

Agenda

General scrutiny committee

Date: **Wednesday 6 March 2019**

Time: **10.15 am**

Place: **Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square,
Hereford, HR1 2HX**

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

For any further information please contact:

Tim Brown, Governance Services

Tel: 01432 260239

Email: tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Tim Brown, Governance Services on 01432 260239 or e-mail tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the General scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor WLS Bowen**
Vice-Chairperson **Councillor BA Baker**

Councillor SP Anderson
Councillor JM Bartlett
Councillor AW Johnson
Councillor A Warmington
Councillor SD Williams

Agenda

Agenda		Pages
<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.</p>		
<p>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>		
<p>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>		
<p>4. MINUTES To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019.</p>		9 - 24
<p>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public. Details of the scheme and related guidance are available here: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved Please submit questions to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk The deadline for the receipt of questions is Thursday 28 February 2019 at 5.00 pm. Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.</p>		
<p>6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the council. Deadline for receipt of questions is 5.00 pm on Thursday 28 February 2019. Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting. Please submit questions to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</p>		
<p>7. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS UPDATE To consider the progress made against the recommendations following the Local Government Association (LGA) corporate peer review held in February 2018.</p>		25 - 54
<p>8. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE - POTHOLE REPAIRS To consider the Task and Finish Group's report on highways maintenance – pothole repairs.</p>		55 - 136

9. WORK PROGRAMME

To review the committee's work programme.

137 - 170

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is Monday 1 July 2019 at 10.15am (provisional).

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.
- 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.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, committees and sub-committees.
- 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.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- 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 and copy documents.

Public transport links

The Shire Hall is a few minutes walking distance from both bus stations located in the town centre of Hereford.

Recording of this meeting

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 services team know before the meeting starts so that anyone who intends filming or photographing the meeting can be made aware.

The council makes official audio recordings of meetings. These Recordings are available via the council's website.

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

Fire and emergency evacuation procedure

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit and make your way to the Fire Assembly Point in the Shire Hall car park.

Please do not allow any items of clothing, etc. to obstruct any of the exits.

Do not delay your vacation of the building by stopping or returning to collect coats or other personal belongings.

The Chairperson or an attendee at the meeting must take the signing in sheet so it can be checked when everyone is at the assembly point.

Guide to General Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is a statutory role fulfilled by councillors who are not members of the cabinet.

The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

Council has decided that there will be three scrutiny committees. The Committees reflect the balance of political groups on the council.

The General Scrutiny Committee consists of 7 Councillors.

Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairperson)	Herefordshire Independents
Councillor SP Anderson	Conservative
Councillor BA Baker (Vice-Chairperson)	Conservative
Councillor JM Bartlett	Green
Councillor AW Johnson	Conservative
Councillor A Warmington	It's Our County
Councillor SD Williams	Conservative

The committees have the power:

- (a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (d) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area
- (f) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the council with respect to the discharge of those functions. In this regard crime and disorder functions means:
 - (i) a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
 - (ii) a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - (iii) a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area
- (g) to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised or to be consulted by a relevant NHS

body or health service provider in accordance with the Regulations (2013/218) as amended. In this regard *health service* includes services designed to secure improvement—

- (i) in the physical and mental health of the people of England, and
- (ii) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness
- (iii) And any services provided in pursuance of arrangements under section 75 in relation to the exercise of health-related functions of a local authority.

(h) to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area.

The specific remit of the general scrutiny committee includes:

- Services within the economy, communities and corporate directorate
- Corporate performance
- Budget and policy framework matters
- Statutory flood risk management scrutiny powers
- Statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers

Who attends general scrutiny committee meetings?

Coloured nameplates are used which indicate the role of those attending the committee:

Pale pink	Members of the committee, including the chairman and vice chairman.
Pale Blue	Cabinet Members – They are not members of the committee but attend principally to answer any questions the Committee may have and inform the debate.
Orange	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to the committee
Green	People external to the Council invited to provide information to the committee.
White	Other councillors may also attend as observers but are only entitled to speak at the discretion of the chairman.

Minutes of the meeting of General scrutiny committee held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 10.15 am

Present: Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairperson)
Councillor BA Baker (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors: JM Bartlett, AW Johnson and A Warmington

In attendance: Councillors J Hardwick, EPJ Harvey, AJW Powers, PD Price (Cabinet Member), A Seldon, NE Shaw (Cabinet Member) and EJ Swinglehurst

Officers: C Baird -Director for Children and Families, R Ball – Acting Director Economy and Place, A Lovegrove – Chief Finance Officer, S Vickers, Director for Adults and Communities and J Coleman – Statutory Scrutiny Officer/Democratic Services Manager.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors SP Anderson, and SD Williams.

35. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

None.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

37. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

39. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

One question had been received. The questioner was advised that the committee would be scrutinising the evidence and rationale for the proposed alternative budget and would ensure that the issue was explored during the debate.

40. ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL 2019-20

The committee considered an alternative budget developed by the It's Our County Group (IOC).

Presentation by IOC

Councillors EPJ Harvey and AJW Powers (the proposers) presented the alternative budget. A copy of the presentation is appended.

The proposal *“proposed investments in improving the resilience and sustainability of communities and council services and changes in spending priority in 2019/20 whilst retaining the base budgets of the directorates at the levels already proposed by the Administration.”*

The proposed investments were funded by £2m from various sources as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the alternative budget proposal. These sums were as yet unallocated for specific purposes in the budget published by the Administration but had been earmarked to support rural service delivery.

Response to question from member of the Council

In response to the question that had been submitted by Councillor Shaw, under the procedure for questions from members of the council, the proposers commented on the budget proposal for improved signage informing A49 traffic of route options via the A417 from Leominster to the M50 at Ledbury and M5 at Worcester. The intention was that this would redirect southbound traffic on the A49 so that it was not routed through Hereford City. This would be a simple and cost-effective way of reducing some of the through traffic on the A49. There had been investment in improving the A417 and it was not considered that the additional traffic would have a significant negative impact on settlements along the A417.

A Member commented that recent traffic modelling undertaken in Leominster had found that the north-south A49 corridor carried the most traffic in the vicinity. There was merit in exploring the proposal.

It was observed that the alternative route was longer than the A49 route and haulage firms would have to balance the additional mileage against the time spent in slower traffic on the A49 through Hereford. Another member was critical of the proposal questioning the suitability of the A417 for HGVs noting the number of traffic lights and roundabouts and maintaining that there would be an adverse impact on settlements adjoining the A417.

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

A statement by the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the alternative budget was included within the agenda papers.

He commented that he considered that the proposed budget was balanced and could be delivered. Although this could not be guaranteed, he considered the proposed budget and medium term financial strategy explained the intentions for the next financial year and the direction of travel.

Discussion of the Alternative Budget Proposals

In discussion of the proposals the following principal points were made, along with the responses by the proposers of the alternative budget:

- It was observed that about half of the additional £2m that the alternative budget proposed to allocate was a one off grant.
- Clarification was sought on the points of difference between the alternative budget and that of the administration.

Response: The proposers commented that there was a total of £2m unallocated within the administration’s current budget with no published plan as to how that sum would be used. Some of the investments proposed in the published alternative budget sought to deal with immediate issues (eg improved signage informing A49 traffic of route options

via the A417). Some investment was also identified to provide departments with the time and resource, in conjunction with subject experts, to work on improvement in and transformation of services by implementing best practice (eg school transport, change to the models of service delivery to children and families and the digital strategy for adult social care.)

- One of the proposals involved building social housing through the Council's development partnership with ownership being retained by the council generating income. It had been questioned how this would work financially, noting the capital cost of construction and the ongoing maintenance cost.

Response: Not all tenants took up opportunity to buy their property after three years as currently permitted. The council would be able to benefit from capital growth in the value of the property. The Government had also indicated that it was considering greater freedoms for local authorities for council owned housing.

- Clarification was sought on the intentions in relation to changes to the current priorities of the development partnership with Keepmoat following reference in the alternative MTFS at section 2: *"We propose to focus investment in sustainable and resilient local infrastructure by applying current and emerging best practice in planning, design and engineering. We also propose to use public property and public money to increase, rather than to deplete, the council's asset base."*

Response: The intention was to draw on the lessons learned from the partnership between Sheffield City Council and Keepmoat and other similar partnerships that were at a more advanced stage than the council's current partnership. Some examples were provided.

In relation to best practice in design and quality of build there were too many instances of developers claiming that their proposed developments were unviable when trying to meet the council's targets for affordable housing. The development partnership should be able to meet these targets with a recognition that affordability encompassed affordability of occupation in addition to the purchase price and this was linked to design and build quality.

- Points were raised about the proposed investment in the core strategy, the western bypass, consideration of an eastern bypass and the exploration of light rail and tram systems for the City.

Response: The proposed investment in the review of the Core Strategy would enable a start on that review to be made as soon as possible. It was important that this happened as there were many issues that needed to be addressed.

In terms of transport the proposal was to prioritise sustainable and active travel measures for the City that the council's consultants had identified as being deliverable irrespective of whether the western bypass was built. One of the aims was to act now to address the immediate transport problems the city faced.

Paragraph 3.11 of the proposal noted that: *"Following the implementation of these schemes, city traffic conditions will be evaluated to inform the need and business case for any further road infrastructure improvements around the city."*

This was consistent with the implementation hierarchy in the Local Transport Plan.

In terms of an eastern crossing it was proposed to commence the work needed to identify and save a land corridor to retain the option for an eastern city river crossing to be built in the future. This did not have to entail a relief road or bypass but most

businesses and residents in the City recognised the need for another crossing irrespective of the proposed western bypass.

In relation to trams there was a new generation of light trams and trackless systems were being tested. There was an indication that there would be government funding for such systems in small cities. This would have an immediate effect on quality of travel in the city.

- The proposals included a lot of small projects. About half the source of funding was one-off. It was asked what assurance could be given that these proposals would bring benefit within a year and deliver benefit into the future. Examples given included: investment in engagement with rail operators, investment in solar and water power and woodland management and waste/biomass.

Response: These matters were linked to the proposal to bring forward commencement of the review of the core strategy. The evidence base for the core strategy identified potential to explore these issues. Examples were provided of the potential benefits it might be possible to reap. The proposal was to explore opportunities for implementing different approaches that could feed into the review of the core strategy.

There was no guarantee that the proposals, which involved modest sums, would yield benefit for future years. However, if there was evidence forthcoming that the proposals had further potential additional resources could be allocated to them. If schemes did not begin to yield benefits closing them down would not have incurred great costs. It was recognised that the proposed sums were only to facilitate exploratory work.

- Clarification was requested as to what the material changes in policy direction and priority were that the alternative MTFS referred to at the penultimate paragraph in the purple shaded text box on page 2.

Response: The direction was defined in the alternative budget proposal and alternative MTFS.

- Although recognising that the proposed alternative budget could not look more than one year ahead, it must be the case that in the absence of significant additional funding some current priorities must be changed in future years and this should be clearly stated.

Response: It was considered that cuts in preventative services had been too great. One proposal was to restore expenditure in those areas. Reference was made to the considerable reduction in demand for services achieved through the Hertfordshire family centred support model. Exploring different ways of delivering services required a strategic approach and investment. Accelerating the delivery of affordable housing using publicly owned assets was another example of a difference in approach.

- Rather than being a complete change of direction the alternative budget seemed to be aligned to a number of existing plans: core strategy, local transport plans, the carbon reduction plan, sustainable modes of travel to school strategy and local flood risk management strategy. None of the proposals appeared unusual in this context. Rather they reflected the need to take the implementation of those policies seriously.

There would be benefit in IOC providing clarity where there was alignment with existing policies and in all members reacquainting themselves with these policies.

- A member expressed support for the proposed progression of active travel measures and the support for preventative work in reducing service demand, but had reservations about expenditure on some of the proposals. A strong economy and a

healthy population required a strong and healthy environment and the infrastructure to support that.

Response. Documents had been cross referenced in the main. It did not appear that it would be helpful to include material from those documents in the papers before the committee and due to be submitted to council. The documentation before the committee was a budget statement. It did include detail on environmental and other matters. A degree of familiarity with the council's policy documents on the part of members had been assumed.

The sum required to bring forward the start date of the core strategy had been provided by officers.

The Assistant Director – Economy and Place confirmed that the proposed sum would enable a start of the core strategy review to be brought forward to earlier in the year. The funding was for one year and the review would take longer than that involving additional cost.

The Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee read the recommendations on the alternative budget of that Committee and those of the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to the meeting.

(The meeting adjourned between noon and 12:15 pm)

- It was asked with reference to paragraph 3.32-3.36 of the alternative budget proposal in relation to car parking what current activity would have to cease if the proposal were implemented.

Response. The proposal would not have a financial impact on the budget. It proposed a discussion about the allocation of the revenue generated from car parking with the city and town councils about local public realm priorities and that the agreed distribution of resources was then publicised by signage, to show how that money was being reinvested in supporting services directly related to transport and people movement as required by law. The intention would be for parish councils to have the opportunity to share in future additional income for example for matched funding in relation to such things as the lengthsman scheme. The process of holding such discussions would in itself have a benefit in changing the perception of the authority and generate increased shared ownership and responsibility for the public realm.

- It was proposed that the committee should welcome the support for a progressive procurement policy outlined in paragraphs 3.48-3.53. It was suggested that amongst other things this would be a means of managing contract inflation.
- In relation to teenage respite provision it was suggested that in addition to discussions with Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, as proposed at paragraph 4.13 of the alternative budget proposal, consideration should be given to discussions with additional neighbouring local authorities namely Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Response: The view was that it was more cost efficient to locate the facility in an area that was accessible to more than one bordering authority. Discussions with Shropshire and Worcestershire could theoretically take place about a facility in the north east of the county. However, better transport links already existed to authorities in the south east of the county. Discussions with Worcestershire and Gloucestershire therefore seemed more logical. Consideration could, however, be given to discussions with other areas.

- The proposal to fund improvements in working relationships with parish councils, as set out at paragraphs 3.54-3.56 of the report was welcomed.

- It was noted and welcomed as stated at paragraph 3.21 that the new university had indicated that it would be keen to provide research support to the council's exploration of future engineering solutions to people transit systems in the city.

The Director for Children and Families and the Director for Adults and Communities were asked if there were proposals within the alternative budget that were not currently being pursued or were worthy of development.

The Director for Children and Families commented that a number of the suggestions raised were being considered but in slightly different ways. He referenced support for early help and preventative work, but noted that the service was not currently looking at placing social workers in schools. That was worth looking into. At the moment, however, the focus was on retaining and recruiting to the core social work teams and he would wish to ensure those arrangements were secure before considering such a deployment. There were no plans specifically at the moment for arts and creative projects. Teenage respite provision had been discussed but the focus was more on supporting teenagers with various needs that would not be described as also having severe and profound disabilities. Hertfordshire's family centred support model was not being pursued at the moment. The intention was to build on recent improvement work undertaken and see how that could evolve.

The Director for Adults and Communities commented that overall the alternative budget recognised the pressures on the provision of social care and no change was proposed to base budgets. The council had a leadership role in fostering relationships with parish councils and partners and this work was ongoing. The role of communities was recognised and the steps that could be taken in pursuing a preventative agenda. The service was already working on these aspects. The service was also working on a technology enabled care strategy and a digital strategy as recommended. The wellbeing hubs were also reflected in the proposal. With the establishment of the adult and communities directorate one area to be explored and developed was creative and cultural projects.

Closing Statement

The proposers were invited to make a closing statement. They thanked the committee and thanked officers for their work in supporting the development of the alternative budget proposals.

It was observed that there had only been one previous instance of the authority considering an alternative budget and it had been a learning experience for all involved.

The Chairperson thanked and congratulated the proposers.

(The meeting adjourned between 12.50 and 12.57 pm)

The proposed recommendations were read to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1. This committee notes the recommendations from the Children and Young People and Adults and Wellbeing scrutiny committees (see below).**
- 2. The committee welcomes the progressive procurement proposals set out in the alternative budget.**
- 3. The committee notes the proposals in paragraph 4.13 of the alternative budget proposal and recommends that additional neighbouring local authorities are considered, namely Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.**

4. **The committee would welcome added clarity from It's Our County in connection to the alternative budget by naming the existing council plans that it is aligned to, including, the local transport plans, the carbon management plan, sustainable modes of travel to school strategy and local flood risk management strategy.**
5. **The committee would welcome added clarity from It's Our County in defining the activities associated with some of the investment proposals, where they are able to do so, to provide confidence that they represent value for money.**
6. **The committee recommends that It's our County welcomes the suggestion to invite parish councils to engage in a debate around how local priorities and spend are set. And, that It's Our County note the offer to utilise the parish summits as a mechanism for doing this.**
7. **The committee shares the concerns of the other scrutiny committees over the short term nature of the funding which does not extend beyond 2019/20. This presents difficulties in determining, with certainty, the outcomes that can be delivered.**

Recommendations from Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny:

1. The committee recommended an amendment to section 5.3 (p.16) of the alternative budget to include 'wider areas, including parishes' after the reference to market towns.
2. With reference to the alternative budget proposals for the council to own its own housing stock the committee recommended that this be removed. Due to legislation permitting right to buy after three years of ownership this proposal would be unsustainable.
3. The committee has welcomed the emphasis on prevention for adults and the wider additional detail offered by 'It's Our County'. The committee recommends that 'It's Our County' updates the alternative budget to present this additional evidence.
4. The committee notes the lack of funding identified for beyond 2019/20 in the alternative budget. The committee, therefore, recommends that this short term funding arrangement creates significant difficulties in determining the outcomes that can be delivered.

Recommendations from Children's and Young People Scrutiny Committee

1. The committee notes the cabinet members welcoming of the ideas coming forward in the alternative budget and the commitment to exploring these ideas further with officers
2. The committee welcomes the emphasis on the family centred approach to supporting vulnerable children and families. The committee recommends that the 'It's Our County' group updates the alternative budget to present additional evidence relating to the family centred approach,
3. However, the committee has some concern over the short term nature of the funding, which does not extend beyond 2019/20.

4.

41. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 10.15 am.

Appendix - Presentation on alternative budget proposal

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman



It's Our County Shadow Budget 2019-20

General Overview Scrutiny Committee
5 February 2019



Budget Overview - 1

- **Themes:** Prosperity + Wellbeing + **Sustainability**
- **Principles & Priorities**
 - Apply a sympathetic and sensitive approach
 - Community and communication is key
 - Provide leadership on sustainability issues
 - Work more effectively with parishes and local partners



Budget Overview - 2

- **Revenue:**

- Work **within the proposed funding envelope** of the Administration's draft budget
- **Prudent but reprioritised work programme** representing wide stakeholder consultation
- **Support aspects of the Administration's budget** which work with the strengths of Herefordshire
- Follow **best practice** and use **sound evidence** for decisions
- 2019-20 – **no changes to Directorate base budgets**
- MTFS shows our revised priorities and policy direction/pace

- **Capital:**

- Work **within the proposed funding envelope** of the Administration's draft budget
- **Prudent but reprioritised work programme** representing wide stakeholder consultation



Income Sources

Additional Income 2019-20	£000
RSD Grant	1,008
Business Rates	493
Council Tax Base	343
New Homes Bonus	147
RSG	4
ASC Grant	5
Total	2,000



Investments

	Economy & Place
Investments	
Strategic planning resource	250
Eastern city river crossing	100
Traffic planning resource	50
Signage to direct traffic	100
Travel planning resource	100
Extend school modelling	100
Rail operators options	50
Solar & waste power	25
Woodland mgt	25
Renewable energy	15
Urban waste	35
Parish councils	50
Total additional spend	900
Shadow Budget	43,101

Economy & Place

Section 3 of Budget Report

- Plan for whole-county sustainability
- Implement Progressive Procurement practices
- Increase affordable housing
- Grow council income
- Maximise operation of transport infrastructure
- Build community capability



Consultation Feedback

Cabinet – 31-01-19

- Our proposals better align with public priorities for council spending
- Our Shadow Budget gives councillors clarity to how £2m of public money is to be spent in 2019-20

22

Chart 1a: Proportion of broad themes emerged from comments to Q2a

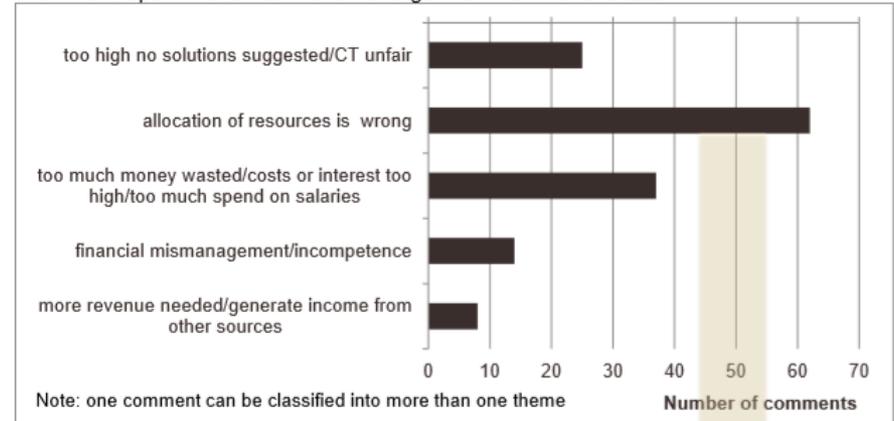
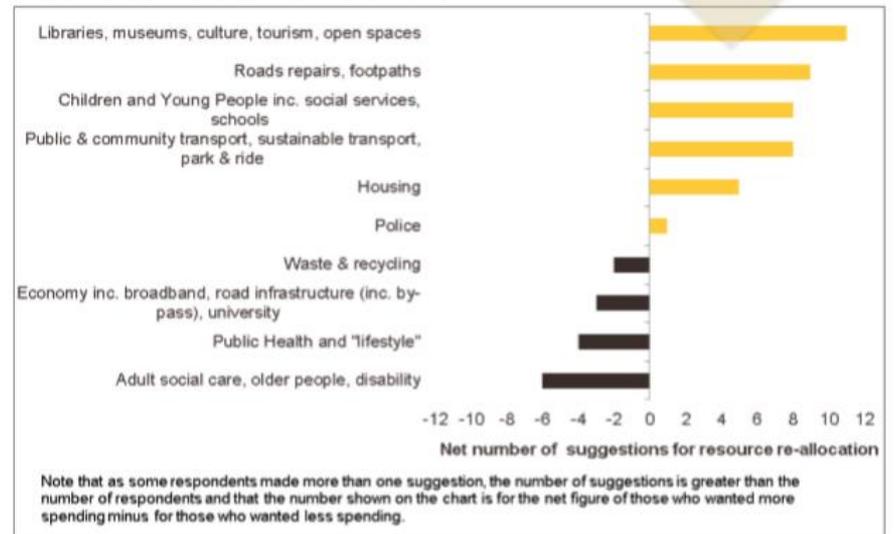


Chart 1b: suggestions for resource reallocation



The logo for ioc (Infrastructure and Opportunity Council) features the letters 'ioc' in a stylized font. The 'i' is purple, the 'o' is green, and the 'c' is purple. A small green tree icon is integrated into the 'o'.

ioc MTFS - 1

Changes in Policy and Pace:

- Accelerate revision of Core Strategy to deliver achievable housing growth alongside local employment
- Increase and expand delivery of affordable housing
- Rebalance investment in economic growth aligned to county strengths
- Reprioritise infrastructure investment to enable sustainable growth and new council income streams

The logo for 'ioc' features a purple dot above a stylized 'i' in purple, followed by a 'o' in purple and a 'c' in green. A hand icon is integrated into the 'o' and 'c' area.

ioc MTFS - 2

Changes in Policy and Pace:

- Redirect investment priorities for the Keepmoat development partnership
- Grow greater community capability underpinned by enabling investment in preventative interventions
- Actively support growth in the visitor, engineering, knowledge and creative sector's of the county economy
- Increase joint and partnership working across all areas of the council's operation



Meeting:	General scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	06 March 2019
Title of report:	Corporate peer challenge progress update
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To consider the progress made against the recommendations following the Local Government Association (LGA) corporate peer review held in February 2018.

