets that do not contribute to Council Plan objectives should be reviewed for disposal.

Consultees

12. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Commercialisation and Income Generation Working Group – findings

Background papers and resources

None identified.

COMMERCIALISATION AND INCOME GENERATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
COMMERCIALISATION AND INCOME GENERATION
WORKING GROUP

GROUP FINDINGS

Background

In November 2025, council's leader, Cllr Jonathan Lester, and then chief executive Paul Walker, approached the chair and vice-chair of Scrutiny Management Board to ask whether the group could undertake a rapid review of the council's fees and charges, asset management and other forms of income generation, to ascertain whether there were any opportunities to either reduce expenditure or increase the council's income. The group had already indicated it would review the draft commercialisation strategy the council had developed, noting that commercialisation is identified as a key programme of work in the council's [Transformation Strategy 2025-2028](#).

The chair and vice-chair of Scrutiny Management Board agreed to carry out this work, recognising that the council's 2026-27 budget would need to be agreed by Full Council in February 2026, just four months later. Scrutiny Management Board therefore agreed informally to establish a working group of its own members to undertake the review.

The group's work focussed on three broad themes: the council's approach to fees and charges, the management and use of council assets, and opportunities to support the council's financial sustainability through greater commercialisation and income generation. Whilst recognising the importance of identifying opportunities to improve the council's financial position, the group also sought to understand how these activities contributed to the delivery of Council Plan priorities and wider social, economic and environmental outcomes for Herefordshire.

In undertaking its review, the group considered information and evidence provided by council officers, including data relating to fees and charges, income generation and asset management. The group reviewed the council's current arrangements for setting fees and charges, examined the principles underpinning the management of the council's property and land portfolio, and members of the group met with senior officers to better understand how the council acquires, manages and disposes of assets and how these activities support corporate objectives.

The review also drew upon previous work undertaken in this area. This included reviews of fees and charges completed by PwC in 2011-12 and 2022-23, [together with the recommendations of the Income and Charging Task and Finish Group](#). The group considered the extent to which observations and recommendations from these earlier reviews remained relevant and whether opportunities identified previously had been implemented.

To inform its thinking on commercialisation and income generation, the group also examined examples from elsewhere in local government, including authorities that had adopted more commercial approaches to asset management, service delivery and investment. The group reviewed both successful and unsuccessful examples from across the sector to better understand the opportunities, risks and organisational requirements associated with commercial activity. Particular attention was paid to issues of governance, organisational culture, commercial capability and financial resilience.

The group was not able to examine all potential opportunities for income generation and commercialisation in detail. In particular, the group identified several areas that merit further consideration but were outside the scope of this review. These included opportunities to bring additional income into the public realm through closer working with parish councils and the wider

parish tier, and opportunities to work differently with the voluntary and community sector to support access to funding streams that are not available directly to the council. The group recognised that this latter area may require consideration of alternative commissioning approaches and a different approach to the management of risk and partnership working.

The group also identified traded services as an area that warrants further examination. This includes consideration of services currently delivered through Hoople Ltd and other arrangements, as well as opportunities to provide services to, or procure services from, other local authorities and public bodies. However, the group noted that many of these matters are expected to be explored in greater detail through the forthcoming spotlight review of Hoople Ltd. The group therefore considered it appropriate to avoid duplicating that work and to focus this review on fees and charges, asset management and broader commercialisation opportunities.

The group's conclusions and recommendations are therefore based on a combination of evidence provided by officers, analysis of council policy and financial information, consideration of previous reviews and recommendations, and learning drawn from practices elsewhere in local government.

Revenue - fees and charges

The group looked at how the local authority sets its fees and charges for chargeable services. In the 2024-25 financial year, Herefordshire Council received £45.009 million in fees, rents and other income, spread across the council's directorates as follows:

Directorate	Income £
Children and Young People	520,309
Community Wellbeing	17,605,843
Corporate Services	4,706,211
Economy and Environment	22,177,632
TOTAL	45,009,994

The largest sources of income were as follows:

Income type	Income £
Adult social care receipts	16,668,770
Car parking and parking fines	6,260,878
Property and land rents, hire charges, and fees	5,818,365
Corporate management	2,256,824
Waste management and energy generation	2,121,045
Building control	1,946,082
Burials and cremations	1,935,938

Many of the fees and charges set by the local authority are either:

- fixed by Government, with no opportunity for local variance
- are limited to a fixed percentage increase annually
- once received, can only be spent in the service area from which they are generated.

For example, [Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#) states that receipts from car parks can only be spent on parking provision and management in the first instance, and after that on a limited range of highways management or development activities.

The group learned that the council's fees and charges are generally reviewed annually by the relevant service manager or director, in time for budget setting for the following financial year. As a result, the fees and charges for the 2026-2027 financial year are reviewed and changed in the period October 2025-January 2026. The group were able to see a list of the fees and charges set by the council, as well as the shared spreadsheet used to determine annual fee increases. However, the group could not ascertain how council managers with budget responsibility determined the level at which their fees and charges were set and changed annually. There appeared to be no mechanism by which managers determined the cost of operating their service, and therefore no means to calculate a service fee that would not result in a subsidy for the service. If, as a result, a service was subsidised, there existed no method to determine the purpose or desirability for the subsidy.

In discussion, the group noted that budget holders ought to understand the cost of delivering the service that they managed. It agreed that managers who had discretion over the fees that they set should ensure that the fees covered the full cost of delivering the service. If the fees did not do this, then the implied subsidy should be linked to a council plan priority. This could most easily be recorded and therefore verified with an adjustment to the spreadsheet used to determine annual increases. Adding columns that asked managers to determine the cost to provide a service, the fee being set, and the policy being used to determine any subsidy of services, would provide the assurance that fees were set at a level that reflected the cost-of-service delivery or the reason for the implicit subsidy of a service.

In the previous 15 years, there have been two systematic reviews of fees and charges, both carried out in partnership with the consultants *PwC*. These reviews took place in 2011-12 and 2022-23.

The 2011-12 review was itself [tracked by a scrutiny task and finish group](#). The review noted that Herefordshire Council recovered a lower percentage of its service costs through fees and charges compared to similar local authorities. This was a point also made by the 2022-23 review, noting that Herefordshire Council recovered 9.6% of its service delivery costs compared to an average of 12.6% across comparator local authorities.

The 2011-12 review also made several observations and recommendations that are pertinent to this review, which are included as Appendix A to this report. It noted then that there existed opportunities to increase income generation through an increase in fees and charges, endorsing a set of principles for charging that sought to assist in doing so. These included a commitment to full cost recovery for chargeable services, underpinned by an understanding of the true cost of providing such services. Any council subsidy to the cost of providing a service should be linked to a local authority priority, and any concessionary scheme should be based on an ability to pay. The review, and the task and finish group also both noted that it could increase public support for the fees and charge set by council if it were made clear the purpose of fees and charges, how they were set, and in the case of parking and waste management, what the income was spent on.

The 2022-23 review was narrower in focus, looking specifically at opportunities to maximise income generation rather than how fees and charges aligned with local authority priorities or whether the council approached fees and charges setting with full cost recovery as an objective. As mentioned previously, this review noted that Herefordshire Council recovered less of its service delivery costs than other local authorities, but without stating why this was the case. It made recommendations to increase service delivery cost recovery, some of which have been put into place to assist in future budget setting. The group however were not given examples of where this had happened.

From its review the group concluded that there may exist some opportunity to raise some charges. For example, it noted from the 2011-12 and 2022-23 reviews that there may be an opportunity to increase short stay city and town centre car parking charge, which were relatively low compared to those charged by other local authorities.

The group therefore recommends that Herefordshire Council's annual review of fees and charges includes (a) a calculation of the cost to provide the service (b) the service fee required to cover the cost of the service and (c) a link for any subsidy to an objective of the Herefordshire Council Plan.

Asset management

The group wished to understand how the council was maximising income from council assets (such as property leases and car parks) and from asset repurposing or disposals. It also sought to understand the council's strategic approach to asset management, and how this aligned to both strategic objectives and creating the income (or reducing expenditure) to better deliver those objectives.

The task and finish group chair met with the council's head of housing development to understand more about how the council acquires, uses and disposes of its capital assets. Herefordshire Council's asset management register lists nearly 1100 buildings and parcels of land owned by the local authority. The council's principles for managing this portfolio is contained in its strategic asset management framework. According its introduction, the framework aims *"to adopt a proactive, sustainable, solution-oriented approach to manage assets in support of the economic, social, and environmental needs of the county. This will help maximize the value of service delivery to customers without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations"*.

The task and finish group also looked at the asset management strategies at local authorities that had taken a considerably more entrepreneurial approach to property acquisition, using these properties primarily or solely as a means to generate income to fund council services. The group noted that many local authorities had taken on considerable debt in pursuing speculative property portfolios, and had as a result found themselves exposed to financial risk that in some cases had resulted in bankruptcy. The group also noted that some authorities had taken on considerable debt but had been able to manage the associated risk effectively. Authorities that used their capital programme primarily to deliver council priorities (for example in housing and economic development) were better able to manage the risks associated with large debts than authorities who used their capital programme primarily to deliver financial return. Authorities that

focus on using their capital programme to deliver council priorities are also able to deliver financial returns to the council.

The group considered that the council could make more effective use of its assets by adopting an approach similar to that proposed for fees and charges. Assets should have a clear and demonstrable link to the priorities set out in the Council Plan. As a minimum, each asset should be expected to be revenue neutral, with the income it generates covering the cost of its management and maintenance. Where possible, assets should generate a positive financial return and produce more income than they cost to maintain.

Where an asset incurs a net cost to the Council, the level of subsidy should be clearly identified and justified by reference to a specific Council Plan priority. The group also considered that assets which do not contribute to the achievement of Council Plan priorities should be reviewed and considered for disposal.

The group therefore recommends that Herefordshire Council adopts an asset management framework which requires all assets to support a Council Plan priority, achieve at least revenue neutrality where practicable, and clearly identify and justify any subsidy. Assets that do not contribute to Council Plan objectives should be reviewed for disposal.

The purpose for holding all buildings and land should be understood and linked to Herefordshire Council Plan objectives. The group was unable to ascertain a link between some holdings and their purpose in delivering the objectives of the Council Plan. These included the Cyber Quarter, Maylord Orchards, College Road Campus, Three Elms Trading Estate. If the council has a purpose for these assets, it should link them explicitly to its strategic objectives in its Asset Management Strategy. The group learned that work to make these links was underway, and the group believes that Scrutiny Management Board should review this work once it has been completed.

Herefordshire Council should also have a clear understanding of the revenue costs and benefits of its property and land assets. Although it should not hold buildings and land purely for a revenue return, it should nonetheless aim to maximise the revenue return on all buildings and land that it possesses. As with the council's fees and charges, where the revenue impact of the asset is negative, the implied subsidy should be explicit and clearly assigned to meet a priority in the Herefordshire Council Plan.

Although the council's asset holdings should serve council objectives, there is also the council's overarching objective to deliver cost-effective services for Herefordshire. In this regard Herefordshire Council should prioritise investment in land and buildings where there is a business case that the investment would deliver net savings to the revenue budget, whether through building new buildings, acquiring existing buildings or repurposing properties that it already owned. This approach to asset management often provides a dual benefit to the local authority, as it can provide the local authority with greater control over and stability for the services that it provides. As an example, if Herefordshire Council owned properties that could house people who are temporarily homeless, it would not have to rely as strongly on the rental market to find accommodation to meet its homelessness duties.

The group understands, however, that making capital investments to provide revenue savings carries an element of risk. For example, a change in legislation might reduce or negate a duty entirely, leaving the local authority with unwanted assets. Capital investments should therefore not be seen as a means to avoid making savings through service efficiency and a focus on prevention in the council's operations that are funded through the revenue budget. Furthermore, outright ownership of assets may not be the most effective way to balance the need to provide stable and cost-effective services. Renting or leasing may instead better balance stability with flexibility, for example, leasing a fleet of vehicles to provide home to school transport services would reduce reliance on taxi and private hire companies and provide greater control over required capacity. This could be preferable to owning vehicles outright, which provides less flexibility in increasing or reducing service provision according to demand.

The group also considered the circumstances in which the council should make capital investments that are intended primarily to deliver Council Plan priorities, such as increasing the supply of affordable housing or supporting economic development. In general, the group agreed that such investments should seek to deliver both a social return, through the achievement of strategic objectives, and a commercial return, through either increased income or reduced expenditure. Where an investment is not expected to generate a positive revenue return and instead carries an ongoing net revenue cost, the rationale for doing so should be explicit. In such cases, any subsidy should be clearly identified and linked to a specific outcome within the Herefordshire Council Plan, ensuring transparency about both the costs incurred and the objectives being delivered.

Commercialisation

The group considered the role that commercialisation could play in supporting the council's financial sustainability over the medium and longer term. It noted that commercialisation should not be viewed simply as a means of generating additional income, but rather as an organisational approach that seeks to improve services, strengthen financial resilience and make more effective use of public resources. Commercialisation implies services holding detailed knowledge of the council's customers and having the resources and the ability to respond rapidly to emerging opportunities. It also implies the ability to work with partners in commercial, public and third sectors in different ways in order to meet customer needs. It implies a clear approach to innovation across services and across partnerships.

The group recognised that successful commercialisation is primarily a cultural and organisational challenge rather than a technical one. Drawing on examples from across local government, as well as the council's own experience of transformational change in areas such as the adoption of relational practice within children's services, the group noted that improvements in outcomes and reductions in costs often arise from changes in organisational behaviour, leadership and ways of working. Commercialisation should therefore be understood as a long-term programme of cultural change rather than a series of isolated income-generating projects.

Achieving this change will require investment in skills, capability and leadership. Managers across the council will need support and training to develop commercial awareness and to identify opportunities to improve efficiency, generate income and deliver greater value from council

resources. They will also need access to specialist skills in Data, Digital and Technology to be able to respond to commercial opportunities.

Members will also need to agree governance arrangements that enable appropriate levels of innovation and prudent risk-taking whilst maintaining strong oversight, accountability and effective delivery.

The group therefore believes that the council should adopt a clear commercialisation strategy that sets out its objectives, appetite for risk, governance arrangements and priorities for action. The group was able to review an early draft of the council's emerging approach and believes that it can provide a number of observations to support its further development.

The importance of governance emerged consistently throughout the group's work. Case studies reviewed by the group repeatedly highlighted governance as a critical factor in understanding, managing and mitigating the risks associated with commercial activity. The group found that successful commercial organisations and local authorities were characterised not merely by an appetite for innovation, but by clear decision-making structures, robust challenge, well-defined responsibilities and strong arrangements for monitoring performance and risk. The group also noted the importance of organisational and political stability in supporting successful commercial activity. Case studies reviewed by the group suggested that authorities which had been most successful in pursuing long-term commercial and investment strategies benefitted not only from robust governance arrangements but also from a shared understanding of purpose and direction across their political and managerial leadership. Political stability can assist in creating the confidence required to take long-term decisions and maintain a consistent strategic approach over many years.

The group recognised that Herefordshire Council operates in a different political environment. Unlike some authorities that have experienced prolonged periods of administration by a single political group, Herefordshire Council has a diverse political composition and is governed by a minority administration. The group therefore believes that strong governance arrangements, a clear organisational culture and a shared understanding of the council's strategic objectives are particularly important. In such circumstances, successful commercialisation is more likely to depend upon broad agreement about the council's priorities, risk appetite and desired outcomes, ensuring that commercial activity can be pursued consistently and with appropriate oversight irrespective of political differences. Conversely, weaknesses in governance at other local authorities frequently contributed to poor decision-making and the ineffective management of commercial ventures. The group therefore believes that effective governance arrangements should be viewed as a prerequisite for increased commercialisation rather than as a constraint upon it. New approaches to governance and project management may be required in some areas to ensure that commercial activity is focused on those opportunities that are most likely to support the council's strategic objectives and financial sustainability.

The group further recognised that the council may need to strengthen its commercial capability through targeted recruitment and by ensuring that staff with relevant experience are able to influence decision-making. This may require management arrangements and project structures that allow specialist expertise to be deployed effectively and that support cross-service working

on specific commercial initiatives. New approaches to governance and project management may therefore be required in some areas to ensure that commercial activity is focused on those opportunities that are most likely to support the council's strategic objectives and financial sustainability.