In adding this matter to its work programme the committee expressed the wish to receive an overview, with particular reference to the relationship with town and parish councils and the partnership with the voluntary sector where their work meant a reduction in the need for statutory services. In addition, given the time that has now passed since the Cabinet meeting, the committee is interested to receive a report to include reviewing implementation of Cabinet's response to the findings.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **the committee determine any recommendations it wishes the executive to consider in order to further embed the learning from the corporate peer challenge**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the recommended action as it is a function of the committee to make recommendations to the executive on the discharge of the executive functions.

Key considerations

2. Herefordshire Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to carry out a corporate peer challenge in February 2018. The corporate peer challenge is the most robust independent, external full council assessment, review and challenge process available to local government. It provides the opportunity for councils to benefit from external objective assessment of its leadership, performance, achievements and plans.
3. The five core elements of a review in all corporate peer challenges are:
 - Local place and priority setting
 - Capacity to deliver
 - Leadership of place
 - Organisational leadership and governance; and
 - Financial planning and viability

In addition, the team were asked to provide views on scrutiny, organisational culture, policy development and decision-making.

4. The peer challenge team consisted of elected members and senior officers (7 people) from other local authorities whose experience reflected the requirements and focus of the review. Over their four day visit, they interviewed a wide range of staff, partners and members (over 100 people) and produced a report of their findings which is contained in the report attached at appendix 2.
5. Cabinet considered the findings from the challenge visit in June 2018 and agreed an approach to taking forward the recommendations made by the peer challenge team. That approach was to ensure that the recommendations are used to inform strategic and operational planning going forward rather than the establishment of a bespoke action plan not embedded in the wider corporate planning processes.
6. The peer challenge team will be returning to Herefordshire Council in November 2019 to undertake a follow up review on progress against their recommendations.
7. The outcome of the peer challenge in 2018 was very positive, with the team finding strong evidence in areas which can be broadly summarised as:
 - **Commitment to and understanding of place** – demonstrated by staff and members through the corporate plan, joint strategic needs assessment and engaged workforce
 - **People and resources** – evidenced by a secure financial position, effective and professional officer and member relationships
 - **Delivery and improvement** – good understanding of the importance of scrutiny and challenge and a general appetite to learn and improve

8. The peer challenge team also identified areas where the council could seek to improve further; these areas can be summarised into three main themes:
- **Developing the narrative for Herefordshire** – understanding the unique selling points of the county to attract inward investment and developing and defining the council's relationship with communities
 - **Developing a “one council” and “one Herefordshire” approach** - enabling more effective planning and coordination of resources
 - **External communications** - Underpinning the approaches through improved communications and confidence in role of community leadership
9. Progress update against each of the key recommendations are contained within the report attached at appendix 1.

Community impact

10. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, encourages constructive challenge and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements of accountable decision-making, policy development and review.
11. Inviting the corporate peer review and publically reporting its outcome helps to ensure that the council establishes and maintains appropriate systems, processes and culture.

Equality duty

12. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:
- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
13. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying ‘due regard’ in its decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
14. It is not considered that this progress report will have an impact on the council's equality duty.

Resource implications

15. There are no resource implications arising from the update against progress. Any resource implications associated with individual activities will be subject to the normal governance processes being progressed.

Legal implications

16. The council's duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to secure best value in the delivery of all its services and functions is effectively a duty to seek continuous improvement and to invite scrutiny of the council's performance in delivering for the communities of Herefordshire. The corporate peer challenge informs and supports this process.
17. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report; changes made to council services or the workforce as part of the implementing the recommendations, these will be subject to appropriate levels of engagement and consultation as required in individual situations.

Risk management

18. The risk of not responding to and progressing the recommendations made by the peer challenge team is that opportunities for improvement are not taken or informing the council's strategic and operational planning.

Consultees

19. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 CPC recommendations update Feb 2019

Appendix 2 Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge

Background papers

None

	Recommendation	Initial response (following CPC February 2018)	Updated February 2019
1	<p>Articulate a longer term vision for Herefordshire including the development of a compelling narrative with your strategic partners under the banner of One Herefordshire. This will help clarify your ambition and establish your ‘USP’</p>	<p>The longer term vision for the county: <i>“People, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and well-being for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire”</i>, was originally developed with stakeholders through the sustainable community strategy process in 2010.</p> <p>Although there has not been a substantial re-testing of this overarching vision, supporting plans such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Economic Vision have been developed with stakeholders and provide further depth to the vision specifically in relation to wellbeing and economic prosperity.</p> <p>The council’s corporate plan is scheduled for review in 2019/20 and the vision will be tested more widely at that stage. Consideration will be given to including a representative residents’ survey to test alignment between residents’ priorities and those of the council.</p> <p>There is more to be done in clearly articulating how the council and partners’ activities contribute to achieving the vision and communicating the distinctiveness of Herefordshire plans. There is also more to be done in ensuring a whole council understands the ambitions for the county and how they can contribute to achieving those ambitions. This will be progressed</p>	<p>The refresh of the Herefordshire economic vision and masterplan is scheduled to begin in June 2019. This refresh will take a strategic approach to the interdependencies between the economy and communities and create tactical plans that both provide the required economic growth and tackle some of the social challenges with our communities.</p> <p>Recognising the links between economy and community, the council is developing an approach to work with ward members, parish councils and community leaders to create and drive plans for economic development and building community assets within their local areas. The first of these sessions will be held in Leominster following the May elections.</p> <p>The council’s corporate plan is scheduled for review in 2019/20 and the vision will be tested more widely at that stage</p>

		<p>through the existing strategic and business planning processes to ensure that members, employees, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute and challenge as appropriate. In addition a communications and engagement plan is being developed to ensure that agreed messages are clearly and consistently articulated.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Ensure consistent delivery and follow through to turn the positive rhetoric into reality – including relationships with communities and engagement with strategic partners</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there were examples of strong place-based working using a systems approach.</p> <p>However there is more to be done to embed these approaches throughout the organisation. Through our management development programme planned for implementation in the autumn we need to promote the culture and support development of managers’ skills to ensure consistent and effective partnership working, system leadership, and community engagement.</p> <p>We have introduced a corporate project management system for capital project management. We will maintain focus on delivery against agreed outcomes and objectives through the corporate performance reporting processes.</p> <p>The scrutiny committees will have the opportunity to review and challenge savings plans relevant to their areas as part of the budget setting process and may review</p>	<p>Relationships with Parish Councils As part of the developing the relationships with Parish Councils, two parish council summits have been held (October 2018 and January 2019). The summits have been aimed at changing the conversation and understanding the local issues to enable greater collaboration in tackling some of the social challenges within the county.</p> <p>These workshops have been very engaging, productive and have provided valuable insight into themes such as social isolation and loneliness, mental wellbeing and fuel poverty. They have also highlighted the different approaches, solutions and enabled the shared learning to see how the council could support parish councils to continue this work and to do more where possible. These summits are planned to continue on a regular basis with the next scheduled for June 2019.</p> <p>Creating capacity One of the new key functions of the corporate centre is to create and provide the capacity to</p>

		<p>delivery performance of particular projects or plans as appropriate.</p> <p>A member development policy and programme is being developed; as part of that programme we will provide elected members with development opportunities to further build their skills in understanding and interrogating data, and in effective questioning and challenge.</p>	<p>deliver change. A project management team has been established to support the organisation to drive the delivery of key capital projects and service improvement in operational areas such as children’s safeguarding and adult social care. The additional capacity to support business managers to drive improvements have shown strong indicators of success, examples being the recent Ofsted recognition of rapid improvement (February 2019) and the continuing success of the adult social care transformation programme to manage demand on formal care services.</p> <p>The expanding capital project team will be project managing many of the new development projects over the coming years. Additional capacity and leadership for the economic team has also been created through the appointment of a new Head of Economic Development.</p> <p>The corporate project management system continues to embed and a comprehensive training programme for project leads and project sponsors has been rolled out.</p> <p>A session has been held for members on how to understand and interrogate data. The feedback from this session will be used to inform the new members training and development programme.</p>
--	--	--	--

Recommendations following Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) – updated February 2019

<p>3</p>	<p>Undertake a strategic review of your finances so that the potential to resource your ambition and priorities over the medium term is maximized</p>	<p>The peer challenge team highlighted the council's successful delivery of financial savings in recent years, which, together with an increase in general and earmarked reserves has placed the council in a relatively secure financial position over the medium term and provides a platform to realise the county's ambitions.</p> <p>A review of general and earmarked reserves has been undertaken as part of the process for preparing the end of year accounts and a report proposing use of some of those reserves in order to deliver priority outcomes appears elsewhere on Cabinet's agenda today.</p> <p>The annual budget setting cycle will provide a further opportunity to review alignment of resources to strategic priorities and a more fundamental review of the council's medium term financial strategy is planned for 2019/20 alongside the planned review of the corporate plan.</p>	<p>A base budget review has been undertaken and reported to full council in February 2019. Included within the budget is a financial resilience/invest to save fund to support the development of new projects or innovations that create new solutions to resolve current or future challenges.</p> <p>The capital programme reporting continues to improve with the appointment of a capital finance lead and project managers. The capital strategy was formally adopted by council in February 2019 and will be key to the delivery of the council's ambitions over the coming years. The strong financial position of the council has provided a stimulus for good progress on strategic plans and development projects including support for higher education in the county through student accommodation, meeting the needs of people with dementia (Hillside), new employment opportunities and housing.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Consider expanding your presence, profile and influence on the regional stage (and beyond) using your narrative and USP</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised that the council is a well-respected player at the sub-regional level with a track record of success.</p> <p>It has been disappointing to note that consideration of Herefordshire Council's application to become a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority will not be progressed in the short term. However, both individually and as a</p>	<p>The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are in the process of reviewing and redrafting their Strategic Economic Plan. The Strategic Economic Plan is used by the LEP to set its strategic direction and priorities, further it has a role in communicating with government and partners, in particular in setting priorities for the accessing of government funding and support. There have also been new national requirements to change the legal structure of</p>

		<p>key partner in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the council continues to actively engage in relevant regional bodies including the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connects and West Midlands Rail to secure investment and other benefits for the county and region.</p>	<p>all local enterprise partnerships and the Marches LEP is currently considering how to implement these requirements locally.</p> <p>Good progress has been made on supporting the development of the narrative for Herefordshire. There is a new Herefordshire Investment Partnership (HIP) to support and collaborate with the council to attract inward investment and shape potential development projects. This approach has already seen interest from national players in the investment market.</p>
5	<p>Develop a more strategic, collaborative and corporate approach to building more resilient communities</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there was evidence of effective work at a local level but there is more to be done to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to engagement and locality working.</p> <p>We are developing a communications and engagement plan which will ensure a consistent approach to engagement.</p> <p>There are a number of community or locality based initiatives already in operation across the council, but these have largely been service led – for example developing a community commissioning model for public realm service delivery; the establishment of a health and wellbeing network; the provision of Wellbeing Information and Signposting in Herefordshire (WISH); children’s wellbeing local area co-ordinators, adults’ wellbeing community brokers. However the benefits of</p>	<p>Community engagement</p> <p>Community engagement offered by the council has been considered by a cross directorate working group which has pulled together the work and outlining the type of work and more specifically, the activity. The summary is that the council has a wide range of community engagement methods and techniques with a high level of engagement around specific project or as part of day to day work however there is opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach to ensure maximising the use of resources. This initial mapping work will feed directly into to the Talk Community programme and wider engagement with residents such as ensuing a collaborative approach when adverse weather effects the county.</p> <p>Community health and social care partnerships</p>

		<p>a strategic approach to the development of more resilient communities are recognised. This work has been started and we have established a CPIP group tasked with identifying opportunities for bringing this work together.</p>	<p>The council’s work in partnership with health leaders and operational teams to continue to improve the experience for patients and implementing the integration plan on a number of key transformational changes. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a health and social care integrated discharge function to improve the transfer from hospital into the most appropriate place • Integrating the health and social care community services functions of Homefirst and Hospital@Home to reduce duplication and provide the most appropriate care and support for individuals. • Integrating and expanding the health and social care quality assurance teams to support the care homes in Herefordshire to improve the quality standards and up skilling the workforce through targeted education and training. • Alignment of the adult social care and health teams in the community around GP localities <p>Community development</p> <p>Herefordshire is leading the way and recognised both locally (Herefordshire Times – Health and Social care awards 2018) and nationally (Local Government Awards 2019 – Community involvement category) for its innovative working to enable people to live well</p>
--	--	---	---

			<p>within their communities with its community broker model and Talk Community initiative.</p> <p>The community broker service is the vital link between social care and community. They understand the needs of the person and seek creative solutions from the voluntary sector and communities to them to help people regain independence, connect with their community and achieve their desired outcomes.</p> <p>Talk Community is a drop-in event held monthly within communities (currently at seven locations throughout the county) to support people to identify and access events, activities and services within their area to prevent or delay the need for formal care.</p> <p>There are plans to further develop Talk Community by enabling more sessions to be held in additional locations. The ambition is for Talk Community sessions to be held at 50 locations within Herefordshire by the end of 2020 and for these sessions to be ran by the voluntary sector and parish councils.</p> <p>A package of support has been developed to support the rollout. This includes training, display materials, a digital device to access WISH and the internet and small amount of seeding funding for community projects. This initiative was considered at the Parish Council Summit in January 2019 and the budget required to support the community to deliver</p>
--	--	--	--

			<p>was approved by full council as part of the budget setting for 2019/20 in February 2019.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Further cultivate ‘One Herefordshire’ by developing a ‘One Council’ approach, specifically:</p> <p>Create more space for the political and officer leadership to work together strategically Give your managers the space to think and do Build a ‘top table’ (Strategic Management Team)</p> <p>Continue to strengthen your governance.</p> <p>Shift the strategic and operational focus from Directorates to One Council</p>	<p>A One Council approach is being developed through a combination of structural and cultural change.</p> <p>The political leadership (Cabinet) and managerial leadership (Chief Executive’s Management Board) are reviewing their working arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to collectively develop strategic thinking.</p> <p>The employee personal performance development process has put the council’s values and expected behaviours as a key component of employee development and the central importance of values and behaviours will be included in the manager development programme to be implemented in the autumn, reinforcing the whole council approach.</p> <p>New terms of reference for Management Board have been agreed which make clear the strategic nature of the board and its role in ensuring the coordination of activities and resources to maintain a coherent council-wide approach to delivering the council’s priorities.</p> <p>The council’s plans to strengthen governance, specifically in relation to capital project implementation and monitoring, and more widely as identified in the annual governance statement are being progressed and overseen by the Audit and</p>	<p>Organisation Redesign Following the peer challenge, an organisation redesign was undertaken to create a new Corporate Centre and redefine and refocus the directorates. The role of the Corporate Centre is to enable great cross organisational planning and delivery recognising that there was good work happening with the directorates but that this was not always tied together effectively to maximise resources. The work is being developed and overseen through a programme of strategy and planning sessions by management board which have started in 2019.</p> <p>As part of this redesign process, the Adults and Communities directorate was established, placing greater emphasis on the role of communities as part of wellbeing and prevention. Additional capacity and leadership for this area has also been created through a new Assistant Director position for Communities and Partnerships.</p> <p>The Children’s directorate has become Children and Families, recognising the importance and support for families in the role of child protection. The previously known Economy, Corporate and Communities directorate is now Economy and Place with the corporate element becoming the core of the new Corporate Centre.</p>

Recommendations following Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) – updated February 2019

		<p>Governance Committee. The council's constitution has been reviewed, following consultation with all elected members and employees, and amendments agreed by Council in May to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>The development of a corporate services centre under the leadership of the chief executive is being progressed. The structure of the directorate performance challenge sessions is being reviewed to ensure that a whole council response to performance challenges can be developed and that opportunities to secure wider benefits from service planning or delivery can be identified and realised.</p> <p>The review of the corporate plan and medium term financial strategy planned for 2019/20 will provide an opportunity for further ensuring that a whole council strategic focus.</p>	
7	<p>Build on your success and have the confidence to work with your top team to drive and deliver your political priorities</p>	<p>The Cabinet's priorities have been clearly articulated in the corporate plan approved by Council and are reflected in the annual corporate delivery plan.</p> <p>The Cabinet team will continue to work with senior managers to drive and deliver these priorities and will ensure that our plans and the successes which we collectively achieve are effectively communicated.</p>	<p>The corporate delivery plan for 2019 has been revised to include key projects. This will be considered by Cabinet on 28 February 2019.</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>Within the context of a corporate transformation programme, develop a more strategic approach to your workforce to ensure alignment with ambition and priorities</p>	<p>The peer challenge team found that employees they met appeared happy, engaged and passionate about working for the Council and were positive and committed to the organisation and Herefordshire as a place. As the team noted these elements provide a good platform for our improvement journey, and we can be proud of the many committed individuals who work with us to achieve our ambitions for the county.</p> <p>We have recognised the need for a more co-ordinated approach to developing and deploying our workforce and already increased organisational development capacity within the human resources team.</p> <p>A workforce strategy is being developed which will provide the framework within which we will ensure that our employees have the right skills, and that capacity is in the right place within the organisation to support delivery. This will include building in flexibility and development of generic skills as well as identifying and resourcing specific skills requirements, all set within the context of the council’s values and behaviours.</p> <p>In addition an Equality in Employment action plan is being developed to help ensure that our workforce is representative of the community it serves and that our employment practices help us to meet our public sector equality duties.</p>	<p>Leadership Group A leadership forum for senior managers (around 50 people) within the council has been refreshed to improve cross-organisational working, management development and strategic planning including a more coordinated approach to working with communities and strategic partners.</p> <p>During 2018-19 the organisation has developed and delivered a programme of development for managers in a range of core skills areas including partnership working. In addition, it has launched a leadership programme being rolled out to 120 managers over the next 12 months. Issues related to recruitment and retention have been addressed through the development of a new approach to recognising hard to recruit and retain roles.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place on how to improve performance development planning and changes have now been implemented. The workforce strategy has been drafted and will be signed off by 31 March 2019. A complementary employee wellbeing strategy is also in development.</p>
----------	---	--	--

<p>9</p>	<p>Use your communications more proactively to build support and understanding of your vision, ambition and direction of travel</p>	<p>The council has agreed a communications strategy and protocols and reviewed the structure of the corporate communications team to ensure resources are aligned to the strategic priorities.</p> <p>A communications and engagement plan is being developed to guide how the strategy is implemented.</p> <p>Effective communication of the council’s key messages is something that all elected members, employees and contractors can contribute to and we need to ensure they are supported in doing so, making the essential links between the vision, the outcomes, and the activity.</p>	<p>External communications</p> <p>Herefordshire Now, a print and digital publication of Herefordshire Council activity including update on key programmes and areas of public interest is now in circulation. A quarterly print run of 3000; along with associated council tax publication is sent to each household with an average of 1,060 visits to each issue of the digital copy.</p> <p>There have been ongoing improvements to the council’s website and the WISH (Wellbeing Information and Signposting in Herefordshire) sites with October and November seeing the highest activity averaging around 2,400 a month.</p> <p>There has also been an introduction of “report it app” for greater resident engagement as “eyes and ears” in the county to report faults and problems.</p> <p>Social media activity continues to grow with 7k Facebook and 11k Twitter followers of Herefordshire Council.</p> <p>The intranet has been revised to provide improved navigation and up to date content, with revised news core and new digital screens are currently being piloted in Plough Lane to highlight key activity, performance and case studies.</p>
----------	---	--	--

Corporate Peer Challenge **Herefordshire Council**

6th – 9th February 2018

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

The Council has a good understanding of the county and strong ambitions for Herefordshire. Some of this knowledge and vision is clearly documented, including within the Council's Integrated Needs Assessment and Corporate Plan. In addition, we were impressed by the comprehensive understanding of the county, and its challenges, demonstrated by both members and officers during the peer challenge. There is a clear identity with, and commitment to, Herefordshire across the Council and key partner organisations.