Finally, the group considered the importance of ensuring that commercialisation remains a means to an end rather than an objective in itself. Commercial approaches should be used where they support the delivery of council priorities and provide demonstrable benefits for residents and taxpayers. They should be applied proportionately and with a clear understanding of both the opportunities and risks involved. The council should therefore promote a culture that encourages innovation, commercial awareness and evidence-based decision-making, supported by appropriate training and leadership, whilst avoiding the pursuit of commercial activity for its own sake.

The group therefore recommends that Herefordshire Council adopts a commercialisation strategy, supported by appropriate governance arrangements, workforce development and organisational culture change, to enable the council to pursue commercial opportunities in a manner that supports the delivery of Council Plan objectives while maintaining effective oversight and management of risk.

Conclusion

The group found limited evidence that significant additional income could be generated through increases to fees and charges alone. It found no evidence that services understand the gap (if any) between the cost of their service and the income raised through fees and charges. Whilst opportunities may exist in some areas to improve cost recovery or to review individual charges, such opportunities are unlikely to make a substantial contribution towards addressing the council's longer-term financial challenges. The council should still pursue these opportunities within a wider commercialisation strategy. The more significant finding from the review is that the council should adopt a clearer and more consistent approach to understanding the costs and benefits of the services it provides, the assets that it holds and the investments that it makes. In particular, where the council chooses to subsidise a service, asset or activity, that decision should be explicit, transparent and clearly linked to the delivery of a Council Plan objective. This principle emerged consistently across the group's consideration of fees and charges, asset management and capital investment.

The group also concluded that the council's assets and investment decisions should be viewed primarily as tools for delivering strategic objectives rather than simply as mechanisms for generating income. The council should seek to maximise the social, economic and environmental value derived from its assets whilst also seeking commercial returns wherever it is reasonable and appropriate to do so. Similarly, where capital investment is undertaken to deliver corporate priorities, the council should seek both social and financial benefits, recognising that any ongoing subsidy should be justified by a clearly defined public benefit. The group broadly supported the council's current direction of travel in relation to asset management but believes there is scope to strengthen the links between assets, investment decisions and the delivery of Council Plan outcomes.

Finally, the group concluded that commercialisation should be regarded as a long-term organisational change programme rather than a collection of individual income-generating initiatives. Successful commercialisation depends upon effective governance, strong leadership, the development of commercial skills and a shared understanding of purpose across the organisation. Given Herefordshire Council's political composition and governance arrangements, these factors are of particular importance. The group therefore believes that the greatest opportunities available to the council lie not in any single commercial venture, but in developing the culture, capability and governance necessary to make better use of the council's resources, assets and investments in support of its strategic objectives and long-term financial sustainability.

Recommendations

The group makes the following recommendations:

- Herefordshire Council's annual review of fees and charges includes (a) a calculation of the cost to provide the service (b) the service fee required to cover the cost of the service and (c) a link for any subsidy to an objective of the Herefordshire Council Plan.
- Herefordshire Council adopts a commercialisation strategy, supported by appropriate governance arrangements, workforce development and organisational culture change, to enable the council to pursue commercial opportunities in a manner that supports the delivery of Council Plan objectives while maintaining effective oversight and management of risk.
- Herefordshire Council adopts an asset management framework which requires all assets to support a Council Plan priority, achieve at least revenue neutrality where practicable, and clearly identify and justify any subsidy. Assets that do not contribute to Council Plan objectives should be reviewed for disposal.

Appendix A

Recommendations made by the 2011-2 Income and Charging task and finish group

1. Council consistently applies the principles for setting or amending fees and charges agreed last year and revised by this group and by PwC. These principles should be set out as part of the annual budget papers where the full schedule of fees and charges is included: any future presentation of the schedule to Members should include a covering report setting out how the principles have been met.
2. Any new charges or any changes to existing charges in excess of inflation, should be tested and reported against the Council's stated principles for setting or amending fees and charges. Over a period of time, not exceeding 18 months, all existing charges should be tested against the principles in order to provide a baseline for future review.
3. The Council should develop a consistent approach to engaging service users and taxpayers more in decisions about whether and at what level to charge for services; and questions should continue to be asked in consultations about services and wider engagement exercises to do with Council finances. As part of this engagement, the Council should describe the financial and non-financial contribution of charging and rationale for levels of subsidy for services to local people and make that available on its website and at service hubs and information centres.
4. Staff should receive the necessary training to behave in a business-like/commercial manner in developing and delivering upon council services
5. The appropriate finance mechanisms and tools should be made available to enable service costs and management overheads to be apportioned and managed effectively to ensure cost recovery.
6. Benchmarking should be undertaken to learn from commercial markets exhibiting functional or capability similarities to council services.
7. Enabling systems and tools should be in place to minimise the implementation and running costs of service charges and to ensure appropriate information about service use and user behaviour is captured to inform future planning and service delivery.
8. Services should be classified to distinguish between those that are Mandatory, Discretionary and Commercial to aid transparency and clarity for staff, councillors and the public.



Title: Hoople Spotlight Review - terms of reference

Meeting: Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting date: Monday 12 October 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide the committee with draft terms of reference for a proposed spotlight review of Hoople Ltd.

Background

1. Hoople Ltd was established in 2011 as a shared services company that in 2011 was owned jointly by Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. Its original purpose was to consolidate “back office” functions, such as IT, HR, payroll, finance, and training, across public bodies to:
 - a. deliver efficiency savings
 - b. reduce duplication, and
 - c. create a platform for wider public sector collaboration.
2. The company was initially designed with a semi commercial outlook, with the intention of expanding to additional partners and generating income through external trading.
3. Over time, Hoople’s portfolio expanded due to variety of reasons. This includes new business from external parties but in the whole most of the work is still received from the Council. The Council’s reasons for transfer of services are varied including for convenience of use and due to the actions of third parties (such as when private providers collapsed and the absorption of functions). This has resulted in a patchwork of services such ICT, Revenues and benefits, HR, payroll, canteen, buildings maintenance, finance processing, social care staffing, and others, without what is, a clearly articulated strategic rationale.
4. At the moment the committee cannot see a shared, clearly stated vision and business model for the council and Hoople. As a result, there is some uncertainty about whether Hoople’s structure supports value for money, service quality, and the council’s strategic objectives

5. Some members also feel that there is a tension between Hoople's company structure and members' wish for greater democratic oversight, noting difficulty accessing information necessary for casework, particularly in revenues and benefits and social care.
6. This proposed review seeks to explore these issues.

Meeting objectives

7. To determine whether to proceed with a spotlight review of Hoople Ltd, according to the terms of reference attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Report information

8. The spotlight review terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Consultees

9. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Hoople Spotlight Review terms of reference

Background papers and resources

None identified.



Scrutiny Management Board

Spotlight review of Herefordshire Council's Relationship with Hoople Ltd

Terms of Reference

Background

Hoople Ltd was established in 2011 as a shared services company that in 2011 was owned jointly by Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. Its original purpose was to consolidate “back office” functions, such as IT, HR, payroll, finance, and training, across public bodies to:

- deliver efficiency savings
- reduce duplication, and
- create a platform for wider public-sector collaboration.

The company was initially designed with a semi-commercial outlook, with the intention of expanding to additional partners and generating income through external trading.

Following the abolition of Primary Care Trusts in 2013, Hoople was split (84%) with Wye Valley Trust (16%). In July 2021, Lincolnshire County Council entered into the partnership with a 3% share, leaving the Council with an 80% share and Wye Valley with a 16% share

The company is structured as a “teckal-compliant entity”, at least 80% of its activity must be with its public sector owners. This means that a shareholder can commission services from the company without requiring compliance with the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023 – accordingly a contract can be let without any formal tender or competition.

Although there is reference to a Hoople “Group” there always has been and remains [a single private limited company](#) providing all services.

Up until 2021, any profits generated by the company were shared each year in the proportions of the shareholder's use of the company. For example, if a shareholder put in 90% of the shareholder turnover business to the company then that same shareholder would receive 90% of all profit. This was changed in 2021 and since then, the share of profit is fixed at 80% Herefordshire and 20% Wye Valley Trust (Lincolnshire Council do not receive a share of profits).

Over time, Hoople's portfolio expanded due to variety of reasons. This includes new business from external parties but in the whole most of the work is still received from the Council. The Council's reasons for transfer of services are varied including for convenience of use and due to the actions of third parties (such as when private providers collapsed and the absorption of functions). This has resulted in a patchwork of services such ICT, Revenues and benefits, HR, payroll, canteen, buildings maintenance, finance processing, social care staffing, and others, without what is, a clearly articulated strategic rationale.

- At the moment the committee cannot see a shared, clearly stated vision and business model for the council and Hoople. As a result, there is some uncertainty about whether Hoople's structure supports value for money, service quality, and the council's strategic objectives
- Some members also feel that there is a tension between Hoople's company structure and members' wish for greater democratic oversight, noting difficulty accessing information necessary for casework, particularly in revenues and benefits and social care

This review seeks to explore these issues.

Purpose of the review

The purpose of this review is to:

- Assess whether Hoople's structure, governance, and operating model align with its current purpose.
- Determine how and to what degree Hoople provides value for money and supports effective service delivery.
- Identify strengths, efficiencies, and opportunities presented by the current model and relationship with the council.
- Identify risks, inefficiencies, or barriers created by the current model and relationship with the council.
- Understand how the council and Hoople manage the relationship with the council's customers and with council members.
- Agree any recommendations made by the group on the future direction, governance, and relationship between Herefordshire Council and Hoople.

Possible Lines of Enquiry

Alignment of Structure and Purpose

- To what extent does Hoople's structure support its purpose?
 - How well is it understood across the company and within the public bodies that own it.
- How have other public bodies approached similar issues.
- What can be learned from these alternative approaches?

Value for Money and Service Effectiveness

- How does Hoople provide value for money
 - How does it demonstrate this to its customers and its owners?
- What are Hoople's distinctive strengths?
 - How are these reflected in the selection of services it provides?

Governance and Democratic Accountability

- How is Hoople governed effectively?
 - How do the governance arrangements promote effective and efficient service delivery?

How does the council balance its role as owner and customer of Hoople?

Structure of the Review

Approach

Given the complexity and political sensitivity of the subject, and to avoid duplicating the work of the ongoing Value for Money (VfM) review being carried out by Herefordshire Council, the review will be conducted as a spotlight review.

a spotlight review allows:

- a focused, intensive evidence-gathering session following a significant period of planning and preparatory work
- private discussion to enable frank contributions
- a structured agenda covering multiple witnesses in a single day and
- a shorter, more agile reporting process.

Preparatory Work

Prior to the spotlight review session, the committee will:

- Gather background documents:
 - Basic details around the governance relationship between the Council and Hoople
 - copies of financial budgets and latest management accounts
 - basic details of current services provided to the Council, WVT and Lincolnshire with costs and breakdown of third party income
 - KPIs and performance data
 - Alternative delivery models
- Identify and invite witnesses, likely including:
 - Council Hoople Board Director
 - Hoople CEO
 - Shareholder Committee member representative(s)
 - Relevant Directors – IT/HR and AWB
 - Herefordshire Council Director of Finance
 - Herefordshire Council Head of Legal Services
 - Revenues and benefits, HR and ICT leads
 - Social care commissioning leads.
- Prepare a question set aligned to the lines of enquiry.
- Circulate a briefing pack to all participants.
- Agree the format and timetable for the review day.

Output

The review will produce:

- A summary of findings.
- A set of recommendations to Cabinet and the Shareholder Committee, possibly covering:
 - governance
 - strategy and purpose
 - contracting and commissioning
 - business and development opportunities and
 - structure.



Draft Work Programme

Preparatory work

Date	Activity	Material required	Persons involved
Completed by (2 weeks prior to Spotlight review date)	Preparatory information, to include - copies of financial budgets and latest management accounts - basic details of current services provided to the Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Lincolnshire County Council, with costs and breakdown of third party income. - KPIs and performance data	Background document pack	Director of Finance Hoople CEO
	Briefing on Hoople scope of activity to Council and other customers	Briefing notes	Hoople CEO
	Briefing on current governance arrangements. Analysis of alternative models used by public bodies to deliver services and the strengths and weaknesses of those models.	Briefing Note	Head of Legal Services
	Findings of Value for Money Review Finance Budget	Briefing Note	Director of Finance

Spotlight review day, date to be decided following conclusion of value for money review

Agenda

Session	Activity	Material required	Persons involved
1	Alignment of Structure and Purpose	Briefing Note	• Council Hoople Board Director • Hoople CEO • Shareholder Committee member representative(s) • Relevant Directors – IT/HR and AWB • Council Director of Finance • Council Head of Legal Services
2	Value for Money and Service Effectiveness Service focus and selection (what sort of services does Hoople deliver well and how does it do this?)	Briefing KPIs, cost and VFM data by service area. Customer feedback	• Council Hoople Board Director • Hoople CEO • Shareholder Committee member representative(s) • Relevant Directors – IT/HR and AWB • Council Director of Finance • Council Head of Legal Services
3	Governance and Democratic Accountability	Interviews/witnesses to be determined	• Council Hoople Board Director • Hoople CEO • Shareholder Committee member representative(s) • Relevant Directors – IT/HR and AWB • Council Director of Finance • Council Head of Legal Services
4	Debate and agreement of recommendations		



Title: Work Programme 2026-27

Meeting: Scrutiny Management Board

Meeting date: Monday 12 October 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

The report:

- Provides the committee with a draft work programme for the committee, for approval.
- Provides the committee with a copy of the council's forward plan of key decisions to assist the committee in deciding its programme of work.
- Lists the recommendations made by the committee since January 2025, and any responses to these recommendations.

Background

1. A fundamental part of good scrutiny is planning and agreeing a programme of work for the committee to undertake. A well-considered work programme:
 - a. identifies priorities for the committee's work that align with corporate and partnership priorities, as well as reflecting community concern;
 - b. ensures that each identified topic has clear objectives that focus the committee's work;
 - c. creates a timetable for the committee's programme of work so that the committee carry out its work at the optimal time; and
 - d. provides officers and partners with requirements for evidence that will support the committee in providing evidence-based scrutiny.

Meeting objectives

2. To agree the committee's work programme.
3. To note the work programmes of Herefordshire Council's other scrutiny committees.

Report information

4. The most recent work programme was published October 2026 and is attached as Appendix 1.
5. At today's meeting, the committee propose to approve the terms of reference for a spotlight review looking at Hoople Limited. The date of the review has yet to be determined. As a

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
 Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, email: danial.webb@herefordshire.gov.uk

result the final report resulting from the review may not be ready until after the committee's meeting on 1 December 2026.

6. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is the council's most recently published forward plan of key decisions.
7. Appendix 3 is a list of all recommendations made by the committee in 2025 and 2026.

Consultees

8. To prepare this work programme, the committee chairs have met with officers of the council to identify potential priority areas of work for the committee. These priority areas have been scheduled within the work programme to ensure the committee considers topics when it is most useful to do so. A draft of this work programme has then been circulated to the council's corporate leadership team and other key senior directors, alongside committee chairs, for further comment and refinement.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Work Programme October 2026 (revised – see paragraph 5 above)
Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan 25 September 2026
Appendix 3 – Recommendations made by Scrutiny Management Board in 2025 and 2026.

Background papers and resources

None



SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

October 2026 – March 2027

Below are the work programmes of Herefordshire Council's five scrutiny committees and their six task and finish groups.

Work programmes are subject to change, with revised programmes agreed at the end of formal committee meetings.

Please note that no meetings will be scheduled after March 2027 until after the 2027 Council elections have concluded.