The Council is a well-respected player at the sub-regional level with a track-record of success. For example, the Council has secured significant benefits through the Marches Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and close working with Gloucestershire has improved broadband provision. We would encourage the Council to continue to look outwards to secure investment and other benefits for the county, including through its ongoing engagement with a range of regional and sub-regional partners.

There is a willingness within the Council to proactively work with local partners to deliver change. This includes initial activity under the heading of 'One Herefordshire' to support the closer integration of health and social care, and activity with schools to improve attainment levels.

The Council should further evolve its relationships with communities, including through parish and town councils. While the Corporate Plan includes an explicit aim to enhance community resilience, we could not identify a coordinated approach. Given the importance of enhancing resilience, both in terms of managing demand and supporting a thriving county, there needs to be a strategic approach and potentially further investment.

The Council has successfully delivered financial savings in recent years, while at the same time increasing general and earmarked reserves. As a result, the Council is in a relatively secure financial position over the medium term which provides a platform to realise the county's ambitions.

Within the Council there is an appetite to learn, a desire to improve, and an awareness of key areas for change. A range of externally supported arrangements have been put in place to assist its improvement journey. This includes a peer review of children's safeguarding, and sub-regional work to support adult and children's social care. Internally, there are directorate performance challenge sessions and a continuous performance improvement programme. Significantly, the importance of supporting future economic growth has been recognised.

The organisation should be more corporate (i.e. whole organisation rather than directorate focused), and take a joined-up approach to engagement, partnerships and delivery. The Council's default way of working is service and directorate based. As a result, the Council's approach can be fragmented and sometimes may appear so to residents. Performance challenges are typically addressed at a directorate level, rather than corporately, which means the benefits of improved coordination and reduced duplication

can be lost. There may be value in reviewing whether existing governance structures and the allocation of resources supports a 'One Council' approach.

The Council should be confident in its political and community leadership role. This report identifies a number of significant successes for which the Council should be proud. In order to realise its future ambitions – whether it be in terms of delivering growth, driving performance improvement or supporting community resilience – the Council will need to demonstrate strong leadership. This is likely to include a clearer narrative of how both the place and organisation will change, and a renewed focus on organisational delivery.

The Council benefits from an engaged workforce that is proud to work for Herefordshire. The Council has recently taken positive steps to focus more on organisational development. In recognising the need to support staff to have the right mix of skills and behaviours for changing service demands, the Council should seek to support a workforce that is resilient, creative, collaborative and empowered.

External communications should be more proactive and coordinated to better promote the Council's achievements and increase awareness of its vision. We found that the Council's communications were typically reactive and service-led. This means that the organisation is often not effective at communicating its key messages or engaging with residents.

2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions. In addition, many of the conversations onsite provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

- 1. Articulate a longer term vision for Herefordshire including the development of a compelling narrative with your strategic partners under the banner of One Herefordshire. This will help clarify your ambition and establish your 'USP'.** The existing focus on bringing some key partners together, 'One Herefordshire', is encouraging and should be developed further. A strong, clearly communicated narrative – agreed by stakeholders across the county – will help sharpen the focus on local priorities and assist when seeking to secure benefits at a national, regional and sub-regional level.
- 2. Ensure consistent delivery and follow through to turn the positive rhetoric into reality – including relationships with communities and engagement with strategic partners.** The Council can point to a number of achievements and good intentions in relation to community engagement and partnership working. However, in order to fully realise its ambitions, the Council should focus more on how it supports communities at a local level and ensure that partnership working is embedded across all parts of the organisation.
- 3. Undertake a strategic review of your finances so that the potential to resource your ambition and priorities over the medium term is maximised.** 2018/19 is an opportune time for the Council to undertake a review of its resources and financial

planning. This review should ensure that resources are explicitly linked to priority outcomes and consider further the Council's existing allocation of general and earmarked reserves.

4. **Consider expanding your presence, profile and influence on the regional stage (and beyond) using your narrative and USP.** The Council has been active in the Marches LEP, as well as engaging with the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect and the West Midlands Combined Authority. Given the importance of economic growth to the county's future ambitions, the Council must seek to expand its influence, and continue to develop strong relationships at a national, regional and sub-regional level.
5. **Develop a more strategic, collaborative and corporate approach to building more resilient communities.** While supporting resilience is an explicit corporate aim, we found that this priority was often pursued without a coherent approach and with limited corporate commitment.
6. **Further cultivate 'One Herefordshire' by developing a 'One Council' approach, specifically:**
 - Create more space for the political and officer leadership to work together strategically
 - Give your managers the space to think and do
 - Build a 'top table' (Strategic Management Team)
 - Continue to strengthen your governance
 - Shift the strategic and operational focus from Directorates to One CouncilThe Council would benefit from greater central coordination – with more emphasis on cross-council rather than directorate-led approaches. Officers and members need to find sufficient time to come together to plan strategically.
7. **Build on your success and have the confidence to work with your top team to drive and deliver your political priorities.** The Council's political leadership should work closely with senior officers to ensure that political priorities are translated into plans, programmes and delivery. This includes a clear narrative of how the place and organisation will need to change.
8. **Within the context of a corporate transformation programme, develop a more strategic approach to your workforce to ensure alignment with ambition and priorities.** The Council does not currently have a corporate transformation programme; service change projects are currently planned and delivered within directorates. There is benefit to a cross-council approach to organisational change which explicitly aligns the Council's workforce activities to its priorities. This would include planning for and developing a workforce with the right skills and behaviours necessary to deliver on your ambitions.
9. **Use your communications more proactively to build support and understanding of your vision, ambition and direction of travel.** The Council acknowledges that a more proactive and coordinated approach to external communications would improve the organisation's ability to share its key messages.

3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Herefordshire Council were:

- Nick Carter, Chief Executive, West Berkshire Council
- Glen Sanderson, (Con) Cabinet member (Local Services and Environment), Northumberland Council
- Helen Isaacs, Director of Governance and Democracy, North East Lincolnshire Council
- Kevin Jones, Strategic Director, Local Partnerships
- Sarah Messenger, LGA Workforce Consultant
- Paul Clarke, Programme Manager, LGA
- Kevin Kewin, Programme Manager, LGA

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges (CPCs). These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

In addressing these questions, the Council asked the peer team to consider some particular issues, including in relation to scrutiny, organisational culture, policy

development and decision making. We have included observations on these elements, where relevant, within the appropriate section of the report.

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focused and tailored to meet an individual council's needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement arrangements. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent four days onsite at Herefordshire Council, during which they:

- Spoke to more than 100 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 250 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than seven weeks in Herefordshire.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit (6th – 9th February 2018). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

4. Feedback

4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

Members and officers have a good understanding of the county, including the strengths and challenges related to its rurality and demography. The Council's Corporate Plan was informed by local engagement and a strategic needs assessment, and reflects key local issues. Positively, the Council has acknowledged the importance of economic growth to the organisation and Herefordshire, and has taken a number of steps to progress this. However, despite the strong local understanding and commitment, the Council has not undertaken a representative survey of residents for more than five years. We would suggest undertaking a robust survey to test alignment between residents' priorities and those of the Council.

There is potential to develop a more coherent and compelling narrative, with strategic partners, about your ambition for Herefordshire. The Corporate Plan sets out a local authority narrative, the Economic Vision sets out the broad investment picture and there are a number of other key council and partnership strategies. However, the overall narrative – for the Council and place - could be refined and better communicated. It is notable, for example, that the recent staff survey found that many employees did not think the Council had a clear sense of direction.

Strategic priority setting and planning appears to typically take place at a directorate rather than corporate level. This is evident from financial planning processes as well as performance management arrangements. We would advocate a more joined up approach that supports greater coordination of key issues, such as community resilience and how diversity is recognised and valued. It would also encourage services to consider fully council or county-wide benefits, such as broader social value gains from procurement.

The Council recognises that it needs to take a more coordinated approach to engagement and locality working. While there is evidence of effective work at a local level – including more than thirty neighbourhood development plans – there is limited corporate oversight of engagement activity. Engagement work is led by the relevant service area which can risk duplication and consultation fatigue. The level of close locality working with parish and town councils appears to be an area for further development and there is learning in the sector to bring to this issue. This provides a significant opportunity for the Council which it could explore further with ward members and wider stakeholders

4.2 Leadership of Place

The Council is a well-respected player at a sub-regional level. For example, Herefordshire has secured significant benefits for the county through its close working with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. The Council has also recently been awarded national funding, including investment from the Department of Transport to improve local road connections.

There is strong evidence of the Council proactively working with others to respond to and realise opportunities. For example, the Council has helped achieve funding for a new university, secured a private development on the old livestock market site and supported

the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The Council has also maintained an active role in assisting schools, despite limited resources, including positive work with head teachers and governors.

However, there is not currently a consistent articulation of Herefordshire's 'unique selling point', which potentially constrains the Council's impact at a regional level and beyond. Although the Council has a good understanding of the area's current and potential future economic specialisms, it would benefit from a stronger articulation of the county's proposition, to fully capitalise on the county's geographical links, including to the Midlands, the South West and Wales. This will involve further consideration of the Council's enabling role and a clear explanation of investment opportunities that will contribute to local growth.

The Council is seeking to develop a 'One Herefordshire' approach to public service reform and economic development. This is a sensible direction of travel as the Council will increasingly need to work beyond the boundaries of its direct authority. There are examples of strong place-based working, using a systems approach, including recent progress in relation to health and social care integration. It is not unusual that system-wide leadership is reliant on a small number of individuals, but the Council will want to consider further how it can embed such approaches. There is potential for the Council to foster a more system leadership focus, including through its forthcoming management development programme. This could include support for managers to work through networks and with stakeholders, including residents.

4.3 Organisational leadership and governance

We found officer and member relationships to be professional and sound, although recent incidents – including difficulties surrounding the refurbishment of Blueschool House – have caused tensions. Positively, there has also been a cross-party review of the constitution, with the Audit and Governance Committee overseeing that it remains fit for purpose.

The Council has a good understanding of the importance of scrutiny and challenge, and an appetite to make the new arrangements work. Feedback on the new scrutiny structure, including the additional new committee, was favourable. External partners were also positive of their experience of scrutiny. Non-executive members set the scrutiny agenda and it was felt scrutiny has informed and influenced decision making.

The Council's directorate performance challenge sessions are an example of innovative practice. While many councils operate performance groups, the active participation of cabinet members, relevant scrutiny chairs and political group leaders within them is a very positive style of working. It is an interesting approach that shows a commitment to engaging members on a cross-party basis. This was welcomed, and appreciated, by members, and can be further developed to ensure non-executive councillors are informed of key announcements more generally, including those that relate to activity in their wards.

There is a need to move from directorate leadership to corporate leadership and ensure that organisational capacity is clearly linked to corporate priorities. The Council's current organisational structure does not foster a coordinated approach to key challenges. Key

corporate functions – such as finance, legal, policy and communications – currently sit within Economy, Communities and Corporate (ECC) – one of the Council’s three Directorates. Although we found evidence of effective cross-council working, a different structure would support more systematic and embedded co-ordination. Budget, performance and risk management are currently directorate-led activities; greater corporate oversight will support a more joined-up approach and sight of the emerging strategic issues.

The organisation’s culture appears to have evolved rather than been defined. Although the Council has articulated a set of core values, the existing directorate-led approach may not foster a corporate culture. The recently revised Personal Performance Development Plan (PPDP) process, which includes a specific section on values and culture, provides an opportunity for managers and all staff to consider these issues further. The recent staff survey findings also provide insight into the culture of the organisation as experienced by staff. We would recommend that the Council analyse and address key differences between directorates. In considering potential actions, the Council should consider the importance of defining and embedding the right values and behaviours as well as structural changes.

It is not completely clear where strategic thinking and strategic decision making happens. The membership of the existing Management Board is large – including heads of service. The Board’s primary focus appears to be facilitating reports through the decision making process rather than providing a forum for leadership. Similarly, the informal executive meeting (Leader’s briefing) often responds to officer reports rather than instigating horizon scanning and longer-term thinking. We would recommend that these structures are reviewed to place more focus on providing senior officers and members with greater opportunities to lead collaboratively, including by setting the agenda for what is discussed and shaping the Council’s strategic thinking.

There were some comments from external stakeholders of slow decision-making or delivery within the Council. It was not possible – within the time available – to investigate the particular examples to ascertain whether the concerns were legitimate or reflected necessary Council processes, including due diligence. It may be worth the Council testing this perception further with partners, including as it develops its One Herefordshire approach.

4.4 Financial planning and viability

Financial statements suggest that the Council should be financially sustainable over the medium term; this view has also been supported by the external auditor. While the Council has delivered significant financial savings, we found that financial planning could be more explicitly linked to the Corporate Plan. The budget setting arrangements, and identification of savings proposals, appears to be a directorate-led process. As a result, there is a potential to test whether resources are fully aligned with priority outcomes.

In addition to successfully delivering financial savings in recent years, the Council’s general fund balance and earmarked reserves have increased. Council reserves are held for a range of purposes including to cover the costs of unforeseen events, fund transformation activity, smooth the late delivery of savings plans and, in the case of

earmarked reserves, meet future identified spending commitments. 2018/19 would be an opportune time to undertake a strategic financial review of Council finances. This work would allow the Council to assess whether it has the appropriate balance within its reserves, including the respective allocations to general and earmarked reserves, and whether there is the potential for the Council to further resource its priorities over the medium term.

There is evidence of improving revenue budget management supported by regular reporting. The Council also recognises that there is further work to do on the management of the Council's capital programme, and that capital monitoring has been less systematised. The Council's financial reporting indicates that there was a capital underspend of £21.2 million in 2016/17; this was 28 per cent of the £77 million programme. At the same time, there has been high-profile issues relating to capital projects, including the refurbishment of Blueschool House which included a significant unauthorised overspend.

The peer team were made aware of the issues relating to the management of Blueschool House as a key part of the context of the Corporate Peer Challenge. We did not seek to investigate the background to this particular issue as it has been subject to a special investigation by internal audit as well as an independently-led HR investigation. Rather, the peer team's work included a focus on understanding whether processes are effective and whether there is a culture to address problems when they arise. The peer team did not find evidence that the issues in relation to Blueschool House were a manifestation of systemic cultural issues with the Economy, Communities and Corporate Directorate. We note the Council's improvement actions planned, and undertaken, which seek to strengthen capital management and mitigate against any further incidents of this type. We emphasise the importance of maintaining this focus.

The Council has been generally successful in the delivery of its savings targets – approximately £70 million between 2010 and 2017. However, there is limited evidence of robust scrutiny of the development of savings plans, their implementation and their impact. This may become a greater issue in the future as further savings are made, including those that are likely to be more difficult to realise. The Council is planning to make savings of £12.9 million in 2018/19 and £4.8 million in 2019/20. Many of the proposals relate to adult and children's services where there is evidence of existing overspending. Under current arrangements, savings plans are primarily managed at a directorate-level. There is potential for a more corporate approach to identifying, scrutinising, delivering and monitoring savings. As well as providing central visibility and challenge, it would also help identify interdependencies and synergies across council services.

The Council has acknowledged the difficulties highlighted in the findings of the 2016/17 external audit. These included weaknesses in the quality and accuracy of the accounts presented but also in how the audit was supported by the Council. We were pleased to note that plans were in place to improve the situation for 2017/18, particularly in light of the new 31 July deadline for issuing opinion on the accounts; there needs to be a continued focus on addressing external audit findings.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

Employees we met appeared happy, engaged and passionate about working for the Council. The Peer Challenge considered the recent staff survey results which are broadly in-line with those of similar councils. In addition, in the discussions with staff, we found employees to be positive and committed to the organisation and Herefordshire as a place. The Council has also reported greater stability, with a 50 per cent reduction in agency staffing over the last year. These elements provide a good platform for the Council's improvement journey.

The Council's leadership structures could be developed further. As highlighted above, there is benefit from creating more space for the Council's most senior officers, and cabinet members, to think strategically. Constrained budgets have meant a scaling back of strategic workforce activity in recent years, which raises questions about succession planning, talent management and skills. The Council has acknowledged this with investment in a new lead role for organisational development and the creation of a corporate training budget. We would advocate a cross-council approach to workforce planning, which recognises particular specialisms and is explicitly linked to an overarching council transformation plan.

In recent years, as part of the Council's budget reductions, staff training opportunities were significantly reduced and focused particularly on e-learning. Given the requirement for staff to work differently to meet council priorities, there is a need for a greater focus on personal development. The Council has begun to recognise this with a new induction and management programme due to launch in April 2018. We would recommend that this programme uses a range of methods (beyond online training) and includes a focus on the particular issues identified during the peer challenge process, including community engagement and programme management. The revised Personal Performance Development Plan (PPDP) which has been rolled out should provide further insight into the training needs of staff across the Council.

There are also potential benefits from more support for members to assist them to carry out their roles. Current member development activity is focused particularly on mandatory training, alongside some LGA development opportunities. We would recommend that the Council invests further, including supporting members to seek development opportunities beyond their portfolios and committee positions, such as community leadership and partnership working.

The Council recognises the need to lever external resources to deliver its ambitions for Herefordshire. For example, the Council worked with external partners to produce a business case which secured £23 million of government funding to establish a new university in Hereford. This work will need to continue sub-regionally, regionally and nationally in order for the Council to support better local outcomes. Positively, the Council has recognised the importance of developing effective working relationships with key partners beyond Herefordshire.

The Council has a stated intent to build community resilience but needs to further articulate what this means and how it will be supported in a strategic and coordinated way. The relationships with parish and town councils will have an important role to play. Alongside

this, the Council should consider other options for connecting and assisting residents and communities to support each other, including the role of ward councillors, digital technology and the voluntary and community sector. We recognise that different areas of Herefordshire will not suit a 'one size fits all' approach; nevertheless, the Council's engagement and resilience activity needs to be part of a coherent framework that is developed and delivered in partnership with others.

The Council has a mixed track-record relating to project and programme management. Alongside a range of successfully delivered projects, such as the new Herefordshire Archive and Record Centre, there have been a number of delayed or less successful examples. The Council has recognised this and taken steps to improve project management arrangements, including a new, more rigorous, project management system to support capital projects. This work needs to continue, complemented with corporate learning and development activity.

While there are many examples of successful service-based change projects and efficiencies, there does not appear to be strategic, cross-council approach to transformation. There are clear advantages of the Council taking a more consistent approach. Residents do not differentiate between different parts of the Council when accessing services and there needs to be a coordinated response to understanding, and mitigating, the impacts of budget reductions across services. A cross-council approach to transformation would also help maximise the benefits of particular approaches across services, for example, when seeking to manage demand or optimise income.

Staff were generally positive about the Council's Better Ways of Working (BWOW) programme. The rationale underpinning the programme is sound and it may help deliver cost savings, and greater flexibility for staff, at the same time as supporting better services. Similarly, the Continuous Performance Improvement Programme (CPIP) has a welcome focus on supporting better outcomes, and we were made aware of activity seeking to make the Council more digital. While all of these initiatives are welcome, there would be greater value from them if they were linked under a broader transformation approach. To maximise benefits, these activities should be aligned and underpinned by a coherent view of the role and shape of the organisation now and in the future. Successful implementation will require appropriate support for managers alongside effective coordination and relevant resources.

The Council's approach to external communications is often reactive and uncoordinated. This is evidenced by the absence of a council-wide communications plan, the existence of more than 40 social media channels and a fragmented approach which makes it more difficult for the Council to evaluate its communications impact. Disappointingly, an LGA Communications Healthcheck, undertaken in 2015, identified a number of similar issues. However, there have been a number of recent steps towards improvement, including a published communication strategy and a redesign of the communications service. A greater dialogue between the communications function and the services it works with, alongside a more targeted approach, would enable the Council to be better share its key messages, celebrate its achievements and engage local people.

5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take issues forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Helen Murray, Principal Adviser, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). Her contact details are: helen.murray@local.gov.uk, 07884312235.

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council during the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform your ongoing consideration.

Follow up visit

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

Next Corporate Peer Challenge

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before February 2023.



Meeting:	General scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Wednesday 6 March 2019
Title of report:	Task and finish group report - highways maintenance - pothole repairs
Report by:	Chairperson of the task and finish group

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To consider the Task and Finish Group's report on highways maintenance – pothole repairs.

The committee is asked to approve the recommendations for submission to the executive. The committee established the task and finish group to seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs

Recommendation(s)

That: the committee considers the task and finish group's report at appendix 1 and decides whether to agree the findings for submission to the executive.

Alternative options

1. The recommendations proposed in the Group's report represent the Group's findings. If there are any additional recommendations that the committee wishes to make these can be considered at the meeting.

Key considerations

2. This committee established the task and finish group on 2 July to consider the highway maintenance plan with a specific focus on pothole repairs. Members had identified during consideration of the public realm contract in January 2018 that it appeared that the local perception within parishes of conditions on the ground did not match the picture of improvement being presented by both client and contractor. The task and finish group was established to seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs. As part of this work views of Parish Councils were sought.
3. The group's report is attached at appendix 1. The committee is asked to agree the recommendations for submission to the executive. The response will be provided following the council elections in May 2019.

Community impact

4. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts and encourages constructive challenge and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
5. The task and finish group's recommendations contribute to the following priorities in the corporate plan: Support economic growth and connectivity (including broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development) and deliver the LTP Programme, providing an enhanced, accessible, safe and integrated transport network supporting economic growth.

Equality duty

6. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
7. If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the executive and, depending on their decision, due regard will need to be given to the public sector equality duty.

Resource implications

8. The recommendations agreed by the committee will be sent to the executive. In considering their response an assessment of resource implications will be undertaken.

Legal implications

9. The functions of the general scrutiny committee include the powers to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.

Risk management

10. The recommendations agreed by the committee will be sent to the executive. In considering its response the executive will need to assess any risks arising from the recommendations.

Consultees

11. All Parish and Town Councils were invited to comment on the matters identified within the scope of the review. The full responses are appended. The principal areas of reported concern were: repairs being carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired; quality of repairs and auditing of repairs including those carried out by statutory undertakers.; speed of repair; value for money; working practices (numbers of employees/use of surplus materials); and pothole prevention.
12. Whilst recognising that members of Herefordshire Council would have input through and in consultation with local councils within their wards, ward members were also invited for comment to see if they had identified any additional concerns. No additional areas of major concern were identified.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - report of the task and finish group – highways maintenance – pothole repairs.

Background papers

None identified.



Task & Finish Group Report

**Review of highways maintenance
– pothole repairs**

March 2019

**Draft for consideration by General
Scrutiny Committee on 6 March
2019**

FOREWORD

1. Potholes generate considerable discussion locally and nationally.
2. The RAC recently reported that across 161 councils in England, Scotland and Wales, 512,270 potholes were reported by members of the public in 2017, up from 356,432 from 152 local authorities in 2015.
3. The Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), claim £8 billion is needed to carry out a one-time, thorough fix of potholes in England.
4. The House of Commons Transport Select Committee is conducting an enquiry into the funding and governance of local roads in England.
5. The Group's task was to consider the highway maintenance plan and seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs.
6. All Parish and Town Councils were invited to comment on the matters identified within the scope of this review.
7. The first point that the Group would wish to acknowledge is the sheer scale of the task of maintaining the County's roads and the challenge it represents.
8. Herefordshire's highway network has evolved over time and consists of roads that were never designed to carry modern traffic and are not resilient to damage. This is due to its relative age, from increasing traffic, severe weather, and decades of underinvestment in its repair as well as normal 'wear and tear'. Many of the rural roads were not designed for the purpose they now serve and the weight of traffic in both volume and size.
9. Managing an asset of some 2,000 miles clearly requires a strategic approach basing decisions on the evidence provided by data.
10. Compromises are also needed because resources are finite. A balance has to be struck between preventative work (resurfacing/surface dressing) and reactive work (repairs of individual potholes or clusters of potholes). There has to be prioritisation of works. The Group has examined the strategic and operational approaches being deployed.
11. As part of its task the Group undertook a visit to observe reactive maintenance repairs being undertaken. The safety of all using the highway, and those who work on it is of paramount concern, we do not wish to see anyone injured, or worse, whilst working to improve our roads, or travelling upon them. As such the highway service and its delivery provider, Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) take safety very seriously. The health and safety briefing and the personal protective equipment it was necessary to wear to go on site reinforced the fact that undertaking works on the highway is a serious business to which safety risks are attached. The Group would caution against unauthorised individuals seeking to undertake works to the highway themselves.
12. The Group was also informed that there had been incidents of control measures around sites being ignored by impatient motorists and staff being abused. The Group realises that the presence of roadworks creates disruption, but no level of inconvenience caused

by such works is worth the life of anybody, and the devastation that injury or loss will have on family and friends. It is completely unacceptable for the workforce to be treated in this way and their safety and wellbeing jeopardised.

13. The Group urges everyone to abide by all traffic control, signage and advice given by highway staff and help them keep the public and workforce safe.
14. In terms of perception the Group was also acutely aware that motorists passing through works on the day of the Group's visit would have observed 8 people on site (the Group) apparently doing nothing. This reinforces the point that things are not always as they seem.
15. Given the resources available, regrettably it is not possible to bring the condition of all roads in the county, or in any county, to a state of perfection. The Group hopes that this report will, however, provide readers with some context, dispel some myths associated with the issue and demonstrate, whether one agrees wholly with it or not, that there is a rationale behind the council's approach. That is not to say, however, that improvements cannot be made. The Group has made some recommendations which it hopes will help to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on road surface maintenance and pothole repair.
16. I would like to thank all those who contributed to the review and to the officers who have supported the Group. I must also thank my fellow group members Cllr Bruce Baker, Cllr Ellie Chowns, Cllr Peter Jinman and Cllr Steve Williams for their excellent contributions.

Councillor Sebastian Bowen
Chairman of the Task and Finish Group

Executive summary

The Group's task was to consider the highway maintenance plan and seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs.

All Parish and Town Councils were invited to comment on the matters identified within the scope of this review. The principal issues raised in responses were: repairs being carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired; quality of repairs and auditing of repairs including those carried out by statutory undertakers (utilities companies); speed of repair; value for money; working practices (numbers of employees/use of surplus materials); and action on pothole prevention.

The Group's report includes background on the asset management strategy and other relevant matters that have a bearing on the current approach to highway maintenance. It also seeks to explore and explain the policy and practice in the areas identified in response to concerns received on behalf of communities. The findings are based around the following four themes encapsulating these points: approach to repairs (strategy, prioritisation), audit/inspection of repair quality, communications and customer service, and strategic issues.

Managing an asset of some 2,000 miles clearly requires a strategic approach basing decisions on the evidence provided by data. The Group supports the continuation of a proactive asset management strategy. Preventative action is the most effective solution. This occasionally results in criticism as the council is seen to be treating a road that looks good. But if attention is not given to maintaining roads currently in good condition eventually they will all decline. Reactive repair regimes can be up to four times more costly.

The strategy also incorporates a risk based approach to repairs. Compromises are needed because resources are finite. There has to be prioritisation of repairs. This means that a large pothole in a place that causes few if any concerns may be categorised with a lower priority rating, and response time, than a smaller pothole that presents an immediate or imminent hazard to all.

By far the most common issue raised in the responses from Town and Parish Councils was frustration that repairs are carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired.

Current policy provides that wherever achievable, all defects within the extent of an area closed off for traffic management reasons should be repaired in a single visit. However, for a range of reasons, mainly relating to the pressure of demand and the need to respond to high risk defects across the network as a whole this policy is not being delivered to a desired level in practice. The Group has recommended that a cluster based strategy should be re-emphasised.

The Group considers the important contribution that the lengthsman can make should be recognised and parish councils encouraged to support lengthsman schemes, exploring scope for co-operation between parishes in doing so, In addition the Group considers that the council should review whether reinstating a financial contribution to the scheme would be prudent, for example via match funding. It considers the council should also provide assistance to parish councils in how to manage their contracts with lengthsman to ensure value for money.

The Group has also considered concerns about the quality of repairs. The Group was told that 15% of defective sections require more than 2 visits on average. The view was that the comparatively small proportion of defective sections of road that had required multiple visits

(three or more) was driving the wider perception that potholes were not being repaired correctly first time. The aim should be, where possible, 'fix first-time'.

The Group supports the adoption of a policy of making a different type of repair in certain locations where evidence shows a standard approach would not be effective in achieving the 'fix right first time approach', and adopt a performance measure of the effectiveness of this approach in reducing occasions where more than one visit is required to fix a defect.

The Group has also recommended strengthening inspection regimes, including inspections on making-good work carried out by utilities companies.

It has also made suggestions on how parish councils could work even more closely with locality stewards.

The Group has made a number of recommendations to improve communication. It is hoped that improved signage at worksites will provide greater clarity to the public. Marking repairs as temporary where this is the case should also remove one of the present areas of misunderstanding.

Improvements to the current systems for reporting potholes and the response residents receive have also been recommended.

Surface water is by far the largest factor in pothole formation that can be addressed. There are significant portions of the network that would benefit from an improvement in drainage maintenance ensuring that grips and gullies are clear. The Group has reiterated the importance of landowners being made aware of their responsibilities and the importance of carrying these out effectively and where necessary for the council to take enforcement action.

Funding is clearly a critical aspect. Without appropriate funding, both revenue and capital, and careful management of that funding the roads will inevitably deteriorate. The Group has recommended that the Council should pursue all available 'invest to save' opportunities, consider prudential borrowing for such investments, and lobby for much more consistent central government funding for highways.

Innovation is to be encouraged and it is recommended that there be continuous appraisal of new techniques, processes and materials that can deliver repairs more efficiently.

The Group reiterates that the safety of all using the highway, and those who work on it, is of paramount concern. It was noted that the highway service and its delivery provider, Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) take safety very seriously. The Group recommends that BBLP should continue to give safety a high priority, both in terms of a) worker and public safety during repair operations, including worker health and safety, and b) continuing a risk-based approach to prioritising works.

The Group was greatly saddened by reports of inconsiderate and downright dangerous behaviours by a few road users when approaching or passing through road closures or other areas where work was being undertaken and wholeheartedly support the public reporting and engagement with the police in following up on such incidents.

Recommendations.

(The Group does not have decision making powers and, subject to approval by the general scrutiny committee, these recommendations will be submitted to the council's executive who will determine what action to take in response.)

Approach to repairs (strategy, prioritisation)

- 1) **The council should continue to take a risk-based approach to prioritising repairs as part of a proactive asset management strategy.**
- 2) **The council should always aim to 'fix right first time' making a sound repair; when this is not possible, residents should be told why, and told when a permanent repair will be made.**
- 3) **BBLP should reinforce, emphasise and implement a 'cluster-based' strategy to fixing potholes i.e. to fix all defects within an appropriate length of road at the same time, unless essential emergency work needs to be done elsewhere.**
- 4) **The service should explore whether there was a point at which a complete replacement of a strip of highway containing a cluster of potholes would represent a more cost effective long term repair.**
- 5) **The service should consult with Parish Councils about the proposed Rural Routes Maintenance Hierarchy, and involve them in any decisions about which roads to prioritise.**
- 6) **The council should consult on and set a threshold for shifting resources to a more reactive approach when the number of defects reaches a certain point, involving undertaking rapid 'make safe' repairs, following up with 'permanent' repairs in time and making arrangements for this change in approach to be communicated so that the public are aware of this temporary change.**
- 7) **The important contribution that the lengthsman can make should be recognised and parish councils encouraged to support lengthsman schemes, exploring scope for co-operation between parishes in doing so, and the council should review whether reinstating a financial contribution to the scheme would be prudent, for example, via match funding.**
- 8) **The council should develop criteria to assist parish councils in managing their contracts with lengthsman to ensure value for money.**

Audit/inspection of repair quality

- 9) **The council should invest further in independent inspection of repair quality, including inspection of 'making-good' work done by utilities companies.**
- 10) **The council should adopt a policy of making a different type of repair in certain locations where evidence shows a standard approach would not be effective in achieving the 'fix right first time approach', and adopt a performance measure of the effectiveness of this approach in reducing occasions where more than one visit is required to fix a defect;**
- 11) **Parish Councils should have a designated person to scrutinise highways work in the parish.**
- 12) **BBLP should be asked to facilitate increased liaison between the locality stewards and parish councils including exploring arrangements for locality stewards to attend PC evening meetings if an issue of particular concern has been raised, inspection tours as appropriate and engagement with lengthsman.**

- 13) Parish Council clerks should publish on their websites the Locality Steward's weekly list of repairs done in the area.

Communications and customer service

- 14) BBLP should improve signage at worksites, including notification of: gang identification number; gang working hours; what the work is for; and a contact number in case of any problems with the site.
- 15) BBLP should mark temporary repairs in a simple fashion e.g. by spraying with a white T, and should communicate to residents why the repair is only temporary, and when a permanent repair will be made.
- 16) BBLP should consult with Parish Councils on the timing of planned works, especially any that will involve significant disruption.
- 17) BBLP should improve the reporting system so that when a resident reports a road defect they are told through an automated system when it has been inspected, what priority it has been given, and the deadline for repair.
- 18) BBLP should improve the system for those reporting potholes by telephone to make it much more user friendly.
- 19) The council should improve communication with landowners regarding their responsibility on drainage; including the need for ditches to be more regularly and effectively maintained.
- 20) The council should develop a brief frequently asked question sheet on the approach to pothole repairs for publication on the website.

Strategic Issues

- 21) Funding: the Council should a) pursue all available 'invest to save' opportunities, b) consider prudential borrowing for such investments, and c) lobby for much more consistent and less ad hoc central government funding for highways.
- 22) Innovation: BBLP should be encouraged to continuously appraise new techniques, processes and materials that can deliver repairs more efficiently.
- 23) The council highways strategy should continue to consider climate change,
- 24) BBLP should continue to give safety a high priority, both in terms of a) worker and public safety during repair operations, including worker health and safety, and b) continuing risk-based approach to prioritising works.

Background

1. The Council is responsible for maintaining an asset of some 2,000 miles as set out in the table below. It is the most significant physical asset in the council's management.

Road type	Length KM	Length miles
Locally Maintained 'A'	378.7	253.3
Locally Maintained 'B'	317.5	197.3
Locally Maintained 'C' and 'U/C'	2578.7	1602.3
Total	3274.9	2306.2

2. In addition there are 4.7 miles of Motorway and 42.6m miles of Trunk Road maintained by Highways England.
3. The Council has a public realm contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) through which highway and other services are delivered.
4. Information on the council's legal obligations are set out in appendix 1
5. The highway network in Herefordshire is an aging asset. An asphalt road surface has a limited lifespan (some c30 years) so there is a constant need for repair and renewal over time usage has increased as have public expectations. (Detail on the overall condition of the carriageway asset showing the proportion rated green amber or red is set out at appendix 2.)
6. Potholes are a highly visible symptom of the underlying condition of the road network. They are a cause of dissatisfaction for all road users and can present a serious safety hazard. In an ideal world with limitless resources repairs would be immediate. However, in the real world the council has to consider the repair of any single pothole in the context of the need to manage their impact across the entire length of the public highway that is maintainable at the public expense for which the council is responsible. This requires a strategic approach that has regard to available funding and actual performance data. This is known as asset management.

7. The Group visited BBLP offices and received a briefing on and observed the asset management software and systems used to manage the road network. This clearly explained the context within which the service operated and reinforced the importance of a proactive asset management strategy,
8. A number of national guidelines exist for the provision of highway maintenance. The current guidance is contained in Well-managed Highway Infrastructure'. This includes the recommendation (Recommendation 7) that: *"A risk based approach should be adopted for all aspects of highway infrastructure maintenance, including setting levels of service, inspections, responses, resilience, priorities and programmes."*
9. Herefordshire's asset management policy and strategy is included as part of the Local Transport Plan, This is available via the following link

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/220/local_transport_plan
10. The highway maintenance plan is available here

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/236/highway_asset_management_and_maintenance/3
11. The council is a member of the Midlands Service Improvement Group (and other best practice groups such as the West Midlands Highways Alliance and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT). This group was formed to deal with matters concerning best value and performance management, specifically within the highways and road safety disciplines of local authorities. The Group comprises Cheshire East and Cheshire West, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Sandwell, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, City Unitary Authorities of Coventry City, Derby City, Leicester City, Nottingham City, Stoke on Trent and Telford & Wrekin. This provides an opportunity to benchmark and ensure that the council can compare its performance and benefit from best practice.

Funding

12. Funding for the maintenance of the highway asset comes in two forms: revenue and capital. Revenue funds are typically those generated by the council itself through council tax, central government grant (decreasing annually and soon to be stopped completely in 2020/21) and other income generating activities. Capital funds are typically provided to the council through central government grants for roads or via council borrowing or from capital receipts. The Council can fund capital expenditure from the revenue budget but not vice versa. Given the demand upon the revenue budget scope for this is extremely limited.
13. More information on funding sources is in Appendix 3.
14. In 2017/18 the revenue budget assigned to BBLP for the management of the entire Public Realm was £6.132 million. The Capital Budget was £13.027 million, a total of £19.159 million. An overview of the plan for the delivery of this expenditure can be seen at

http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50045949/Appendix%20Service%20Overview_%20Annual%20Plan%2017-18.pdf
15. In 2017/18 the revenue budget assigned to BBLP for the management of the public realm was £6.559 million. The capital budget was £21.42 million, a total of £27.979 million. An overview of the plan for the delivery of this expenditure can be seen at

16. Herefordshire is a rural county, the fourth least densely populated county in England. Access to many areas of the county can only be gained via the C and Unclassified road network. Whilst traffic volumes may be comparatively low on many of these roads, they form the network on which communities rely.
17. The contrast between low population and an extensive highway asset means that the contribution that can be made to the maintenance of the highway asset from the council's revenue budgets (as generated by council tax) is low when considered on a per mile basis. The same is true of many rural areas. Capital investment and receipt of capital grants is welcome but it is essential that this is supported by ongoing revenue funding. Certainty of funding over a set period is important to support forward planning.
18. Analysis by the council following the 2015/16 financial year of the combined revenue and capital budgets as published for all 152 highway authorities showed that the county has the lowest spend per km of all highway authorities (bar the Isles of Scilly, which is a special case). Yet in terms of per head investment per mile only 12 authorities invest more than Herefordshire.
19. Repairs carried out as part of the planned programme to manage the highway asset can be classified as capital expenditure "enhancing the life of the asset". Reactive work is classified as revenue expenditure. There is considerable pressure on the council's revenue budget as a whole because of all the service demands it has to meet.

Perception and Reality

20. All Parish and Town Councils were invited to comment on the matters identified within the scope of this review The full responses are attached at appendix 4.
21. Views were also sought on other aspects of the Public Realm contract with BBLP to inform future scrutiny work as appropriate. Whilst this does not form part of this review it is included in the appendix for completeness.
22. The principal areas of reported concern were: repairs being carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired; quality of repairs and auditing of repairs including those carried out by statutory undertakers (utilities companies); speed of repair; value for money; working practices (numbers of employees/use of surplus materials); and pothole prevention. Whilst recognising that members of Herefordshire Council would have input through and in consultation with local councils within their wards Members were also invited for comment to see if they had identified any additional concerns. No additional areas of major concern were identified.
23. The Group's report is based around the following four themes encapsulating these points:
 - Approach to repairs (strategy, prioritisation)
 - Audit/inspection of repair quality
 - Communications and customer service
 - Strategic issues

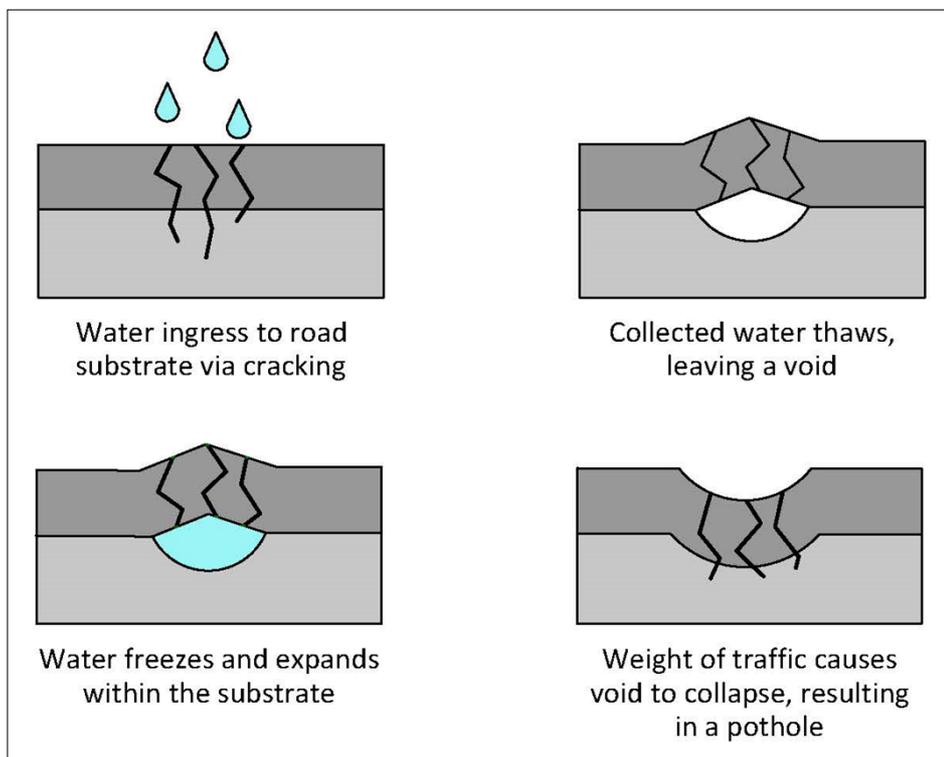
A: Approach to repairs (strategy, prioritisation)

24. The RAC Foundation in publishing its recent report "Potholes What is a pothole? A look at Local Highways Authorities road maintenance policy", stated that its analysis showed that local highway authorities across the country are increasingly adopting the 'risk-based' approach to fixing road defects. Based on data received from 190 of the 207 local highway authorities in Britain 75% (142) had already moved to a risk-based approach by Autumn 2018, by when a further 15 (8%) said they were about to move to the new system or were reviewing their existing practices.
25. A risk-based approach takes account of the likelihood and impact (risk) of the injury or damage that would result from a highway user encountering a defect. In Herefordshire the response times to highways defects have then been developed taking into account the changes in likelihood of a defect actually being encountered on different hierarchy roads. This means, for example, that not only will the size – width and depth – of a pothole be taken into account but also the type of road where it is, the volume of traffic that road carries and the mix of road users. A large pothole in a place that causes few if any concerns may be categorised with a lower priority rating, and response time, than a smaller pothole that presents an immediate or imminent hazard to all.
26. Herefordshire Council was one of the very first highway authorities to adopt the risk based approach, having done so upon publication of the code of practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. That code also advocates the use of asset management. Asset management promotes a more structured and business-like way to undertaking highway maintenance. The core of the principle is to make the best use of available resources to deliver efficient and effective highway maintenance, thereby keeping the asset in the best achievable condition. These principles encourage a long-term approach to highways maintenance, focused on performance and outcomes that ensure public funds are spent on maintenance operations that in time will reduce the demand for expensive short-term repairs. Not only does this reduce the 'whole life cost' of maintaining the asset but keeps it in as safe a state as can be achieved, reducing risk.
27. Good asset management should not just focus on the expenditure of existing funds but should also produce a clear and justifiable data set to highlight the need for future investment.
28. The Department for Transport has indicated that around 20% of funding for local highways authorities will be reliant on an ability to demonstrate an engrained approach to asset management and the pursuit of the efficiency agenda. This includes a move away from reactive to proactive maintenance. The 'Incentive Fund' encourages the application of asset management principles rewarding authorities which adopt and improve these principles with additional funding. Herefordshire has currently attained the highest banding in this fund which is a testament to the authority's commitment to improve.
29. The principle "prevention is better than cure" in determining the balance between structural, preventative and reactive maintenance activities is embraced and has shaped the review of asset management policies and strategies. For example, the timely application of a surface treatment such as dressing can prevent the potholes forming. This philosophy should improve the resilience of the highway network and minimise the occurrence of potholes in the future, informing the risk-based approach to response times in a move to "first-time fixes" for highway defects.