Table of Contents

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	2
Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee.....	4
Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.....	5
Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.....	7
Scrutiny Management Board.....	8

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

6 October 2026 **report deadline 28 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 2 October 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Alternative provision - Review of capital programme relating to alternative provision. - Overview of existing provision.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement - Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs - Jane Morse - Commissioning
Children and Young People NEET - Impact of data updates on NEET average figures. - Overview of focussed service action plan with milestones.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Alexia Heath - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

10 December 2026 **report deadline 2 December 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC December 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Youth Strategy	Draft strategy	Tina Russell Hereford Rural Media Will Lindsey HVOSS Lindsay McHardy

11 March 2027 **report deadline 3 March 2027** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Fostering Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Tori Lynch - Natasha Newton
Participation strategy Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Suzanne Sims - Andrea Busk

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

23 October 2026 **report deadline 15 October 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 19 October 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Review of projects funded - Examine future funding opportunities	Overview of funded projects	- Service Director, Economy and Growth Economic Development Manager
Public participation in planning task and finish group - Review final report - Agree report recommendations	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

27 January 2027 **report deadline 19 January 2027** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Year of delivery – capital projects End of year review of capital projects taking place in 2026.	- Council capital programme - Individual programme progress reports	To be determined

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, Cabinet Member, Economy and Growth, Cabinet Member, Community Services and Assets, Cabinet Member, Roads and Regulatory Services, and Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure, all have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

2 December 2026 **report deadline 24 November 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Carbon Management in Herefordshire - Identify progress in achieving carbon neutrality within: - The council and - Herefordshire more widely. - Scrutinise evidence, resident and business experiences, and project feedback to highlight - resident and business issues - evidence gaps, and - project progress. - Review the cost of carbon management programmes within the council and across the county. - Outline aims and objectives of Herefordshire Environment Board.	- Fourth Carbon Management Plan - Climate adaptation pilot feedback - Resident or business feedback and case studies - Best practice elsewhere, including the use of biochar	Richard Vaughan - Daniel Lenain - Mary Burton - Gareth Ellis - Outside representatives to be determined.
Rail Strategy - To test the ambition of the rail strategy - To establish progress to restore the Hereford-Ross-Gloucester rail link. - To seek assurance that the policy supports the objectives of the Local Transport Plan 5. - To establish how the strategy supports potential coordination of bus and rail services.	- Rail strategy - Buses task and finish group report (any West Midlands rail strategy)	- John Hobbs Ffion Horton - David Land

Flooding spotlight review – terms of reference To agree the terms of reference for a proposed spotlight review to scrutinise flood risk management and flood emergency responses.	Spotlight review terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
--	---	---

Prospective spotlight review

February/March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Flooding and flood risk management Terms of reference to be agreed.	Evidence to be agreed	- John Hobbs - Other TBC

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment and Cabinet Member, Environment, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

8 December 2026 (TBC)** **report deadline 30 November 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning December 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Right Care Right Person Deferred update on work to deliver acute community mental health support in Herefordshire.	West Mercia Police Situation Report	Iain Richmond, Head of Adult Social Care Operations Nigel Webster, West Mercia Police Jake Wright, West Mercia Police Paul Abernethie, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust
Shaping neighbourhood health - Analyse how the health partnership identifies health needs in communities. - Scrutinise provision of current and future neighbourhood health services.	2Neighbourhood health bid - Taurus Out of Hours GP service - Worcestershire Council papers	Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health Sarah Shingler, Managing Director Wye Valley NHS Trust Nigel Fraser, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB Alan Dawson, Wye Valle NHS Trust Lauren Parry, Taurus Healthcare
Adult Social Care budget outturn Scrutinise financial outturn against budget savings plans	Quarterly budget outturn and performance monitoring	Hilary Hall, Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing and Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

**As of 28 September, we plan to move this committee meeting date from 14 December to 8 December 2026. This will be confirmed shortly.

Scrutiny Management Board

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

12 October 2026 **report deadline 02 October 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Temporary accommodation - Provide assurance that the council understands and is actively managing the growing demand and financial pressures associated with temporary accommodation, - Examine whether temporary accommodation services are meeting the needs of homeless households - Assess the effectiveness of prevention and support activity. - Identify the wider causes of homelessness and prolonged stays in temporary accommodation, including housing supply, demand trends and policy influences.	- Demand trends, causes of homelessness, turnover and household profiles. - Temporary accommodation costs, funding sources, capital investment and future financial pressures. - Resident experiences, prevention outcomes, housing supply constraints and options for reducing demand and length of stay.	Head of Supported Housing
Commercialisation task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Annual review of effectiveness Agree final report	Scrutiny annual review	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Hoope spotlight review terms of reference Agree terms of reference	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

1 December 2026 **report deadline 23 November 2026** member briefing 24 November 2026 pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Hoople spotlight review report* Agree findings and recommendations of the Hoople spotlight review.	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Inequalities task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
The voluntary and community sector Objectives to be agreed.		
Work programme Review work programme.	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*this report is dependent on the date the spotlight review takes place.

Committee Meeting

18 January 2027 (date TBC) report deadline 8 January 2027 pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC January 2027

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Budget 2027/2028 - To understand the executive's proposed revenue and capital budgets and its medium-term financial strategy. - To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council.	2027/2028 revenue budget report 2027/2028 capital budget report 2027-28-2030/31 medium-term financial strategy report - Supplementary information as requested by the committee.	Cabinet members Directors

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



This document, known as the Forward Plan, sets out the decisions which are expected to be taken during the period covered by the Plan by either Cabinet as a whole, or by individual Cabinet Members. The Plan is updated regularly and is available on the Herefordshire Council website (www.herefordshire.gov.uk) and from Council Offices. This edition supersedes all previous editions.

The council must give at least 28 days' notice of key decisions to be taken. A key decision is one which results in the council incurring expenditure or making savings of £500,000 or more, and/or is likely to be significant in terms of the strategic nature of the decision or its impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

Current cabinet members are listed below. For more information and links papers for Cabinet meetings please visit <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251>

Councillor Jonathan Lester	Corporate Strategy and Budget (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst	Culture and Environment (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Carole Gandy	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Ivan Powell	Children and Young People
Councillor Harry Bramer	Community Services and Assets
Councillor Graham Biggs	Economy and Growth
Councillor Pete Stoddart	Finance and Corporate Services
Councillor Barry Durkin	Roads and Regulatory Services
Councillor Philip Price	Transport and Infrastructure
Councillor Dan Hurcomb	Local Engagement & Community Resilience

Documents submitted in relation to each decision will be a formal report, which may include one or more appendices. Reports will usually be made available on the council website at least 5 clear working days before the date of the decision. Occasionally it will be necessary to exempt part or all of a decision report from publication due to the nature of the decision, for example if it relates to the commercial or business affairs of the council. Other documents may be submitted in advance of the decision being taken and will also be published on the website unless exempt.

To request a copy of a decision report or related documents please contact governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01432 261699.

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead officer and lead cabinet member	Directorate	Notice of decision first published / ID	Issue Type and exemptions
--------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	-------------	---	---------------------------------

FORWARD PLAN FOR 25 September 2026 ONWARDS

The following information is provided for each entry in the Forward Plan:

Heading	Contains
Report title and purpose	A summary of the proposal
Decision Maker and Due date	Who will take the decision and the date the decision is expected to be made
Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	The cabinet member with responsibility for this decision and the officers producing the decision report.
Directorate	The directorate of the council responsible for the decision.
Date uploaded onto plan	The date the decision was first uploaded and the notice period started for key decisions.
Decision type, exemptions and urgency	Whether the decision is a Key or Non-Key decision, if the report is expected to be fully open, partly exempt or fully exempt and if urgency procedures are being followed.

Decisions to be taken by Cabinet at a formal meeting are listed first, ordered by date, and include both Key and Non-Key decisions. Decisions to be taken by individual Cabinet Members are then listed, grouped by portfolio area and sorted by date. These include Key and Non-Key decisions.