30. Research has shown that reactive repair regimes can be up to four times more costly than adopting preventative treatment strategies.
31. The effect of a risk-based approach is to give longer response times on infrequently used parts of the highway network, but with an expectation that the defect will be permanently repaired. The shift of resources to a preventative maintenance strategy will also see fewer potholes develop as more roads receive a surface treatment.
32. Another aspect of this approach is that by taking preventative action each year authorities should gradually 'get on top of the problem' and slow down deterioration. The overall condition of each part of the carriageway asset is given a rating: green amber, or red. If attention is not given to roads currently in the green category eventually they will all decline to amber condition and then to red.
33. This occasionally results in criticism as the council is seen to be treating a road that looks good. If asset management principles are not followed through, the maintenance strategy reverts to a short term, reactive approach. This is less efficient, results in ever increasing quantities of defects and is more costly to manage and deliver in the longer term.

What are potholes? How do they form?

34. There is no national definition of a 'pothole'. However, a pothole can be considered to be a depression or hollow in a road surface caused by wear or subsidence.
35. Defects generally start life as small cracks in the structure of the road, allowing the ingress of water. Over time water damages the binder material that holds the road together and the material fractures, allowing the aggregate to loosen. Freezing conditions accelerate this process. Drainage system maintenance is key to slowing down the process and preventative treatments such as surface dressing, which seals surfaces are a vital tool in preventing potholes from developing.



36. Much of the research on potholes, notably work done by the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) state that ‘prevention is better than a cure’ for potholes

<http://www.highwaysefficiency.org.uk/efficiency-resources/asset-management/the-potholes-review.html>

37. This places an importance on drainage and general maintenance functions such as vegetation clearance to reduce the circumstances that aid pothole formation. The knock-on benefit of this is that flooding instances that are not directly attributed to a watercourse reduce and road maintenance capacity is released, therefore enabling the delivery of higher quality repairs.
38. Herefordshire Council is currently reviewing the Highways Maintenance Plan to see how it can improve the quality of the repair works and better match the levels of service achieved to the maintenance hierarchy.

How are repairs classified and prioritised?

39. When a defect is found it is triaged by an authorised person into one of 5 categories based on risk:

Category 1a & 1b – Priority reactive works

Category 2a & 2b – Routine works

Category 2c – aim to cover in planned works

40. The categorisation is based on the code of practice and informed by the work done by Herefordshire with the Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG). This was created with input from all member authorities and ensures an appropriate consistency in the approach taken across the whole area covered by the MSIG membership.

- 41. Key to the pothole repair strategy is the identification and deployment of techniques that deliver a right first-time repair. This is so that the level of risk that highway users are exposed to is managed down.
- 42. The analysis shows that between 8-10% of the network has had a pothole identified in it in the last two years.

Repairs being carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired

“The public are bewildered by some potholes being left while others are filled on the same stretch of road”-.

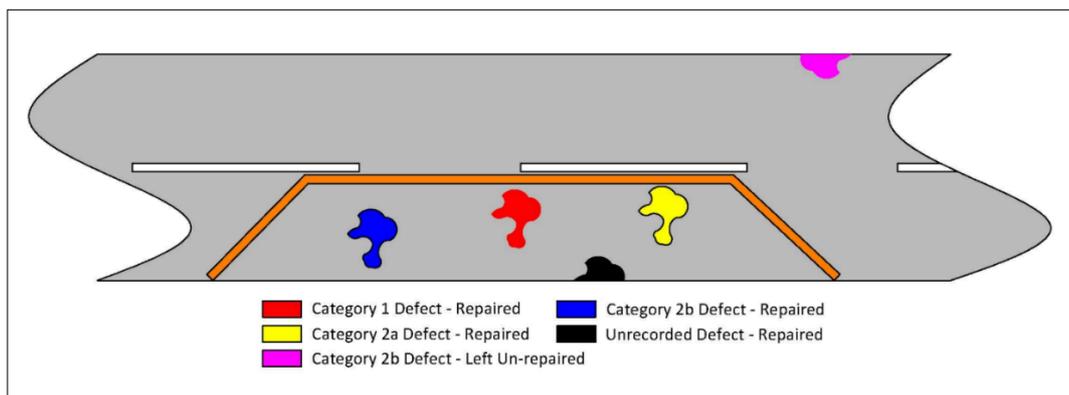
- 43. This is by far the most common issue raised in the responses from Town and Parish Councils.
- 44. A pothole repair of 1 square metre takes about 10 minutes to complete but clearly the time taken does depend on many factors such as the actual location of the pothole, the traffic management required, and weather conditions. Setting up traffic management safely can take 20 minutes. It should be noted that this repair time does not include travel time between potholes

<https://www.midsussextimes.co.uk/news/politics/video-how-long-does-it-take-to-fill-a-pothole-1-8409773>

- 45. The Asphalt Industry Alliance Alarm Survey identifies that the cost of filling a single pothole is £52 when part of a planned operation and £75 when undertaken as reactive works.

<http://www.asphaltuk.org/wp-content/uploads/alarm-survey-2018-key-findings-for-website.pdf>

- 46. By contrast planned maintenance such as surface dressing can cost as little as £2 per square metre (see <https://www.rsta-uk.org/news/>) and resurfacing c£15 to £20 per square metre, all depending on the treatment options.
- 47. The Group noted that the Highways Maintenance Plan sought a right first-time approach and fixing the place not just the reported incident. There were a range of considerations in “fixing the place”. It could be that drainage issues causing the holes needed to be fixed rather than it simply being a case of filling in holes.
- 48. In essence and in principle, in all cases BBLP have been instructed to, wherever achievable, address all carriageway defects within the extents of the traffic management in a single visit. Generally this results in the most efficient method of pothole repair in a time when a ‘find and fix’ method is not deliverable due to service demands.



49. This approach minimises the overall travel time between defects, it is ideal to reduce travel times by removing the necessity to revisit the site, although this must always be balanced against a network level view of demand.

50. However, the Group was advised that the ideal repair strategy for potholes at any given location has to be adjusted to ensure that the risk to the travelling public across the entire highway asset is managed.

51. If there is sufficient resource available to fill a stretch of potholes in one go this makes sense – but often in order to complete the repair of all high risk defects within timescale targets BBLP are not able to achieve the cluster repair objective in all instances. Teams have job orders to complete. They have some discretion. But if they stop to fill in something not on the list the risk was is they could then fail to complete the list and deal with some high risk category 1 defects in time.

52. In addition there were a number of scenarios in which the preferred approach cannot be followed.

(i) Inclement Weather

Bituminous materials are less effective in a repair during low temperatures - generally where the road surface is around freezing and in very wet conditions. In these situations it may be preferable to undertake a temporary repair on the high risk defect to manage the immediate risk to the travelling public effectively. This scenario assumes that the defects in the vicinity are still within the timescale for response set by the Highway Maintenance Plan and a more effective repair can be programmed within the available defect response window.

(ii) Out of Hours Response

Category 1 defects that are identified 'out of hours' and require rectification prior to normal working times will be treated in isolation to ensure that the risk to the travelling public is properly managed. Examples of where this is particularly likely is weekend and bank holiday periods.

53. These defects represent a very small proportion of the total defects raised and treated.

(iii) Defect Demand Pressure

During periods of very high demand, such as in the weeks following a severe weather event it might be the case that the service struggles to meet its requirements to make defects safe in time. In order to limit the exposure to risk, a more 'reactive' or 'firefighting' type of approach may be required.

In this situation temporary repairs allow additional defects to be cleared within the available defect response window. The safety of the travelling public is of paramount importance so leaving lower risk defects unrepaired enables the service to respond to all high risk defects and manage the overall risk.

(iv) Temporary Repairs

There are cases where a defect could be identified that requires repair more immediately because of the extreme risk posed by its physical size or location. In these cases a temporary repair using some cold lay tarmac or similar might be used in place of signage to make safe. When the locality steward deems this the best approach it is reasonable to focus efforts on the temporary repair, allowing the other gangs to reinstate properly and fill adjacent holes at a more opportune, and considered time.

(v) The Impact of the Performance Indicator

Inevitably, from a commercial stand point BBLP will prioritise their approach on meeting and exceeding performance indicator thresholds. BBLP have a performance indicator that relates to clearing defects within the determined time scales set out in the highway maintenance plan.

If BBLP are at risk of failing to meet timescale targets and be 'timed out' on a number of defects, these defects will, understandably, be prioritised over defects that may be in the vicinity but not yet picked up by inspection. This is because those defects, which have not entered the system yet, can have no bearing on the way that operational performance is measured.

The Council acknowledges that careful consideration needs to be given to the setting of performance indicators. Developing maintenance strategies and performance indicators that assist in reducing the instances where defects are treated in isolation is vital for driving down the demand on the pothole repair operation.

Conclusion

54. The conclusion is that there are scenarios where singular defects may sensibly be repaired and surrounding defects left. Preventing potholes from occurring in the first place is the most effective way to drive efficiency in this area of maintenance work.
55. The Group did understand how from a practical standpoint the approach to repairing clusters of potholes could be seen as reasonable. However, it considered that it was a question of judgment and that there was a balance to be struck. There did appear to be scope for greater flexibility and use of discretion by those tasked with carrying out the work on the ground, subject to appropriate managerial controls. The use of technology could also be explored further to enable a local situation to be balanced against the wider need to manage the network as a whole. The Group considered that BBLP should reinforce and emphasise a 'cluster-based' strategy to fixing potholes i.e. to fix all defects within an appropriate section of road, having regard to relevant traffic management considerations, at the same time, unless emergency work needs to be done elsewhere.
56. In addition it was suggested that there was scope to explore whether there was a point at which a complete replacement of a strip of highway containing a cluster of potholes would represent a more cost effective long term repair to the public satisfaction.

Rural Routes

57. The Group was informed that there was scope in determining the maintenance regime to explore the legal provision relating to the character and usage of a highway. On all routes it was important to ensure that the maintenance strategy was in keeping with the general character of the route. On very rural lanes, that character was not that of a metalled road and such lanes may serve their purpose very well even when in a 'very rough' state.
58. Historically, many roads in the county and across the country had been constructed hastily to a basic specification and were now being used to an extent and in a way that had never been envisaged or intended, carrying extremely large and heavy agricultural vehicles. It was suggested to the Group that consideration might usefully be given to considering whether, rather than having an objective that all roads should be in pristine condition, it should be accepted that on parts of the network roads would be potholed, and could only be driven on slowly in appropriate vehicles.

59. Criteria under consideration included traffic flow and type, route links (what is served by the route and does it link to another route), collision history, whether the route was used as a diversion route, for example in times of flood.
60. The Group acknowledged there may be some merit in this approach. It was recognised that it would allow the limited resources available to be focused on those parts of the network that matter most to the majority of highway users, and present the greatest risk to them on a day to day basis.
61. However, the Group emphasised that particular consideration needed to be given to the frequency, nature and need of use of routes it was proposed to include in this category. Some routes could be very important and indeed crucial in the local context. It was essential that if the matter were to be pursued the highway service should regularly consult with Parish Councils about the proposed Rural Routes Maintenance Hierarchy and involve them in any decisions about which roads to prioritise.

Threshold before shift to emergency repairs

62. The 2017/18 winter led to a peak in demand for pothole repairs. As a consequence of higher volumes, the service had to adapt its delivery to a more reactive approach, otherwise it would not have been able to respond to all high-risk defects in an appropriate time with available resources. In principle there are three approaches that might be taken when faced with an increase in pothole volumes: increase resources, this can be done, but, even if funded, resources cannot typically be scaled up instantly; relax response times, this will inevitably lead to highway users being exposed to risk for longer; undertake rapid 'make safe' repairs, following up with 'permanent' repairs in time.
63. In order to manage risk well and to avoid resources being moved away from operations such as resurfacing, which will ultimately improve the overall quality of the asset, it is most appropriate to revert to a pothole strategy that utilises rapid 'make safe' repairs in such circumstances. However, it is vital that such an approach is not allowed to perpetuate beyond the genuine peak in demand. This is because ultimately, right first-time fixes will ensure that the highway user is presented with least risk in the longer term.
64. Work had been carried out to identify the threshold above which rapid 'make safe' repairs would be deployed as the norm, and below which 'right first time' repairs will be deployed as the norm. It was suggested to the Group that analysis of data had arrived at a threshold of 3,000 defects.
65. The Group considers that it is worth exploring this idea. It recommends that the service should consult on and set a threshold for shifting resources to a more reactive approach when the number of defects reaches a certain point, involving undertaking rapid 'make safe' repairs, following up with 'permanent' repairs in time and making arrangements for this change in approach to be communicated so that the public are aware of this temporary change. Any such threshold should be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually and adjusted accordingly. It is essential to ensure that such an approach is indeed temporary.

Lengthsman scheme?

"The loss of funding from this scheme has, and will continue to have, a detrimental effect on the ongoing maintenance of these roads, and increase the pressure on Herefordshire Council to meet the inevitable additional works. The investment made through town and parish councils to oversee this work, and to deliver local maintenance through a local Lengthsman, ensures that local needs are met and reacted to speedily."

66. The lengthsman scheme allows parishes to undertake low risk maintenance works, for example to verges, ditches, village greens or C and U roads. The importance of proper road drainage to ensure water damage to road surfaces is minimised has been highlighted earlier in this report. A lengthsman can play a key role in effecting minor clearances or identifying and highlighting more significant and impending problems.
67. The scheme enables parishes to identify areas where works are required and address these directly, either through local contractors, volunteers, or community groups, encouraging the community to work together. It is recognised that where Herefordshire Council work to a risk based approach, this may not allocate the same level of priority to a job that the local community would, therefore the community are able to undertake such work sooner than the council would be able to do. Funding is generated from the parish precept, however community groups can come together to collaborate towards community maintenance on a voluntary basis, either identifying and reporting where council works are required, or carrying out low risk maintenance tasks themselves, within limited parameters defined by the council.
68. The fifth key component of the council's highways asset management strategy states: "Provide the support that enables routine maintenance work to be delivered locally so that defects on the road can be responded to locally when they are recognised as an issue by local people. This means that more defects can be fixed before they become a hazard to road users. Through our approach to locality working we will ensure that this local delivery complements our countywide programme of works."
69. The Group considered that the important contribution that the lengthsman can make should be recognised and parish councils encouraged to support lengthsman schemes. The council should review whether reinstating a financial contribution to the scheme would be prudent, for example via match funding.
70. It was observed that there was scope for parishes to work together rather than each seeking to employ its own lengthsman.
71. The Group also considered that it would be constructive if the council provided assistance to parish councils in how to manage their contracts with lengthsman to ensure value for money. and supplied opportunities for further training.
72. The Group did discuss Devon County Council's Road Warden Scheme that allows communities, under a formal agreement, to organise/carry out minor works either on or off the live carriageway. This includes pothole repairs (when they do not meet the council's intervention criteria).
- <https://new.devon.gov.uk/communities/opportunities/road-warden-scheme>
73. The Group considered that development of the lengthsman scheme would be a preferable course.

Recommendations: Approach to repairs (strategy, prioritisation)

- 1) The council should continue to take a risk-based approach to prioritising repairs as part of a proactive asset management strategy.**
- 2) The council should always aim to 'fix right first time' making a sound repair; when this is not possible, residents should be told why, and told when a permanent repair will be made.**

- 3) **BBLP should reinforce, emphasise and implement a ‘cluster-based’ strategy to fixing potholes i.e. to fix all defects within an appropriate length of road at the same time, unless essential emergency work needs to be done elsewhere.**
- 4) **The service should explore whether there was a point at which a complete replacement of a strip of highway containing a cluster of potholes would represent a more cost effective long term repair.**
- 5) **The service should consult with Parish Councils about the proposed Rural Routes Maintenance Hierarchy, and involve them in any decisions about which roads to prioritise.**
- 6) **The council should consult on and set a threshold for shifting resources to a more reactive approach when the number of defects reaches a certain point, involving undertaking rapid ‘make safe’ repairs, following up with ‘permanent’ repairs in time and making arrangements for this change in approach to be communicated so that the public are aware of this temporary change.**
- 7) **The important contribution that the lengthsman can make should be recognised and parish councils encouraged to support lengthsman schemes, exploring scope for co-operation between parishes in doing so, and the council should review whether reinstating a financial contribution to the scheme would be prudent, for example, via match funding.**
- 8) **The Council should provide assistance to parish councils in how to manage their contracts with lengthsman to ensure value for money and supply opportunities for further training.**

B: Audit/inspection of repair quality

“There is concern about the quality of workmanship in repairs to potholes carried out and if the repairs carried out will last. The same potholes seem to be re-occurring.”

“The poor standard of work experienced recently was fed back to BBLP, but there is no evidence that there was any quality assurance by them of the works carried out or any follow-up to the negative feedback provided.”

74. The Group was advised that the council’s expectation was that BBLP would itself check work. When the council received complaints these were followed up; the council audited a sample of work and undertook inspections.
75. The council did not have a hands-on day to day supervisory role. It had entered into a contract for a service and it was for the contractor to manage the service delivery. The council’s contract management resource had been strengthened.
76. BBLP don’t currently undertake self-audit of reactive maintenance, but they do undertake a gang meeting four times a month that addresses health and safety issues and equipment checks.
77. Daily briefings outline to the gangs the gang make up for the day, the area of work and the repair standards required.
78. Productivity is then measured and gang performance is discussed with the gangs.

79. The Group considers that the council should invest further in independent inspection of repair quality. It notes that the use of photographic, GPS and time based recording will all help to ensure the quality of cost effective repairs.
80. The Group considered a briefing note (23/11) on a review of pothole repair quality and a separate audit from April to June 2017.
81. The briefing note had been produced in response to a significant influx of complaints relating to the quality of pothole repairs. It reviewed the approach taken to repairs and examined the main causes of complaints and considered customer perception issues.
82. The briefing note observed that: a large number of the complaints seemed to be relating more to customer perception rather than specifically poor practices. There appeared to be a theme in the complaints and these were: defect repairs were not sealed; the use of a sealant was linked to quality; edge repairs fail quickly because they are not supported; - gangs repair some potholes in an area, but leave others. The recommendations included that BBLP Self Audit Procedures should be considered to assist with responding to complaints.
83. The briefing note also commented that it was important to remember that often the complaints are the worst (or perceived worst) of the defects repaired and represented a small percentage of the overall repairs completed
84. The second report the Group received concluded Category 1, Cat 2 and emergency repairs are being completed within the required timescales and the quality of repair works carried out is considered good. The service is economic and equitable, but requires improvement to the measurement of how effective or efficient it is.
85. Recommendations included that there should be a review of how current productivity levels can be improved and an agreed method for assessing and measuring value established.
86. The Group also received a briefing note from officers that amongst other things commented on the issue of repeat repairs.
87. This reported that on average 65% of defects were single visit occurrences within the two year period. Of the sections with a defect, 65% required one visit within a two year period and if that was up to up two visits in the same period 85% would be included. 15% of defective sections required more than 2 visits on average.
88. It was considered that it was the comparatively small proportion of defective sections of road that had required multiple visits (three or more) that was driving the wider perception that potholes are not being repaired right first time.
89. The Group was advised that consideration was being given to whether a different (probably more expensive) type of repair needed to be undertaken in certain locations and whether that would be more cost effective. The Group supported the view that the council should adopt a policy of making a different type of repair in certain locations where evidence shows a standard approach would not be effective in achieving the 'fix right first time approach' and adopt a performance measure of the effectiveness of this approach in reducing occasions where more than one visit is required to fix a defect.
90. The Group noted that on occasion, for sound reasons, a crew may intentionally carry out a temporary repair and then return to carry out a more substantial repair within a short

space of time. It was considered that public perception would be improved if BBLP marked temporary repairs, e.g. by spraying with a white T, and communicated to residents why the repair is only temporary, and when a permanent repair will be made.

91. The Group considered that in terms of reactive maintenance works in general perception would be improved by BBLP improving signage at worksites, including notification of: gang identification number; gang working hours; what the work is for; and a contact number in case of any problems with the site. It was recognised that care would be needed to ensure the signage was not a distraction to drivers.
92. These issues relate to both quality of repair and communication. Each work site is an opportunity to communicate with the public and inform them about improvements being made to local infrastructure.) The recommendations flowing from the above two paragraphs are therefore included with the recommendations on communications and customer service in the next section of this report.

Work undertaken by Utilities Companies (Statutory undertakers)

“When any work is carried out on the highway (eg by utilities) what check is carried out on the work and subsequent follow up to ensure there are no unnecessary costs to Herefordshire Residents?”

93. There is a perception that utilities companies do not restore roads properly after works.
94. There are nationally agreed specifications for reinstatements by statutory undertakers. If the reinstatements meet the national standard there is no further action that can be taken.
95. Companies have the right to give 3 months’ notice of major works and then undertake them.
96. There was an issue for the council in terms of resource needed/deployed to monitor works.
97. The Group considers that the recommended increase in inspection of repair quality should extend to making-good work done by utilities companies. Inspectors must insist on the quality of reinstatements by utility companies and appropriate action should be taken to ensure any substandard work is remedied.

Locality Stewards

“The Locality Stewards are an integral part of ensuring that issues and concerns are raised and dealt with. The direct communication between the parishes and the Locality Steward keeps things simple and easy. The continued investment in the Locality Stewards will help towards further development of the response to local issues.”

98. The Group noted the appreciation expressed by the Parish Councils for the locality stewards. It also recognised that parishes currently had a range of working arrangements with their locality stewards.
99. There are currently 13 locality stewards in the county The Group was mindful of the number of parish councils in the county (Herefordshire has 133 *parish councils*, five town

councils and one city council) . Proposals for increased regular engagement at Parish Council meetings even on an annual basis could place significant and overly onerous burden upon the locality stewards. However the Group did think that it would be reasonable for BBLP to ask locality stewards to attend PC evening meetings if an issue of particular concern has been raised.

100. The Group also considered that there would be benefit in regular liaison between the parish council and locality stewards and local ward member including inspection tours as appropriate and engagement with lengthsman. The Group also considered that relationships between parishes and locality stewards could be strengthened following the example of some parishes nominating a designated person, not necessarily a parish councillor, to scrutinise highways work in the parish. In addition parish council clerks should publish on their websites the locality steward's weekly list of repairs done in the area.

Recommendations: Audit/Inspection of Repair Quality

- 9) The council should invest further in independent inspection of repair quality, including inspection of 'making-good' work done by utilities companies.**
- 10) The Council should adopt a policy of making a different type of repair in certain locations where evidence shows a standard approach would not be effective in achieving the 'fix right first-time approach', and adopt a performance measure of the effectiveness of this approach in reducing occasions where more than one visit is required to fix a defect.**
- 11) Parish Councils should have a designated person to scrutinise highways work in the parish.**
- 12) BBLP should be asked to facilitate increased liaison between the locality stewards and parish councils including exploring arrangements for locality stewards to attend PC evening meetings if an issue of particular concern has been raised, inspection tours as appropriate and engagement with lengthsman.**
- 13) Parish Council clerks should publish on their websites the locality steward's weekly list of repairs done in the area.**

C: Communication and customer service

Speed of Repair

"The repair to potholes takes too long to be completed when reported. The white marker paint has usually worn off before the pothole gets filled."

101. When a defect is found it is triaged into one of 5 categories based on risk

Category 1a & 1b – Priority reactive works

Category 2a & 2b – Routine works

Category 2c – aim to cover in planned works

Priority	Deadline
1a	End of next day
1b	7 days
2a	28 days
2b	2 months
2c	Forward programme

102. It should be noted that all response times set a window within which action should be taken. As such the response time for category 1a means that a defect should be repaired by the end of the next working day. This does not preclude any defect from being repaired or made safe sooner and this can be done. This particularly if the defect is considered to be of critical importance to safety. The timescales set are designed to, wherever practicable, to enable works to be efficiently delivered through a planned approach. Through adopting the timescales set out above the overall risk to the travelling public from defects across the highway network will be reduced, this by comparison with a system of work that attempt to react to all defects in a short period of time. Such reactive systems of work tend to lead to higher numbers of temporary repairs and lower quality solutions being delivered.

Working Practices

103. The repair of individual potholes or clusters is classed as reactive maintenance.

104. The process is:

- Incident reported
- Locality steward inspects to risk assess
- Photographs of defect sent in (showing defect itself and longer shot to show location) and logged
- Job scheduled

- Photo sent in of completed repair

105. There are four gangs (5 Men each) assigned to this task (2 gangs at Kingsland depot 2 at Hereford). The gangs are assigned to different parts of the County but resources are used flexibly and directed to need.

106. The gangs are issued with a daily schedule of works. If an emergency arises they can be diverted to deal with that.

107. The working day is 7 am – 4pm adjusted during winter hours – to allow work to be carried out in daylight

108. In contrast to the high-tech approach to asset maintenance this task remains a low tech task. The Gang sets up road management, digs out the pothole, puts in hot asphalt, compacts it, seals it and moves on to the next.

109. Spray injection patching can be used in the spring/summer on the rural roads in the county that carry lower volumes of traffic and this is to be increased.
110. Views are sometimes expressed that there were too many operatives “standing about doing nothing” and also suggestions that when a gang arrives “the first thing they did was have a drink and eat.”
111. In terms of supervision the starting point must be that most people want to do a good job and take satisfaction in their work. Equally no one works to full capacity all the time. It is important to note that repairs carried out are logged. There is live data on performance and tracking devices on vehicles.
112. It should be borne in mind that for health and safety reasons there is a need for some operatives to be deployed to observe what is going on and direct vehicle movement on or around site. In addition there are limitations on the amount of time that operatives can operate certain equipment for health and safety reasons to avoid industrial injury triggered by continuous use of vibrating hand-held machinery.
113. In terms of perception, it was noted that some reports from the public were received stating a pothole had not been fixed when the report from the gang said that it had been. As mentioned above photographs of completed repairs are sent to BBLP and logged. The view was that it was sometimes possible that the gang had repaired a pothole but not the one to which the report/complaint had related. It was in no one’s interest to misrepresent the truth. Mistakes do happen and miscommunication is the commonest reason for this.
114. The Group undertook a visit to observe reactive maintenance repairs being undertaken. The health and safety briefing and the personal protective equipment it was necessary to wear to go on site (hard hat, ear plugs, safety glasses, reflective jacket, reflective trousers, gloves and steel capped boots) reinforced the fact that undertaking works on the highway is a serious business to which safety risks are attached. It is a hard physical task.
115. The Group would caution against unauthorised individuals seeking to undertake works to the highway themselves, mindful of the health and safety risks.
116. The Group was also informed that there had been incidents of control measures around sites being ignored by impatient motorists and staff being abused. It is completely unacceptable for the workforce to be treated in this way and their safety and wellbeing jeopardised.
117. The Group did discuss whether the resource available for reactive repair work was sufficient. It acknowledges once again the balance that has to be struck, the importance of the proactive asset management strategy, the higher cost of reactive work compared with planned maintenance and the proposed introduction of a threshold for shifting resources to a more reactive approach when the number of defects reaches a certain point,

Material left over at the end of the working day

“It appears that in the afternoon when the time arrives for the gangs to return to base in Hereford, surplus tarmac is just used up filling farm gateways rather than spending the extra hour and using up the tarmac on potholes.”

118. There have been a small number of complaints relating to gangs wasting material. It is likely that the frustration that the public see is potholes remaining unfilled in areas where the gang is deployed, and then a small patch of bituminous material laid in a gateway or off the carriageway somewhere.
119. The Group was advised that this is not a widespread issue, and BBLP have confirmed that the gangs are encouraged to take material back for reuse. However, in some situations the material is no longer suitable because it ages prior to laying.
120. Whilst seeking to minimise waste of materials, any work has to be undertaken to a satisfactory standard or that in itself can lead to a poor perception of work undertaken.

Communication

121. The Group had some criticism of the reporting map on the Herefordshire Website. There was also a view that whilst the new Mobile Reporting App is a bit 'clunky', it is a good mechanism for reporting on the go rather than having to wait until getting home. Some comment was received that the online reporting system works well, though the agreed response time is far too long – leading to the situation of some potholes on a stretch of road being repaired while others are left until near the end of the response time
122. There was also comment that the 24 hour assistance line for the most severe pot holes was positive and had resulted in an improved service delivery. However, the Group expressed dissatisfaction with the current system in place for those reporting potholes by telephone. There is long preamble before being put through to BBLP. There would be benefit in pruning the preamble and making the system much more user friendly.
123. The Group's overall view was that the current system did not provide effective communication with residents. There should be better feedback for residents enabling them to understand when a repair might be made and when it had been carried out. This would be in keeping with other customer satisfaction measures across the council.
124. The Group considered that BBLP should improve the reporting system so that when a resident reports a road defect they are told through an automated system when it has been inspected, what priority it has been given, and the deadline for repair.

Consultation on works

125. The Group discussed instances known to them from their wards where proactive consultation with the community would have been of benefit before works by BBLP were commenced.
126. The Group was reminded again of the mix of programmed maintenance and reactive works – again highlighting the complexity of managing the whole of the network given the scale of activity – making it difficult to accommodate everyone's wishes. Under the current approach account was taken of local intelligence on local events. A notice was posted of planned closures. It was accepted that this was not an especially effective means of communication.
127. The Group acknowledged there was a balance to be struck between the requirement to plan maintenance and responsiveness to community requests. However, they considered that there was room for improvement in the current processes. In particular

there was scope for proactive communication and improved tailored notification to Parish Councillors and Ward Councillors.

Pothole prevention

“More preventative work should be undertaken ie ditch and culvert clearance so that problems aren’t created through lack of routine maintenance.”

128. The influence of surface water is by far the largest factor in pothole formation that can be addressed. There are significant portions of the network that would benefit from an improvement in drainage maintenance. The Group was advised that it is important that the drainage maintenance is linked to the maintenance of carriageways in accordance with the intentions laid out in the lifecycle plans for drainage and carriageways.
129. Understanding how the functions of managing the highway network work together is important for reducing the instances of pothole formation and extending service life of both repairs and replacement surfaces.
130. The Group noted that the local flood risk management plan recognises this issue. However, it wishes to reinforce the points that better communication is required with land owners on their responsibilities for maintaining effective drainage and where necessary further action is taken to ensure landowner compliance. Ditches need to be more regularly maintained. ditching works need to be better prioritised, and an inventory of gullies should be progressed. Greater investment in keeping drains and gullies clear and grips open will reduce damage to the highways. This has already been referenced in the earlier section on the lengthsman scheme.

Public Information

131. The aim of this review was to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs.
132. The Group notes that some authorities publish frequently asked questions sheets on the approach to pothole repairs on their website. It considers that it would be helpful if such a document could be produced for Herefordshire.

Recommendations: Communications and customer service

- 14) BBLP should improve signage at worksites, including notification of: gang identification number; gang working hours; what the work is for; and a contact number in case of any problems with the site.**
- 15) BBLP should mark temporary repairs in a simple fashion e.g. by spraying with a white T, and should communicate to residents why the repair is only temporary, and when a permanent repair will be made.**
- 16) BBLP should consult with Parish Councils on the timing of planned works, especially any that will involve significant disruption.**
- 17) BBLP should improve the reporting system so that when a resident reports a road defect they are told through an automated system when it has been inspected, what priority it has been given, and the deadline for repair.**
- 18) BBLP should improve the system for those reporting potholes by telephone to make it much more user friendly.**

19) The council should improve communication with landowners regarding their responsibility on drainage; including the need for ditches to be more regularly and effectively maintained.

20) The council should develop a brief frequently asked question sheet on the approach to pothole repairs for publication on the website.

D: Strategic issues

133. Without appropriate funding, both revenue and capital, and careful management of that funding the roads will inevitably deteriorate. The section on funding earlier in this report commented that capital investment and receipt of capital grants is welcome but it is essential that this is supported by ongoing revenue funding. Certainty of funding over a set period is also important to support forward planning.

134. In recent years Government has announced one-off funding allocations at short notice. In 2018 funding it was announced in the budget at the end of October 2018 that the Council's had been granted an additional £5.1m for highway maintenance to be spent before the end of the financial year. This puts pressure on the ability of the supply chain to deliver across the country. The Group noted that the council intended to roll forward c£2m of council capital to deploy as part of planned expenditure in accordance with the asset management plan.

135. The Group considered that invest to save opportunities and prudential borrowing should continue to be explored and there should be lobbying for more consistent central government funding.

Innovation/ New Technology

136. The Group noted that one of the audit reports did observe that, "BBLP's repair options are currently limited and would benefit from reviewing previously used methods and exploring new options, to establish if/what improvement could be achieved".

137. The Group was advised that there is a continuous appraisal of new introductions to the sector that can deliver repairs more efficiently. Herefordshire has, for some time, utilised innovative repair techniques, such as Velocity Patcher/ Jetpatcher, and a Jetpatcher is being purchased (this will be demountable, so the chassis can be utilised during winter months as a gritter). This will allow for spray injection patching to be routinely delivered on the rural roads in the county that carry lower volumes of traffic which has the advantage of not only filling the pothole, but also sealing the cracks adjacent. Whilst this repair isn't appropriate for use on faster, more heavily trafficked routes due to the properties of the repair, it should help to manage the demand placed on the current resource and drive a higher quality and volume of repair.

138. The Group considers BBLP should continuously appraise new introductions to the sector that can deliver repairs more efficiently.

Climate Change

139. Climate change can have a direct impact on the performance of the transportation infrastructure both in terms of adaptation (i.e. taking measures to reduce risks relating to increased frequency and severity of extreme weather, such as ensuring bridges are flood-proof, and ensuring road surface materials do not melt in heatwaves) and mitigation (i.e. taking measures to reduce the climate impact of highways operations, such as reducing fuel use, and increasing materials efficiency).

140. It was suggested that while advised that some account is being taken of this issue there was more scope to consider both adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. The Group considers that the Council highways strategy should explicitly consider climate change,

Safety

141. In the section on working practices this report refers to the Group's site visit to observe reactive maintenance repairs being undertaken. The health and safety briefing and the personal protective equipment it was necessary to wear to go on site reinforced the fact that undertaking works on the highway is a serious business to which safety risks are attached.

142. The Group reiterates its concern about incidents of control measures around sites being ignored by impatient motorists and staff being abused. It again emphasises that it is completely unacceptable for the workforce to be treated in this way and their safety and wellbeing jeopardised

Recommendations: Strategic Issues

- 21) Funding: the Council should a) pursue all available 'invest to save' opportunities, b) consider prudential borrowing for such investments, and c) lobby for much more consistent and less ad hoc central government funding for highways.**
 - 22) Innovation: BBLP should be encouraged to continuously appraise new techniques, processes and materials that can deliver repairs more efficiently.**
 - 23) The council highways strategy should continue to consider climate change,**
 - 24) BBLP should continue to give safety a high priority, both in terms of a) worker and public safety during repair operations, including worker health and safety, and b) continuing risk-based approach to prioritising works.**
-

Scrutiny Review of Highways Maintenance – Pothole Repairs – March 2019

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scoping statement for the review

Appendix 2 – Legal Background

Appendix 3 - Information on distinction between Revenue and Capital Expenditure

Appendix 4 – Responses received from Parish and Town Councils

Appendix 5 - Detail on the overall condition of the carriageway asset showing proportion rated green amber and red.

Herefordshire Council

General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Title of review	Highways maintenance – pothole repairs
Scope	
Reason for enquiry	To consider the highway maintenance plan and seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs.
Links to the corporate plan	<p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire corporate plan and other key plans and strategies:</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2016-2020</p> <p>Priority: Supporting the growth of our economy.</p> <p>Measure: Overall satisfaction with the condition of highways.</p> <p>Support economic growth and connectivity (including broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development)</p> <p>Corporate Delivery Plan 2017/18</p> <p>Priority: Support the Growth of the Economy</p> <p>Support economic growth and connectivity (including broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development)</p> <p>Deliver the LTP Programme, providing an enhanced, accessible, safe and integrated transport network supporting economic growth</p>

	<p>Measure: Condition of Principal; Non-Principal Roads (B/C roads); and Unclassified Roads</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="491 293 1066 992"> <thead> <tr> <th>Road Class</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A Road Red</td> <td>9%</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A Road Amber</td> <td>36%</td> <td>38%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B Road Red</td> <td>8%</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B Road Amber</td> <td>34%</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C Road Red</td> <td>11%</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C Road Amber</td> <td>36%</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>U Road Red</td> <td>32%</td> <td>26%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Priority: Secure better services, quality of life and value for money</p> <p>2 Ensure our essential assets, including schools, other buildings, roads and ICT, are in the right condition for the long- term, cost-effective delivery of services</p>	Road Class	2013	2017	A Road Red	9%	6%	A Road Amber	36%	38%	B Road Red	8%	7%	B Road Amber	34%	33%	C Road Red	11%	8%	C Road Amber	36%	36%	U Road Red	32%	26%
Road Class	2013	2017																							
A Road Red	9%	6%																							
A Road Amber	36%	38%																							
B Road Red	8%	7%																							
B Road Amber	34%	33%																							
C Road Red	11%	8%																							
C Road Amber	36%	36%																							
U Road Red	32%	26%																							
<p>Summary of the review and terms of reference</p>	<p>Summary: To consider the highway maintenance plan and seek to address concerns expressed within the community about the potential mismatch between policy and practice on pothole repairs.</p> <p>Terms of Reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the strategy in context including the approach to maintaining the highway asset, the level of maintenance and repair that the plan caters for, and budget constraints. To review a sample of the work undertaken – seeing examples of repairs (in the context of the plan) and, To understand the rationale for prioritisation of repairs and the nature of repairs and consistency of approach. 																								
<p>What will NOT be included</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other aspects of the BBPLP public realm contract 																								
<p>Potential outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm that the highway maintenance plan is fit for purpose or identify improvements. To establish whether the highway maintenance plan is operating as efficiently as resources allow and serves the needs of the whole county. 																								

Key Questions	To consider: What is the current policy? How effective is it? What improvements can be recommended?
Cabinet Member	Councillor Durkin – Transport Roads and Regulatory Services
Key stakeholders / Consultees	Balfour Beatty – living places Herefordshire Council Councillors Town and Parish Councils Director Environment and Place/Head of Highways and Community Services External Highways Maintenance Expert
Potential witnesses	Director for Economy and Place BBLP
Research Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Policy • Council Policy (The LTP Policy documents and the first section of that document on Asset management. the Highway Maintenance Plan and the code of practice ‘Well managed Highway Infrastructure’. <p>https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/220/local_transport_plan/1</p> <p>https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/707/highways/2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance information • Comparative Information • Customer satisfaction data (including information on level of insurance claims) • Best practice locally, regionally and nationally
Potential Visits	To see good example of repairs (in the context of the plan) and inferior examples.
Publicity Requirements	No advance publicity/wider public information gathering is proposed. Together with the communication team, a plan should be put in place to ensure awareness of meeting at which final report is to be discussed and that findings are disseminated clearly.

Outline Timetable (following decision by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to commission the Review)	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	By 17 October 2018
Collect current data available for circulation to Group for first meeting of the Group	
Analysis of data/Interviews/survey of Parish Councils	
Carry out stakeholder meetings (Spotlight meeting)	n/a
Final analysis of data and stakeholder evidence	n/a
Prepare options/recommendations	?
Present final report to General Overview & Scrutiny Committee	January 2019
Prepare cabinet report	2019
Present options/recommendation to Cabinet	2019
Cabinet response/decision	?
Monitoring of implementation of agreed recommendations	?