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
--------------------------	-----------------------------	--	-------------	-------------------------	---------------------------------------

Cabinet decisions by date (Key and Non-key listed)

Early Help Task and Finish Group - final report To provide Cabinet with the final report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Early Help task and group, looking at the provision of early help in Herefordshire.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer Danial.Webb@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260659	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Travel Plan Strategy The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for an updated Travel Plan process for Herefordshire. The updated approach sets out a clearer, more consistent and outcome-focused process for the development, implementation and monitoring of travel plans across new developments, existing organisations and key trip-generating sites.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Q2 2026/27 Budget Report To report the forecast position for 2026/27 at Quarter 2 (September 2026), including explanation and analysis of the drivers for the material budget variances, and to outline current and planned recovery activity to reduce the forecast overspend. To provide assurance that progress has been made towards delivery of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Q2 Performance Report 2026-27 To review performance for Quarter 2 (Q2) 2026/27 and to report the performance position across all Directorates for this period.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Jessica Karia-Fitzgerald, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence j.karia-fitzgerald@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976	Corporate Support Centre	NEW ITEM	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Risk Management Update Q2 2026/27 To provide an update on the status of corporate risks at the end of Quarter 2 2026/27 (September 2026) and provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively across the council.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	Non Key Open
Update on the Phase 2 Phosphate Mitigation Schemes To provide Cabinet with an update regarding the Phosphate Mitigation Wetland schemes	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member culture and Environment Gemma Dando, Chief Operating Officer, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager gemma.dando@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Recommissioning of Drugs & Alcohol Recovery Services To obtain approval to recommission drug and alcohol recovery services in Herefordshire for an initial five-year period (2028–2033), with the option to extend the contract by a further two years. (2033–2035).	Cabinet 17 December 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Natalie Johnson-Stanley, Public Health Lead - Substance Misuse / Tobacco Natalie.Johnson-Stanley@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383230	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Cabinet Member Decisions (Key and Non Key decisions)					
Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing					
Renewal of Access Group contract for Mosaic, Synergy and associated systems To seek approval to enter into a new contractual arrangement with The Access Group for the provision of Mosaic (adults and children's social care case management system), Synergy (education management system), Abacus (adult social care finance system) and Core+(youth service system including transition to a cloud-hosted Software as a Service (SaaS) , following expiry of the current contract's available extensions in September 2026.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 25 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Hilary Hall, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing Hilary.Hall@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Herefordshire Care Home Partnerships Framework To approve the procurement of a new multi provider partnership framework for the provision of care home placements and related services. The Council is looking to formalise partnership arrangements for a minimum of 500-550 placements across all providers. Estimated value of up to £320m across the framework term (maximum of 8 years).	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Before 28 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Ros Murphy, Commissioning Manager, Community Wellbeing ros.murphy@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
To re-commission the home care framework in Herefordshire To approve the re-commissioning of the council's home care framework, called Services In Your Home (SIYH), in Herefordshire. The new SIYH framework needs to be operational by 1 May 2027.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 21 October 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383734	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy The purpose of the report is to approve the 2026-2036 Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 30 November 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing David Collyer, Acting Consultant in Public Health: General Practitioner david.collyer2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
To re-commission the Technology Enabled Care Service in Herefordshire The existing contract for the Technology Enabled Care Service (TECS), including call monitoring, ends on 31 March 2027. Therefore, any new service arrangements will need to commence from 1 April 2027.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 3 December 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383734	Community Wellbeing	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: children and young people					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Schools Budget 2026/27 The cabinet member to approve the schools budget for 2026/27	Cabinet member children and young people 30 September 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Samantha Gregory, Democratic Services Officer, Jen Preece, Democratic Services Officer samantha.gregory@herefordshire.gov.uk, jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Schools, Central School Services and Early Years Budget 2027/28 To approve School Forum's recommended budget proposals for school budgets, central school services and early years within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2027/28.	Cabinet member children and young people 27 January 2027	Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
High Needs Budget 2027/28 To propose the High Needs Budget for 2027/28 to the Cabinet Member Children and Young People.	Cabinet member children and young people 29 March 2027	Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095	Corporate Support Centre	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: community services and assets					
Establish a new Alternative Provision Centre capital spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to establish a new Alternative Provision Centre	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Relocation of Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units Capital Spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to relocate Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units onto a single site.	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	18 September 2026	KEY Open
South Bank Close and Ivy Close Lease Arrangements To approve Midland Hearts request to rescind their lease of South Bank Close and Ivy Close. To approve the procurement of a new lease holder for these properties.	Cabinet member community services and assets Before 30 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Hannah McSherry, Housing Strategy Officer Hannah.McSherry2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383061	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: economy and growth					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Merton Meadow Flood Alleviation Scheme Approval for additional expenditure due to the impact of unprecedented levels of rainfall and flooding on the site during January to March 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth 15 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth, Stephen Holland, Interim Head of Housing Development Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk, stephen.holland@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260330,	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Connect to Work Programme To approve the procurement of the Connect to Work Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Programme in Herefordshire using the Open Procedure in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The programme is fully funded through a grant provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To approve the award of a contract to the bidder achieving the highest overall score against the published evaluation criteria for a period of up to three years and six months, commencing in October 2026, with a total contract value of up to £1.22 million. To delegate operational responsibility for the delivery of the Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire to the Service Directors for Economy and Growth and Education, Skills and Learning, acting in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth.	Cabinet member economy and growth 16 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Skills Bootcamps Herefordshire 2027/2028 Financial Year To approve the submission of a delivery plan to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Skills Bootcamps funding of £1.5 million for the 2027/28 financial year. To agree that Herefordshire Council will act as the accountable body for the management, administration and commissioning of the funding, once approved by DWP, including any subsequent Skills Bootcamps allocations awarded to the council. To delegate to the Service Director for Economy and Growth and Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, all operational decisions necessary to implement and deliver the programme, including the appointment of training provider(s) and the management of associated funding and contractual arrangements.	Cabinet member economy and growth 16 October 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: environment					
Portfolio: finance and corporate services					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Public Notices To approve a contract via a direct award process for the placing of public notices in newspapers circulating within Herefordshire.	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Ed Bradford, Major Contracts Programme Director Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: local engagement and community resilience					
Portfolio: roads and regulatory services					
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy To seek approval from the Cabinet Member (Roads and Regulatory Services) for the proposed revision of the Policy and Strategy for the delivery of Highway Infrastructure Asset Management. These documents establish the framework for the principles which are applied to the maintenance of our highway network.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Mark Lewis, Group Manager – Highway Asset Management mark.lewis2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Parking Enforcement Policy 2026 To approve the implementation of a revised Parking Enforcement Policy to include the policies relating to the implementation of virtual permits.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Michael Barnes, Parking Services Manager michael.barnes@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Procurement of Parking and Virtual Permitting Software To approve the procurement of Parking Enforcement and Virtual Permitting Software contract for a maximum of 5 years with an estimated value in excess of £500k .	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Michael Barnes, Parking Services Manager michael.barnes@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	18 September 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: transport and infrastructure					



Appendix 3: Recommendations made by Scrutiny Management Board in 2025 and 2026

Date of recommendation	Topic	Recommendation	Response
Tue 14-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update	That Herefordshire Council provide a report to Scrutiny Management Board on the planned improvements around adult social care, an assessment of the likely impact they will have on mitigating future budget pressures in the medium-term financial strategy, and any analysis of the future demands on the service.	A report will be prepared as requested.
Tue 14-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update	That the council's capital programme be reprofiled over the lifetime of the programme.	For capital projects recommended for addition to the council's approved Capital Programme, the profile of investment is based on estimated delivery as per the relevant Outline Strategic Business Case. Expenditure is profiled over the expected lifetime of each individual project and therefore no further action is required to progress this recommendation. Delivery of the approved Capital Programme is monitored through the financial year and reported quarterly to Cabinet. The quarterly reports include a forecast of planned spend, per project, against approved budget. In line with recommendations from the council's external auditors, the reprofiling of capital budgets is carried out in Quarter 2 in each year and reported to Cabinet; this was last reported at Quarter 2 2024/25 at the meeting of Cabinet on 28 November 2024.

Tue 14-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update	That the council's budget include a more realistic estimate of the interest likely to be received through treasury management.	The council's Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) 2025/26 notes that the objective of the council's investment activity is to balance optimum performance of the council's resources with effective management of risks, ensuring prudence is applied. To ensure responsible stewardship of the council's financial resources, the approach is informed, above all, by consideration of security, liquidity and yield. The council employs external advisors to provide advice and guidance on treasury management activity, including interest rate forecasts. For 2025/26, the TMS highlights that the UK economy remains a fiscal challenge following a prolonged period of high interest rates and sticky inflation, caused by the global pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis, and notes that interest rates are expected to fall throughout 2025/26. A review of interest receivable earned in the financial years from 2020/21 to 2023/24 highlights the variability in levels of income from this source. In 2020/21, an interest receivable budget of £200k was approved in the Revenue Budget. In 2020/21, actual interest earned was £165k, £35k less than the budgeted amount. From 2021/22 to 2023/24, the revenue budget did not include a budget for interest receivable and any interest receivable achieved in the year was used to manage the council's overall financial position. In each of the financial years noted, interest receivable income has been recognised as it is achieved and reported at the end of each quarter. In the 2024/25 financial year, interest receivable income of £1.6 million has been achieved to date against a budget of £0.5 million, as reported in the Quarter 2 2024/25 Budget Report. Accounting standard IAS 18 Revenue Recognition
---------------	---	--	---

requires that income is recognised when it meets the following criteria:

- it is probable that any future economic benefit will flow to the entity; and
- the amount of revenue can be measured reliably.