Group Members	Cllrs Baker, Bowen, (Chair) Chowns, Jinman and Williams
Support Officers	J Coleman T Brown

Legal Background

1. The legal foundation for this area of work is in legislation found in The Highways Act 1980. The two sections of this Act which are most relevant when considering the approach to highway defects, they are Section 41 and Section 58 (both are reproduced below):

Section 41 – Duty to Maintain Highways Maintainable at Public Expense

1. *The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty, subject to subsections (2) and (4) below, to maintain the highway. [F1(1A)In particular, a highway authority are under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.]*
2. *An order made by the Minister under section 10 above directing that a highway proposed to be constructed by him shall become a trunk road may, as regards:*
 - a) *a highway to which this subsection applies which becomes a trunk road by virtue of the order, or*
 - b) *a part of a highway to which this subsection applies, being a part which crosses the route of the highway to be so constructed, contain such a direction as is specified in subsection (4) below.*
3. *Subsection (2) above applies to:*
 - a) *any highway maintainable at the public expense by a local highway authority, and*
 - b) *any highway other than a highway falling within paragraph (a) above or a highway maintainable under a special enactment or by reason of tenure, enclosure or prescription.*
4. *The direction referred to in subsection (2) above is:*
 - a) *a highway to which this subsection applies which becomes a trunk road by virtue of the order, or*
 - b) *in a case where the highway or part of a highway falls within subsection (3)(a) above, a highway authority for that highway until such date, not being later than the date on which the new route is opened for the purposes of through traffic, as may be specified in a notice given by the Minister to that authority; and*
5. *In a case where the highway or part of a highway falls within subsection (3)(b) above,*

a direction that, notwithstanding subsection (1) above, the Minister is to be under no duty to maintain it until such date as aforesaid.

Where an order under section 10 above contains a direction made in pursuance of subsections (2) to (4) above, then, until the date specified in the notice given by the Minister pursuant to the direction, in accordance with subsection (4) above, the powers of a highway authority under sections 97, 98, 270 and 301 below as respects the highway to which the direction relates are exercisable by the highway authority to whom the notice is required to be given, as well as by the Minister.

Section 58 – Special Defence in Action Against a Highway Authority for Damages for Non-repair of Highway

- 1. In an action against a highway authority in respect of damage resulting from their failure to maintain a highway maintainable at the public expense it is a defence (without prejudice to any other defence or the application of the law relating to contributory negligence) to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic.*
- 2. For the purposes of a defence under subsection (1) above, the court shall in particular have regard to the following matters:*
 - a) the character of the highway, and the traffic which was reasonably to be expected to use it;*
 - b) the standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic;*
 - c) the state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway;*
 - d) whether the highway authority knew, or could reasonably have been expected to know, that the condition of the part of the highway to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway;*
 - e) where the highway authority could not reasonably have been expected to repair that part of the highway before the cause of action arose, what warning notices of its condition had been displayed; but for the purposes of such a defence it is not relevant to prove that the highway authority had arranged for a competent person to carry out or supervise the maintenance of the part of the highway to which the action relates unless it is also proved that the authority had given him proper instructions with regard to the maintenance of the highway and that he had carried out the instructions.*

3. *This section binds the Crown.*
4. Section 41 places an absolute duty on highways authorities and so gives no scope for interpretation in terms of approach.
5. Section 58 is the special defence and is important when developing an approach to response times because it introduces the concept that it is a defence "*to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic*".
6. This piece of legislation is key in terms of justifying any kind of defence but will also be the foundation of changes to response times because the authority will have to prove that the systems it have put in place are considered as having *taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic*. Sections 58 (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) can be used to support approaches such as response times based on hierarchy or possibly differing intervention levels based on hierarchy.

Information on distinction between Revenue and Capital Expenditure

1. Funding for the maintenance of the highway asset comes in two forms revenue and capital. Revenue funds are typically those generated by the council itself through council tax, (and whilst it is set to diminish) central government grant and other income generating activities. Capital funds are typically provided to the council through central government grants for roads or via council borrowing.
2. In terms of accounting requirements councils are free to invest its revenue funding in any form of works on or to the highway asset. However, there are two criteria that have to be met for highways expenditure to be met from capital budgets. Those criteria are:
 - It is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the authority; and
 - The cost of the item can be measured reliably.
3. In order to capitalise any works to the highway asset the council must evidence that those works provide enhancement in a way that it is probable that future economic benefits or service potential associated with the expenditure will flow. Expenditure that extends the useful life or increases the level of performance of an asset (or increases the fair value of the asset in some other way) would be capital
4. Works that simply maintain asset value and/or life are typically initiated as a reaction to a failure that results in a significant loss of functionality or has rendered that component of the asset (locally) unsafe. Where the council is driven to simply correct the failure on safety grounds its intervention cannot be funded from capital as, by definition, the assets value or life has simply been restored to its rightful place on its deterioration curve.
5. Currently the capital maintenance grants from central government are composed of three components, they are:
 - The Formula Grant Allocation;
 - The Incentive Fund;
 - The Challenge Fund.
6. Other funding opportunities may also exist in addition to those set out above. In particular the council has taken a lead in developing its approach to locality working in a way that can enable Town and Parish Councils to invest in the management of the highway asset locally. This through a well-established lengthsman scheme and also a community commissioning model.
7. The ability to deliver a good return on the investment made in local roads will be enhanced by two things that are sadly lacking in the current funding environment:
 - First, the visibility (and security) of the intended investment curve. Asset managers plan on the basis of the asset lifecycle and uncertainty over levels of forward investment curtail the ability to take investment decisions that will reduce whole life cost to a minimum;

- Secondly, overall the scale of funding must be sufficient to effect a substantial change in the quality of the asset. If not then it is inevitable that the demand for reactive maintenance will increase further. This will not only put further unsustainable pressure on local authorities and the revenue funds they generate locally, but to deliver such repair costs approximately four to five times that of planned (capital) maintenance and for no (at best) improvement in the overall quality of the asset, in terms of its anticipated deterioration and life.

Responses received from Parish and Town Councils

All Parish and Town Councils were invited to comment on the matters identified within the scope of this review. The full responses are attached.

Views were also sought on other aspects of the Public Realm contract with BBLP to inform future scrutiny work as appropriate. Whilst this does not form part of this review it is included in the appendix for completeness.

The principal areas of concern were: repairs being carried out to some potholes in a cluster leaving others nearby unrepaired; quality of repairs and auditing of Repairs including those carried out by statutory undertakers; speed of repair; value for money; working practices (numbers of employees/use of surplus materials); and pothole prevention.

Responses received from Parish and Town Councils – Autumn 2018

Acton Beauchamp	<p>The Parish Council would like to high light certain areas that need particular attention but request that a survey is carried out in each parish; Acton Beauchamp, Evesbatch and Stanford Bishop as there is alot of work needed.</p> <p>In particular can you please look at the lane from Stanford Bishop Church to Lower House (on the brow of the bank) where there is a particularly dangerous area - the road has subsided. Also Hooks Lane going down to Evesbatch has been partly re-surfaced but needs to complete the rest of the lane which is full of potholes and very poor.</p> <p>With regard to the work of Balfour Beatty, can you please survey the three parishes again with regard to salt bins. Many have been damaged beyond repair and we would like to request their replacement a.s.a.p. as the winter is approaching.</p>
Ashperton	<p>It was felt that verge cutting is done too fast and sometimes looked “chewed” rather than cut, also the rubbish exposed after cutting needs to be cleared. It questions whether verge cutting is inspected at all. Pothole repairs – it was felt that by only repairing large potholes and not nearby smaller ones at the same time was not cost effective as they would be returning to the same area within weeks. If Herefordshire Council did one stretch at a time it was felt that they would receive greater public support and understanding.</p>
Bartestree and lugwardine	<p>The white marker paint has usually worn off before the pot hole gets filled.</p> <p>Some large potholes take ages to be filled.</p> <p>The quality of the filling could be vastly improved.</p>
Belmont Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair to potholes takes too long to be completed when reported. • Repairs being done ignores neighbouring potholes. • The current procedures do not represent value for money
Border Group	<p>This was discussed at our Sept meeting and Cllrs were very pleased with the level of work carried out on pothole /carriageway repairs over the last year. There has been a noticeable improvement across our Parish giving rise to positive comments from residents. It was felt imperative that PC’s are notified before work is done so they can have input e.g recent white lining in Adforton when by chance we were able to get the whites lines re-instated on the side of the road following resurfacing. The issue of duplication of work by the Lengthsman and Balfour Beatty was also raised e.g. clearing a ditch – we ask Lengthsman to do it then BB come along a few days later so perhaps better communication?</p>

	No comments on other PR services
Brampton Abbots and Foy Parish Council	<p>1. Speed of pothole repair: The Parish Council are concerned about the time taken to survey and carry out repairs to potholes on roads in the Parish.</p> <p>2. Workmanship of repairs carried out: The parish council are concerned about the quality of workmanship in repairs to potholes carried out and if the repairs carried out will last. The same pot holes seem to be re-occurring</p> <p>3. The parish council would like to have a better understanding of the contractual obligations of Balfour Beatty under the Councils highways maintenance contract. Do Balfour Beatty have a time frame to carry out identified repairs and how long should these repairs last. We believe there could be a mismatch between policy and practise.</p>
Breinton	<p>Councillors consider that the Locality Steward scheme introduced by Balfour Beatty works extremely well for our parish, as we have a very active and experienced steward in Mike Gill.</p> <p>The overriding concern with the potholes and general condition of the roads and lanes around Breinton parish and Herefordshire in general is that the delays in repairing roads lead to damage to vehicles, and especially cyclists, as well as injuries to pedestrians - even more so with the shorter daylight hours of autumn and winter.</p> <p>There was an incident in Breinton a couple of years ago, when a cyclist was thrown off his bike on hitting a pothole. The bike was irreparably damaged and the cyclist suffered a broken shoulder. He was lucky not to have come of any worse.</p> <p>The push is for sustainable transport, which obviously includes cycling, but the state of the roads is obviously putting people off from cycling.</p> <p>Please ensure that your teams take a more proactive approach to road repairs. For example if they repair a pothole, and there is another close by, surely it is much more efficient to repair the 2nd one at the same time, rather than attending to it on another occasion.</p>
Brilley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no money to be spent in Powys as recent event, know where the boundaries are, be responsible for correct maintenance; • look at complete stretch of road, record with photos any work done not previously identified by Locality Steward; • reduce waste of few potholes filled in many places and others left unfilled for another visit.
Bromyard and Winslow	<p>Apart from the obvious concern that there are potholes and serious road surface damage that is not considered to be a pothole, Members' main gripe is with the Reporting Map on the Herefordshire Website.</p>

	<p>Previously the map showed the location of a reported pothole and if you hovered over the pin it would give you information about when it was reported, when it was expected to be repaired, or indeed whether it had been repaired. Now, all you get when you hover over a pin is "Existing Incident". This lack of information is considered to be a backward step; there is no way of knowing whether the incident you are reporting is the same one and causes uncertainty for the person reporting.</p> <p>Members felt that whilst the new Mobile Reporting App is a bit 'clunky', it is a good mechanism for reporting on the go rather than having to wait until you get home. However, one member reported that the pothole he had reported several days ago is not showing on the Pothole Map.</p> <p>Finally, some of the pothole repairs are so precise, that they cut through road surface damage not considered a pothole, and repair just the edge which is part of the pothole. Surely this is a false economy.</p>
Dorstone	<p><input type="checkbox"/> What works well Within Golden Valley North there is a very proactive Locality Steward, he has identified issues & sought hard to resolve them, in particular drainage. Reporting system is improved & the standard of pothole repair improved recently</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What areas for improvement you consider there are. Council understand that surface water, which subsequently freezes, is one of the main contributing factors creating potholes, better communication is required to land owners on responsibilities on drainage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any questions you would like the Committee to explore. What independent checks are carried out on the effectiveness of the work undertaken</p> <p style="text-align: center;">B. PUBLIC REALM SERVICES</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What works well</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What areas for improvement you consider there are. Lengthsman scheme, as one of the parishes retaining a lengthsman through parish funding he is not allowed to work on the B roads. Utility companies employ staff to carry out their work on B roads, what qualifications do they hold? Could specified work carried out by the lengthsman (cleaning grips etc) be covered under insurance of the council/Balfour Beatty provided suitable training had been undertaken?</p>

	<p>□ Any questions you would like the Committee to explore. Council understand roads have a life of 30 years; What checks are independently carried out when roads are resurfaced? What guarantee is given on the work carried out? What checks are independently carried out on the effectiveness of material used & possible claim for any subsequent defects? When any work is carried out on the highway, (utility company, developer, householder) what check is carried out on the work & subsequent follow up to ensure there are no unnecessary costs to Herefordshire residents ?</p>
Eardisland	<p>Eardisland Parish Council would like the Committee to consider a better use of resources by Balfour Beatty in the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair of a complete stretch of road, not leaving some potholes but using photos to record extra potholes filled but not previously identified by Locality Steward. The public are bewildered by some potholes being left while others are filled on the same stretch of road – this is very bad publicity for Herefordshire and Balfour Beatty • Connection between the repair of potholes and utility company works is not being followed up – is Balfour Beatty repairing potholes in utility works because the utility company works have not been inspected correctly to ensure suitable making good has been undertaken? • The Locality Steward system works well with the parish, our Steward does regular driverounds with councillors, contractors and the Clerk to identify suitable work for contractors using parish funding and/or defects/work that should be undertaken by Balfour Beatty • The online reporting system works well, though the agreed response time is far too long – leading to the situation of some potholes on a stretch of road being repaired while others are left until near the end of the response time – see the first point • The Senior Accident Investigator was very helpful to the parish • The pothole fixing is now of better quality.
Eardisley	<p>Eardisley Group Parish Council wishes to make the following feedback in relation to the Pothole Repairs scrutiny. The response is shaped around the objectives in the public realm contract for service provision stated on the Herefordshire Council web site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our roads, public open spaces and streets are accessible, safe, clean and well-maintained: The fact that so many pot holes remain on very many roads of all categories throughout the county infers this objective is not being met. Funding constraints aside, EGPC believes more could be done, better. Whilst it is appreciated that some positive, focused effort during the previous year was targeted at accelerating pothole repairs (i.e. the Velocity Patcher programme), the high number of potholes remaining on Herefordshire roads is evident to all road users on a daily basis. The condition of many roads throughout the country resemble those in what were historically believed to be ‘poorer’ countries, with patches and potholes making driving conditions hazardous either from

	<p>driving over them or the consequences of motorists trying to avoid them.</p> <p>Based on recent pot holes that have been filled in its own Parish, EGPC's view is that:</p> <p>a) The quality of work is very questionable; pot holes appear to have been 'patched' rather than properly repaired.</p> <p>b) Poor quality materials have been used to perform repairs that certainly do not look as if they will last.</p> <p>c) It appears sealing of pot hole repairs is not being done properly, meaning water will be able to penetrate the patches and erode the hole again within a short space of time. Observations have also been made that holes were filled with water already in them and that other agencies, in particular Welsh Water, appear to be doing work to a higher standard when they are responsible for a repair.</p> <p>d) Lack of QA by the commissioner agency, i.e. BBLP on behalf of HC. The poor standard of work experienced recently in Eardisley Parish (much of which was presumably undertaken by sub-contractors) was fed back to BBLP, but there is no evidence that there was any QA by them of the works carried out or any follow-up to the negative feedback provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the delivery of essential services The condition of roads in Herefordshire generally and with specific regard to pot holes does not assist in the delivery of services to road users. In particular, damage to vehicles caused by driving over pot holes must be significant. It would be interesting to submit a Freedom of Information request for statistics on the number of claims submitted to HC and any monies paid out in respect of punctures and other damage potentially linked to this issue, which could otherwise be diverted to the repair programme. • Achieving value for money, facilitated by process improvement and transparency through open book accounting EGPC questions the achievement of value for money and the policy deployed in respect of pot hole repairs. It is recognised the facility for on-line reporting and a 24 hour assistance line for the most severe pot holes is positive and has resulted in an improvement service delivery. However, the policy of contractors being deployed to repair only one or two pot holes in a cluster because others are not deemed 'deep enough' is not considered an economical or strategic way of tackling the issue. From an efficiency perspective, a works repair programme conducted on this basis is ad hoc and fragmented in nature and, as such, cannot make the best use of resources, fuel and materials. At the same time, a negative public perception results. Better co-ordination of areas being repaired would surely result in better value for money, particularly when sub-contractors may be travelling a considerable distance from out of county to undertake the work. <p>In terms of transparency on costs, it is proving extremely difficult to obtain information on the cost of recent repairs to a crash barrier</p>
--	--

	<p>near Whitney Toll Bridge. EGPC is advised the costs (which included a specialist environmental survey due to proximity to the River Wye and an extended period of time when traffic control with traffic lights was in place) are the subject of an insurance claim. However, there is no confirmation about whether all costs will be met from the claim or how much money is involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving service delivery which is efficient and responsive to local needs and priorities Despite the perception of some improvement on the issue reporting tools and action taken on so-called Priority 1 pothole maintenance, it is still considered by EGPC as a recipient of the service that time from reporting to action is too long; this especially applies to potholes that are not considered Priority 1 at the time of reporting, but which deteriorate further in the interim. Use of the current categorisation criteria also appears to ignore the objective of being responsive to local needs and priorities. For example, a cluster of pot holes outside a row of bungalows in Whitney on Wye was drawn to the attention of BBLP during a recent drive round with the locality steward. As per the grading based on depth, only one of the potholes was marked for attention and was subsequently repaired (although to a poor standard!). This appears not to take into account the fact that residents of these properties are mostly elderly and the multiple remaining pot holes pose a threat to their safety when entering and exiting their properties. • Contributing to the regeneration of the economy and social capital in Herefordshire Poor road infrastructure in general, not complimented by roads plagued by pot holes, does not assist in achievement of this objective. To a large extent, it is recognised this is dependent on government funding and constraints are placed on local agencies in this regard.
Eastnor and Donnington	As Ashperton.
Eaton Bishop	<p>In Eaton Bishop Parish we have in past been very critical of the BBLP system and indeed quality of repairs. We must comment that since Paul Norris has been our Locality Steward communication and repairs has improved dramatically and we have together achieved some improvement but we still feel there is still scope for a better delivery of repairs when funding is so limited.</p> <p>We suggest that targeting of individual rural Parishes and completing all reasonably sized potholes rather than passing through just target filling the worst would be far more efficient. We have experienced periods when gangs have passed through and filled just a few holes and then been through again in a very short time period. Surely the cost is incurred in transport, manpower and time spent working is better than time spent traveling around.</p> <p>Another issue that we have experienced is that it appears that in the afternoon when the time arrives for the gangs to return to base in Hereford, surplus tarmac is just used up filling farm gateways rather than spending</p>

	<p>the extra hour and using up the tarmac on potholes. We have experienced this waste of tarmac several times in the past with inappropriate use of tarmac off the highway.</p> <p>Some areas within the Parish, just off the C class do not appear to get potholes filled, and when this is the main route to homes for residents this causes much concern for the residents affected. This is particularly apparent and of concern in Ruckhall and Lower Eaton.</p> <p>It must be said that in certain areas the concept of pothole filling in areas where the whole surface has broken down just makes an area of random tarmac circles surrounded by a broken surface of gravel and stone.</p> <p>Touring the Parish with a locality Steward gives Parish Councillors an opportunity to discuss the problems and identify the priority areas. We are sure better communication as we have established with Paul Norris should be encouraged across the whole County.</p>
Fownhope	<p>A. Highways Maintenance – Pothole Repairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works well – The on line reporting system is easy to use and our Locality Steward (Maynard Smith) makes timely and regular inspections. He is responsive to direct inquiries made by the PC and is easy to communicate with. □ Areas for improvement - The matrix system of determining which potholes are scheduled for repair is complex and appears to involve a degree of subjective assessment. While we appreciate that limited resources demand prioritisation, it is often difficult to understand why one pothole is repaired while others, close by, are left unrepaired. □ Questions you would like the Committee to explore. – Clearly, financial resources are limited. Can the committee please explore additional funding options from Central Government as well as local resources such as sponsorship from private enterprise? Perhaps individual stretches of road could be sponsored in the same way that urban roundabouts are maintained under sponsorship? <p>B. PUBLIC REALM SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works well – The telephone reporting service operated by BBLP is staffed by helpful and polite operators. Our Locality Steward (Maynard Smith) makes timely and regular inspections. He is responsive to direct inquiries made by the PC and is easy to communicate with. The regular update meetings held by BBLP are useful and informative. □ Areas for improvement – Again, funding seems to be the problem. We have an ongoing problem with flooding in Fownhope. BBLP make regular visits to clear the gullies, but there are underlying issues that are

	<p>still to be addressed. Joel Hockenbunrg, Senior Engineer, conducted an extensive assessment in 2015 and agreed that remedial action was required, but no further action has been taken.</p> <p>□ Questions you would like the Committee to explore. – Again, the committee should be pushing Central Government for funding to maintain basic infrastructure such as drainage and flood defence.</p>
Holmer	<p>The largest issue that they had concerned the coordination of pothole repairs which was considered inadequate. It is reported that the maintenance gangs attending to repair the highway often ignore any nearby potholes.</p>
Kingsland	<p>Kingsland Parish Council considered the invitation to comment on pothole repairs and other public realm services at the last meeting. It was felt that a strategic view needs to be taken to resurface sections where the number of potholes means further repairs will just make the road surface too rough for vehicles to use safely. Also, all potholes in a given area should be repaired at the same time, which saves making multiple trips to the same location. The quality of pothole repairs can vary from the very good to the very poor. White lining needs to be replaced urgently, particularly on junctions such as the Corners crossroads, and on the sharp corner at Cobnash.</p> <p>Since the PC meeting, there has been a tour of the parish roads with the enhanced lengthsman and locality steward, and the roads in the parish have improved noticeably since the Spring. In fact, there were no potholes identified for the enhanced lengthsman to repair. It appears that after many years, the general condition of the roads – with the notable and urgent exception of Longford in Kingsland – are much improved.</p>
Leominster TC	<p>HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE - POTHOLES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What works well? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 The Lengthsman scheme was a useful mechanism to deal with potholes in C and U roads in the parish as well as addressing season work such as grip clearance, cutting back junctions to improve sight lines, and weed control. 1.2 The loss of funding from this scheme has, and will continue to have, a detrimental effect on the ongoing maintenance of these roads, and increase the pressure on Herefordshire Council to meet the inevitable additional works. The investment made through town and parish councils to oversee this work, and to deliver local maintenance through a local Lengthsman, ensures that local needs are met and reacted to speedily. 1.3 The Locality Stewards are an integral part of ensuring that issues and concerns are raised and dealt with. The direct communication between the parishes and the Locality Steward keeps things simple and easy.