Responsible and prudent management of the council's resources requires that funds must be available to meet the council's day to day cash flow obligations ahead of taking advantage of investment opportunities; available balances are identified as part of cash flow forecasting and daily treasury management activity.

Ahead of each financial year, it is not possible to reliably estimate the council's surplus funds with any degree of certainty to inform a forecast of interest receivable for the full financial year. If the actual interest received earned in a financial year is less than the budgeted amount, any shortfall would be required to be made up from reserves or other resources.

A prudent estimate is assumed as part of budget setting for 2025/26 and income achieved above the budgeted value will be reported once the flow of economic benefit to the council is probable, i.e. at each quarter end, as in previous years.

The council's proposed Revenue Budget for 2025/26 includes a budget for interest receivable of £0.6 million. This is considered a prudent and realistic estimate of potential interest on treasury management activity for the year

			ending 31 March 2026.
--	--	--	--------------------------

Tue 14-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update	Restating the Scrutiny Management Board recommendation from 2024 future draft budgets should be accompanied by a draft delivery plan.	Cabinet notes that the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) approved the terms of reference for the Herefordshire Council Plan Delivery Plan working group at its meeting on 16 December 2024. At this meeting, the Board agreed to review progress in producing the 2025/26 Delivery Plan. Cabinet welcomes this engagement and will consider the resulting recommendations when they are presented, as agreed, at the meeting of SMB in March 2025. Whilst the 2025/26 Delivery Plan has not been finalised, the development of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2025/26 has considered the priorities of the Council Plan to ensure that Directorate budgets and planned capital investments are sufficient to support Delivery Plan objectives.
Tue 14-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update	The capital strategy should be developed to show more clearly how the capital programme will deliver council plan priorities.	The Outline Strategic Business Cases included at Appendix E to the 2025/26 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update item on this Agenda identify the Council Plan priority for each of the proposed additions to the Capital Programme. The Capital Programme is aligned to the priorities of the Council Plan at an individual project level. The Capital Strategy is supported by and aligned to the Strategic Asset Management Plan, Local Transport Plan, Schools' Capital Investment Strategy, Digital Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.

Wed 26-Mar-25	Digital, Data and Technology	Agrees an action plan to address digital exclusion in the county encompassing digital literacy, cost, infrastructure and other factors	Through several projects across the Digital and IT Programme and through business intelligence activities undertaken by the council, we have identified the need to address digital exclusion and have already begun scoping solutions as part of our planning. Digital literacy and training: we are currently exploring opportunities and will seek input as part of our customer engagement activities planned for summer 2025, to support customers as part of the customer programme – identifying suitable locations such as libraries and Talk Community Hubs to deliver training, assist with accessing My Account and accessing online forms, supported through volunteer and social value mechanisms. Although customer redesign will be a digital first model, we are committed to ensuring equitable access for all customers with a high-quality telephone and face to face customer offer. We will also ensure we act upon and participate in opportunities as they emerge from the Government's Digital Inclusion Action Plan and will seek engagement with neighbours both regionally and nationally as opportunities arise. Digital infrastructure – see below
Wed 26-Mar-25	Digital, Data and Technology	Requests an update on work to enhance broadband provision across the county	The Fastershire project is now in contract close-down phase, and national government are administering a scheme delivered via BDUK. Coverage across Herefordshire has gone from 0.6% in 2011 to 97.6% Superfast in 2025 (the UK figure is 98.3%) however, we are aware there are some descoped properties still in need of a solution. We are therefore looking at opportunities to use gainshare funding to implement a grant scheme and to employ a fixed term Digital Infrastructure Officer (job title to be agreed), focussing specifically on hard to reach and rural areas, and to

			work alongside BDUK to advocate for and support Herefordshire.
Wed 26-Mar-25	Digital, Data and Technology	Provides assurance that the refreshed Customer Services Strategy will drive a review of the digital, data and technology underpinning customer services, to ensure it is enabling residents to get the service they require	There are underpinning digital, and technology principles and activities which will support the delivery of customer services. We are implementing the new content management system and telephony platform; once these are implemented and business continuity achieved, we will start to exploit the new features, whilst also exploring additional opportunities to support customers (such as AI Virtual Telephone Assistant). We must also ensure that existing operational systems can support streamlined and efficient customer journeys across the organisation, especially in terms of feedback loops, and that where existing systems cannot perform as required, that these requirements are addressed through re-procurement activities. We are completing comprehensive analysis to understand customer needs and utilising existing service data to inform an iterative programme of customer journey and to identify 'quick wins'. We will measure the success in terms of customers receiving the services they require through a refreshed set of KPIs and by improving feedback mechanisms and making them visible to customers through a refreshed customer insights webpage (e.g. You said, we did).
Wed 26-Mar-25	Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring	Undertakes a risk assessment regarding the major cumulative risks facing the council including the Dedicated Schools Grant and SEND transport, and the steps being taken to mitigate these risks	
Wed 26-Mar-25	Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring	Engages all members regarding the major cumulative risks including the	

		Dedicated Schools Grant and SEND transport, and the steps being taken to mitigate these risks	
Wed 26-Mar-25	Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring	Ensures that the council's risk register is shared with scrutiny committees as part of their work programme planning	This is now taking place
Wed 26-Mar-25	Update on recommendations made by Scrutiny Management Board	Ensures that the statutory scrutiny officer drafts a cross-scrutiny committee protocol, to ensure timely responses with faster escalation as required to outstanding recommendations	This has been produced
Wed 26-Mar-25	Update on recommendations made by Scrutiny Management Board	Asks the executive to explain the failure to respond to outstanding recommendations	This will form part of the 2025-2025 member development programme
Wed 26-Mar-25	Update on recommendations made by Scrutiny Management Board	Provides training on producing recommendations to all members of scrutiny committees	This will form part of the new elected member induction programme.
Tue 1-Jul-25	Q4 2024/25 Budget Outturn	To provide Scrutiny Management Board with the delivery plans for all undelivered 2024-25 savings that have been built into the Council's 2025-26 base budget, and the savings to be delivered in the 2025-26 budget.	As confirmed in the Q4 2024/25 Budget Report to Cabinet on 5 June 2025, where savings have not been delivered recurrently in 2024/25, a focused review of the original proposals and planned activity has been undertaken and revised savings plans have been developed, where appropriate, to confirm activity to deliver savings in 2025/26. The revised savings plans will be approved as part of Directorate Savings Boards and Budget Boards in 2025/26 and delivery will be monitored robustly against approved targets as part of monthly routine budget monitoring arrangements. A schedule of savings not delivered recurrently in 2024/25 which have been carried forward for delivery in 2025/26 was included in Appendix D (Annex 2) to

			the Quarter 1 Budget Report presented to Cabinet on 25 September 2025.
Tue 1-Jul-25	Q4 2024/25 Budget Outturn	The executive should model the necessary capital investment to increase the supply of affordable housing such that it will significantly reduce the number of people becoming homeless.	In July 2024, full Council approved the addition of £5m to the capital programme for housing provision. In March 2025, Cabinet committed to exploring the development of a Herefordshire Council owned housing development company to meet some of the council's critical housing need and this work is currently in progress. The council continues to investigate opportunities to acquire and develop further housing provision to respond to demand and reduce temporary accommodation cost pressures. Any proposals for additions to the capital programme will be considered as part of work to develop the capital programme and revenue budget for 2026/27.
Tue 1-Jul-25	Q4 2024/25 Budget Outturn	The existing financial facility to enable the council to accelerate the delivery of S106 funded infrastructure be actively used by this administration.	The use of developer contributions in advance of receipt is detailed in the Capital Strategy approved annually at Full Council during budget setting. Once the S106 is completed, planning permission granted and the development commenced then the Council can internally borrow to fund the S106 works to start. This has been used in 2025/26 to distribute an education grant to a school carrying out work that is

			funded from S106 which is expected to be received in the future.
Tue 1-Jul-25	Q4 2024/25 Budget Outturn	The executive should ensure there is no further delay in delivering the Planning and Regulatory Services software capital project by urgently appointing a new provider to deliver the necessary software solution.	This has already been actioned. The Planning and Regulatory Services software contract was signed on 15/07/2025 and the purchase order has been raised. This will start implementation by the Services from September 2025, with a plan to go live with building control and planning by December 2026, other services will complete the following year.
Tue 1-Jul-25	Q4 2024/25 Budget Outturn	The executive provides clarity on the difference between the Financial Resilience Reserve and Budget Resilience Reserve, or the two reserves are combined and the scope and use of the resulting reserve is clearly stated.	A verbal explanation was provided to Scrutiny Management Board Members in the meeting and reference made to the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement. The Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2025/26 reported to Cabinet 23 January 2025 explains the purpose of each reserve: Budget Resilience Reserve: This reserve is held to mitigate the risk to the revenue budget of excessive cost pressures and volatility in demand across social care budgets. Financial Resilience Reserve: This reserve is held to manage financial risks across the council. This recommendation was actioned in the meeting.
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	Given the council faces the largest savings requirement in its history, approximately £30 million, the Scrutiny Management Board	

		recommends that Cabinet prioritises capital investment and officer capacity toward projects that deliver the greatest and most immediate relief to the revenue budget.	
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	Cabinet adopt a bolder approach to borrowing to deliver capital projects that will relieve pressure on the revenue budget.	
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	Council should maximise its relationship with partners to explore the use of property assets when determining its medium-term financial strategy.	
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	Cabinet should enable commercialisation in services by focusing on outcomes rather than activity in its performance reporting.	
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	There should be more transparency on the RAG status in the performance plan and how that flows through to underlying risks of slippage in the Capital Programme.	
Mon 8-Dec-25	Q2 2025/26 Budget Report	The executive should intensify its efforts at a strategic level with the Integrated Care Board to ensure that cost pressures on the board are not transferred to the council.	
Fri 23-Jan-26	2026-2027 Draft Revenue and Capital Investment Budget	The executive should conclude an exercise to identify recurrent savings for the medium-term financial strategy period by the end of September 2026.	Activity planned to address the estimated funding gap in future years is identified at para 3.4 of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Cabinet will work to resolve the funding gap with immediate focus from April 2026 and will continue to develop proposals to balance the 2027/28 Revenue Budget over the budget setting period to recommend a balanced budget to Council in February 2027.

Fri 23-Jan-26	2026-2027 Draft Revenue and Capital Investment Budget	Medium-term financial strategy risks should reflect the most current financial information known to the executive at the time of publication and should include savings known to be at risk.	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes the risk of potential overspend and non-delivery of savings required to balance the budget and identifies the mitigations in place to manage this risk. The Draft Revenue Budget presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 23 January and 5 February includes an update on the delivery of savings at Quarter 2 of 2025/26 in paras 105 to 107. This represents the most current financial position reported to Cabinet.
Fri 23-Jan-26	2026-2027 Draft Revenue and Capital Investment Budget	The medium-term financial strategy should report what scenario planning has been undertaken and highlight the key sensitivities in the medium-term position.	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes sensitivity analysis at para 6.2 and quantifies the potential full year impact of 1% movement in assumptions for council tax, employee related costs, inflation, demand and interest on borrowing. The Strategy has been reviewed by External Audit as part of their Value for Money work and no weaknesses in arrangements for financial planning have been identified. The Budget Report notes that the MTFS will be updated to reflect the impact for the council of the multi-year Settlement and in-year funding allocations as further information is released and proposals to mitigate the funding gap are developed.
Fri 23-Jan-26	2026-2027 Draft Revenue and Capital Investment Budget	The executive should report separately savings, initiatives funded from reserves and grants, and planned additional income.	Appendix B: Savings Proposals including detailed activity plans identifies saving E3 within the Economy & Environment Proposed Savings as funded from reserves. "Reallocation of directorate reserves: to maintain expenditure for Public Rights of Way (£250k), Drainage (£445k) and Lengthsman Scheme (£250k) added to base budget in 2024/25 on receipt of additional funding at Final Local Government Settlement." Following additional government funding in the 2024/25 Final Settlement, additional expenditure for Public Rights of Way (£250k), Drainage (£445k) and

			Lengthsman Scheme (£250k) was approved by Council. In 2025/26, the council's funding allocation did not include these additional amounts. Despite this, Cabinet committed to maintain expenditure to support these priorities in the 2025/26 revenue budget. In 2026/27, it is proposed that expenditure will be maintained for a further year, funded from the reallocation of Directorate reserve balances. This is a one-off measure to support one-off expenditure in 2026/27. Commitments in future years will be subject to a growth bid as part of the budget setting process to be considered in the context of future funding and strategic priorities.
Fri 23-Jan-26	2026-2027 Draft Revenue and Capital Investment Budget	The executive should report income and expenditure at sub-directorate level in the Directorate Budget Position Statements.	The Directorate Budget Statements present the gross expenditure, income and earmarked reserves by Service for 2026/27 (Appendix A included in each of the individual Appendix C Directorate Budget Position Statements). Cabinet will continue to develop the Directorate Budget Position Statements throughout 2026/27 as part of continuous improvements in the budget setting process. Revisions to the statements will be made to add value to users.
Mon 13-Apr-26	Q3 2025/26 Budget Report	Review the method by which the council counts the number of people sleeping rough, to take into account local factors.	
Mon 13-Apr-26	Q3 2025/26 Budget Report	Urgently review the application of the RAG status to reassure themselves it is a realistic picture of the current position on Delivery Plan items. In doing so, they should also develop guidance for senior responsible officers (SROs) and service leads in line with the outcome of this review.	
Mon 13-Apr-26	Q3 2025/26 Budget Report	Ensure that delivery reports display RAG ratings for each quarter (Q1–	

		Q4), to provide a transparent record of progress and to highlight risks or declining performance as they occur.	
Mon 13-Apr-26	Q3 2025/26 Budget Report	Develop an action plan to support and increase the number of private landlords in the county.	
Mon 06-Jul-26	Adult Social Care	The executive strengthens the adult social care improvement plan so that it is underpinned with a strong evidence and data base, supporting the actions prioritised for funding.	The evidence base for the improvement priorities is set out in the improvement plan and directly relates to the findings of the Care Quality Commission assessment. The suite of measures now included in the plan directly relate to the outcomes and actions identified.
Mon 06-Jul-26	Adult Social Care	The executive prioritises the delivery of the prevention strategy and the voluntary and community sector commissioning framework and ensures these link to the improvement plan and to each other.	The Prevention Strategy will be launched in September 2026 and a pilot of the voluntary and community sector commissioning framework around support for low level care needs will also launch in September. Both activities are integrated into the improvement plan and the council's duty to "prevent, reduce or delay [people's] needs arising".
Mon 06-Jul-26	Adult Social Care	The executive provides clarity on the outcome measures they will use to evidence the impact of the improvement plan.	Following feedback from Scrutiny Management Board, the suite of measures relating to deliver, impact and assurance are included in the final version of the improvement plan agreed by Cabinet.
Mon 06-Jul-26	Adult Social Care	The executive ensures there is adequate resource available for data analysis to deliver the adult social care improvement plan.	Data and insight is one of the improvement areas in the plan and expertise from public health, corporate performance and from within the directorate will be used to deliver the required data analysis. External resource will be commissioned as required.
Mon 06-Jul-26	Adult Social Care	The executive undertakes work to cost fully the adults improvement plan and to address any gaps in the budget setting for 27/8 and onwards.	The plan is fully costed in terms of resources needed to deliver it, including some external expertise. The budget setting process for 2027-2028 is underway and an external partner is working with the directorate on a 12-week diagnostic to build on the improvements set out in the plan and to identify further opportunities for future transformation and savings.