	<p>1.4 The continued investment in the Locality Stewards will help towards further development of the response to local issues</p> <p>2. What areas for improvement are recommended?</p> <p>2.1 Increase the role and responsibility of the Locality Steward to help meet the concerns of local residents expressed through the town and parish councils.</p> <p>2.2 Reinstate Lengthsman funding, and expand the remit of this initiative to enable better, reactive and proactive responses to local issues. An increased remit could include a small budget for renewing white lines, carrying out interim pothole repairs on B roads, footpath repairs and weed spraying.</p> <p>3. Questions for the Committee to explore?</p> <p>3.1 Review the reinstatement of funding for the Lengthsman scheme.</p> <p>3.2 Investigate expanding the remit of the Lengthsman scheme subject to additional funding being provided.</p> <p>3.3 Carry out a Best Value assessment to ensure that the Lengthsman scheme is providing value for money and a responsive, local service.</p> <p>3.4 Consult with town and parish councils in the County to assess who would be willing to continue with the enhanced Lengthsman Scheme especially if a level of funding was reinstated.</p> <p>3.5 Carry out an assessment of works no longer being carried out by town and parish councils due to the discontinuation of the Lengthsman scheme.</p> <p>3.6 Carry out an assessment on the effect the withdrawal of funding has had on local Lengthsmen and their businesses, as the scheme potentially invested in local employment.</p> <p>PUBLIC REALM SERVICES</p> <p>1. What works well?</p> <p>1.1 The maintenance of the public realm in Leominster is poor and leaves much to be desired. This is not the entire fault of the Contractor as the current infrastructure is well past its sell-by date and requires significant investment.</p> <p>1.2 The major issue currently being experienced is quality control. Repairs are undertaken but there appears to be no quality control once completed to ensure that it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>1.3 The use of cheaper, non-compatible materials to repair damaged and broken public realm surfaces is unacceptable and has left Leominster looking like a patchwork quilt of poorly carried out repair work that creates a sense that no one really cares about the public realm.</p>
--	---

	<p>1.4 Street furniture is removed annually each year to enable the May Fair to take place. The reinstatement of this sometimes sees seats and benches being removed and never being reinstated.</p> <p>1.5 Leominster Town Council supports the street cleaning service in the town centre by providing street cleaning services three times a week under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Balfour Beatty (BBLP) at no cost to either BBLP or Herefordshire Council. The quid pro quo was that BBLP would focus on more regular cleaning and maintenance of the public realm outside the town centre. There is a lack of evidence that this has been delivered.</p> <p>1.6 Litter removal in the town centre is carried out by BBLP, although the SLA has been slightly revised to enable the Town Council to undertake this task especially when the bins are overflowing.</p> <p>1.7 The issue, which has never been properly addressed, is that despite there being a waste collection site in the town the Town Council's Environmental Team has never been allowed to dispose of rubbish here. Instead it has to be collected through a third party, the Town Council has to house large 1,100 litre wheelie bins on its main site, and pay a significantly higher price for the collection and disposal of that rubbish because it is commercial.</p> <p>1.8 Among the issues raised with BBLP and Herefordshire Council over the past few years with regard to the maintenance of the public realm are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fading white lines throughout the town which have not been repainted; • A town centre public realm that is a hazard to pedestrians, especially when the weather is inclement; • Poor quality running repairs using materials that are not in keeping with the existing public realm; • Loss of various pieces of street furniture; • Poor signage; • Extremely poor road surfaces especially in Etnam Street, Worcester Road (especially on the roundabout), High Street, West Street, Dishley Street, Cursnew Road, Rainbow Street, New Street, Burgess Street, Church Street, Pinsley Road and Hereford Road. <p>2. What areas for improvement are recommended?</p> <p>2.1 Improved communication between BBLP, Herefordshire Council and Leominster Town Council.</p> <p>2.2 Post-repair quality control regime to be fully developed, funded and implemented.</p> <p>2.3 Reintroduction of funding for town and parish councils for the Lengthsman scheme to help deliver reactive maintenance and repairs.</p>
--	--

	<p>2.4 Provide an opportunity for the Town Council to input into the Annual Maintenance Plan and be consulted on what the priorities are for the area.</p> <p>2.5 Improved maintenance planning, in consultation with the Town Council.</p> <p>3. Questions for the Committee to explore?</p> <p>3.1 Consider delegating authority to discharge these functions to town and parish councils willing to take responsibility for their area. They would be responsible for carrying out everyday maintenance and repairs of the public realm using a contract similar to that entered into between Herefordshire Council, the parish council and BBLP for the Lengthsman scheme. This could be implemented using the delegated authority power contained within the Local Government Act 1972 (s101). An adequate funding agreement would need to be put in place in order for town and parish councils to be in a position to take on this responsibility. A pilot scheme could be developed using a market town such as Leominster that is in a position to deliver such a service. Section 101 of the LGA 1972 is outlined below:</p> <p>s101 - Arrangements for discharge of functions by local authorities.</p> <p>(1) Subject to any express provision contained in this Act or any Act passed after this Act, a local authority may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions—</p> <p>(a) by a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority; or</p> <p>(b) by any other local authority.</p> <p>3.2 Consider the reintroduction of funding for the Lengthsman and P3 schemes.</p>
Linton (s)	<p>The matter of Highways Maintenance was discussed by Parish Councillors at a recent meeting. I am asked to respond as follows:</p> <p>Generally road maintenance appears to be too low down the priorities for expenditure despite being of vital importance to the infrastructure of the County. Many have noticed that despite white marks being placed around certain potholes and other road disrepair spots, these are frequently not included in eventual work carried out. A pothole on Linton Ridge road last winter was reported repeatedly and became impassible, but was missed whilst work nearby was undertaken.</p>
Llangarron	<p>We have been asked by Anthony Bush of Herefordshire Council (HC) to complete a local review of the way highway maintenance is conducted within our parish. In so doing, we have to assess any mismatches between policy and practice. Our review also addresses mismatches between policy/practice and the needs of our largest community (Llangrove) within the Parish. The road we have chosen as a 'sample' to show the current illogical approach to road repairs, is the U71224 running through Llangrove. Our contention is that the U71224 is largely being ignored by Balfour Beatty (BB) because it is an unclassified road.</p> <p>Executive Summary</p>

A summary of our recommendations is as follows:

- BB to work with the parish council through the appointed roads officer in setting priorities for pothole and other urgent road repairs.
- Upgrade the classification of the U71224 to at least a 'C' class road. (See the justification below).
- Declassify the C1250 if there is a need for a compensating reduction for financial reasons for the upgrading of the U71224.
- Place urgent repairs on the U71224 at Hilltop and Treduchan Farms as the highest priority within Llangarron Parish.
- The request for a 20 mph limit within the Llangrove Village boundary be given urgent consideration by Herefordshire Council. This road is the main artery of the parish, which includes a school, thriving village hall, church and busy pub. There is no pavement, no lighting and all age groups and families have to walk this narrow road. There must be no hiding behind HC processes as there is an urgent need to make this a safe 20mph zone. We ask that HC do the right thing and immediately seek this change.
- HC Highways, Planning and NDP Departments should work in a more coordinated way when it comes to upgrading and maintaining roads to support the development of substantial new housing caused by the Housing Needs allocation.
- Llangarron Parish Council to nominate a permanent Roads Officer who will become to point of contact for all highways related matters.
- The Locality Steward should meet quarterly and as required with the appointed PC Roads Officer and attend periodic general Parish Council Meetings to brief on recent and future work.

Detailed Explanation

Llangarron Parish has only 2 classified roads within its boundary, but many unclassified roads. One can only speculate about the reasons for this, but it is probably historical and reflects previous precedence of communities within the Parish. It is logical that the A466 and A4137 are joined through our area by another classified road, the C1248, which runs through Llangarron. The reason for the existence of the other classified road, the C1250 seems to have little logic to support its existence as a classified road and earlier this year planning for 8 new houses just off this road was turned down in Llangarron Village for road safety reasons! Undoubtedly, the busiest road in the parish (we can produce recent traffic surveys) is the U71224 which links our largest community (Llangrove) to the A40 and C1248, but probably for financial constraint reasons has remained unclassified despite Herefordshire Council knowing that Llangrove housing has grown considerably in recent years. The largest proportion of new housing envisaged under the Core Strategy and the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) will also come to Llangrove. One could be forgiven for thinking that the Planning/NDP and Highways Departments at Herefordshire County Council work in isolation from one another. Some joined up thinking is much needed at Hereford!

Our road maintenance concerns with regard to BB are well known to them, but their view is that funding is limited and urgent health and safety needs drive a very limited budget along with the HCC Risk Based Approach

(RBA). They use a template that for the U71224 ensures that potholes eventually get marked and at some stage in the future (this can be months) are then filled. This is hardly reasonable where the largest number of road users within the parish have to contend with a very poor road, the highest volume of traffic and with the worst rate of repair; inevitable because this is such a busy road and it is maintained to the lowest standards. Last year, 2 Councillors walked this road with our BB Locality Steward, but nothing came of the specific issues raised. Not only is the road single track over much of its length, many of its passing places are mud and potholed verges and at 2 locations there are severe water table/sub-base issues that result in a mass of potholes for much of the year. At these 2 locations nothing will really improve unless the underlying issues are permanently resolved and this remains an urgent issue.

As stated above, Llangrove is growing rapidly with a probable further 30 new houses due to appear in the next few years, having already seen considerable growth in the last 20 years. The U71224 will have to take its existing traffic plus that needed to support new housing and the interim construction traffic. The school, pub, church and village hall all bring considerable additional traffic into the community on a daily basis from outside the parish. Additionally, this road is used as a rat run when the A40 is congested or blocked at the Dixton Roundabout at Monmouth and backs up to Whitchurch, particularly on a Friday afternoon. A simple traffic survey will verify that this is the most used road in the whole parish, but currently gets no regular maintenance.

A request for a 20 mph limit in Llangrove remains an urgent aspiration, particularly as we have a local primary school, volume of traffic has increased and Llangrove is a village where there are no pavements. There is clearly a need for the U71224 to be re-classified or logic to prevail and the road be given a higher priority when it comes to the urgency of repairs. The 2 small sections of road mentioned above and needing urgent repairs are opposite the entrance to Hilltop Farm and next to Treduchan Farm. Photographs of both locations are attached.

We watched with interest as BB repaired potholes and the verges on the C1248 earlier this month, using their new rapid repair system. The repair team came within 50 metres of the worst potholed area in the Parish on the busy U71224 next to Treduchan Farm and yet completely ignored the problem due to preference going to the much less used C1250 classified road. A much more intelligent approach to pothole filling is requested by this Parish. If Herefordshire Council and BB are unable to see what the priorities are, then the Parish Council should have a say in the process of prioritising the urgency of repairs. It would also be useful to know in advance what work BB intend to undertake in the future in our parish. We also should be able to have a stronger voice in demanding substantial repairs rather than patching where there are long term problems on busy roads.

Under the HC/BB Living Places Contract (222 pages), Llangarron PC sees little evidence of BB working with us in developing the Forward Programme or Annual Plan in relation to planning work on road repairs and understanding our priorities. We believe that BB should have a much closer relationship with the PC and that the Locality Steward should periodically attend PC meetings. We in turn as a PC should appoint a Roads Officer as

	<p>a principal point of contact and these 2 people should meet at least quarterly.</p> <p>Also under the HC/BB Living Places Contract it is noted that formal surveys on unclassified roads take place once every 4 years, whereas for C classified roads it is every 2 years. Even Category 1 – 4 footways are surveyed every 2 years. This cannot be acceptable with regard to the busiest road in the Parish, the U71224. Interestingly this road is included as a ‘Secondary Route’ for winter gritting – so at least someone at HC is switched on enough to know to the needs of the Llangrove community!</p>
Longtown	<p>HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE - POTHOLES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What works well? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Liaison with the Locality Steward locally. Accessible, responsive, knowledgeable. 1.2 Good response from Locality Steward regarding works that are requested by the Parish Council. 2. What areas for improvement are recommended? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 The inconsistent quality of work undertaken and level of repair made. 2.2 Review the way potholes are repaired. There is a frustration that potholes are filled separately when patching would be so much more efficient. 2.3 The allocation of a larger budget. 2.4 Focus repairs and maintenance geographically to achieve greater efficiency. 2.5 Provide Parish Councils with information on the location of assets so that the use of Lengthsmen can be used more efficiently by those parishes that are still investing in this scheme. 2.6 The Parish Council welcomed the discontinuation of using the slurry seal method of road repairs. 2.7 Greater investment in keeping drains clear. This will reduce damage to the highways. 2.8 Ditches need to be more regularly maintained. 2.9 Ditching works need to be better prioritised. 2.10 Provision of contact numbers to enable better communications when emergencies occur, especially during inclement weather/flooding. 3. Questions for the Committee to explore? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Review the reinstatement of funding for the Lengthsman scheme.

	<p>3.2 Obtain information from Herefordshire Parishes on which Councils will continue to support the scheme and how much budget is being allocated.</p>
<p>Lyonshall</p>	<p>Pot Hole repairs What works well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website recording facility. • Relationship and liaison with Balfour Beatty Steward Lara Edwards. <p>Areas for improvement you consider there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some services of Balfour Beatty are somewhat disorganised, with inefficient working and poor quality of work. It is often evident that large numbers of workforce attend repairs and that some are surplus to the needs of the work, standing or sitting around whilst work is carried out. <p>Example: When work was carried out on the A480 road outside the Royal George The person came to collect the traffic lights, but the road had not been filled in. The hole was filled in and then the traffic light team returned on another day to remove the traffic lights. Later the same day different traffic lights were erected further along the A480 road towards The Close.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There appears to be an unreasonable delay in repairing potholes specially where they may result in injury to road users (particularly those on two wheels) and serious damage to vehicles of whatever description. • There appears to be a lack of flexibility when repair staff attend to reported potholes when they will repair specific holes but ignore other damage nearby which could be quickly and effectively remedied at the same time. • The quality of repairs seems to be lacking and the materials used do not last as long as could be anticipated and often potholes have a return visit to refill. <p>Any questions you would like the Committee to explore. Public realm services What works well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship and liaison with Balfour Beatty Steward Lara Edwards. • Support from Balfour Beatty Steward Lara Edwards to attend problematic land owners. • Invoice submission to Balfour Beatty and prompt payment.
<p>Marstow (joint response with Whitchurch and Ganarew PC)</p>	<p>The Council members have confirmed how very satisfied they are with the Balfour Beatty organisation and the relationship they have developed with these two Parish Councils. The concept of the Locality Steward is a brilliant idea and we have both an outstanding relationship and assistance from them. Site meetings are always positive in that we know what can be achieved and what is not possible. Timings are always realistic. We are very pleased with the level of help and advice and service assistance.</p>
<p>Middleton on the Hill & Leysters</p>	<p>The Middleton on the Hill & Leysters Parish Council met last night and one of the agenda items was the consideration of the delivery of pothole repairs etc. The parish council thinks the key point is to encourage reporting of problems so that they are dealt with promptly. We have a very good Locality Steward who is very proactive, this has improved the situation. We also now receive weekly emails with a report of work undertaken, this is a definite plus point.</p>

	As a long term plan the Parish Council would like to see more preventative work undertaken ie ditch and culvert clearance so that problems aren't created through lack of routine maintenance.
Orcop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard of pothole filling is poor, not consistent and did not represent Value for money • Rather than fill by category use common sense and fill potholes as required.
Orleton	The parish council agreed to ask that Herefordshire Council consider adopting the approach taken by Worcestershire which is believed to have borrowed funds to bring the county roads up to standard, and then use the annual savings made from doing fewer pothole and other repairs to pay the annual loan charges.
Pembridge	<p>Pembridge Parish Council response for General Scrutiny Committee regarding pot hole repairs and public realm services</p> <p>Pot holes:</p> <p>What works well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting System. • Balfour Beatty Steward liaison. • When large area resurfacing is undertaken an excellent job is done. <p>Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When potholes are reported on a particular highway & marked, repair those & others in the vicinity. Cheaper to do one hit than constantly returning to same area, increasing manpower & time constraints. <p>Example- C1032 Bridge St., Pembridge, to Kingspan corner. BB records will show that this road has received multiple repeat returns to correct small potholes & trenches over the last two years at vast costs for labour & plant usage. Additional potholes & defects are often within metres of those being repaired.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair all pot holes in a reported area together. • Change the pothole classification so that badly sunken road edge drain covers, sunken & protruding service manhole covers & historical, sunken utility trenches are included in road surveys & covered under 'pothole' reports from the public. These classifications are as dangerous as potholes. • Ensure utilities repair the road and manhole covers properly and introduce a penalty for poor workmanship or late return to repair. • Many potholes/defects are white marked & left so long that the markings disappear completely. Poor continuity in administration? Priority is understood, but this seems lax. <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If "What improvements" cannot happen why not ? <p>Public Realm:</p> <p>What works well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much. Set up is too Bureaucratic. • Good locality steward.

	<p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBLP take advantage of their position to provide uncompetitive prices for extra work that they have the exclusive right to perform under the terms of contract and where Herefordshire Council is not Paying. Parish Councils and other third parties commissioning and paying for work to be done should be able to put work out to competitive tender and BBLP must not be permitted to charge exorbitant prices for approving and signing off such work. Permission to do the work must be granted unless BBLP can prove a good reason why not. <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What financial guarantees does Herefordshire Council have in place in the event that BBLP fails financially? Are those guarantees provided by financially robust Third Parties?
Pencombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the filing machine in the past was good and potholes filled in were still ok. • More use of the pothole filling machine, with machine operator having more discretion to fill potholes as necessary.
Pixley and District	As Ashperton
Pyons Group	“Based on the recent experience of repairs in 2018, the parish council is pleased with both the standard and speed of response to fix potholes. Please keep going for the future and maintain the higher standard of pothole repairs which have presumably been achieved through the deployment of the velocity patcher.”
Richards Castle	Richards Castle Parish Council agreed to comment on the poor quality of pothole repairs in the parish. The outside edges of the potholes are not sealed meaning water will get in and shorten the life of the repair. Where there are multiple potholes more use should be made of patching. Potholes are often left for too long before being repaired, for example on Castle Road.
ROSS TC	<p>Response awaited post 14 nov</p> <p>A. Highways Maintenance – Pothole Repairs</p> <p>What works well? Response from the Locality Steward is helpful and positive, without making unrealistic promises.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests response to emergency highway defects is good. However general responses from BBLP in terms of actually repairing potholes are less encouraging, with few instances reported to or witnessed by Town Councillors to suggest the pothole repair service is working well.</p> <p>Whilst this does not mean the service is failing, Councillors and residents perceive it is and are generally dissatisfied with the service.</p> <p>Potential improvements Customer responses are generally perceived to be slow and often require chasing. There appears to be no published response times for responding</p>

to customer requests for potholes repairs. We therefore suggest the following;

- All customers must receive a response to their initial request within 5 working days, stating when the reported problem will be assessed and when a full response will be sent. This full response must be received within 10 working days.
- If for any reason that date slips, the customer must be informed why and given a revised date without having to chase.
- Once inspected, the customer must be informed what action will be taken, by whom and when. If no action is proposed a full explanation must be given.
- For most potholes it is not necessary to inform the customer when a repair has been carried out as this will be self-evident. Responses must also state whether the repair will be a full one, where the pothole is cut out before filling or a 'Jetpatcher' type repair where the pothole is repaired without cutting it out first.

We note from the most recent monitoring report that it is intended to develop more meaningful customer satisfaction performance indicators. We therefore request that one is developed which relates specifically to Town and Parish Council views of pothole repair services.

Herefordshire Council also needs to identify the mechanism by which BBLP will be incentivised to achieve the KPIs described here, as well as measures to tackle under performance by BBLP.

Areas to explore

It appears that town centre highway defects are unlikely to be deemed a priority for 7-day repair due to factors such as speed restriction and street lighting. We believe therefore that the current repair criteria are ineffective as they do not appear to reflect the high usage and visibility of many roads in Ross. The Town Council therefore requests an urgent review of the current prioritization matrix, in full consultation with town & Parish Councils.

A new and simplified measure of customer confidence in pothole repair services must also be developed with direct input from Town & Parish Councils.

Any changes to service levels or specifications which have been agreed with the contractor since the BBLP contract started must be clearly identified and accessible on Herefordshire Council's website, showing when they were agreed and what cost saving or service improvement they delivered.

Town and Parish Councils must be consulted not less than 40 working days prior to any future changes in specification being agreed.

This Council notes that there has been significantly less spent in Ross recently than in other market towns on planned maintenance but recognises that this is based on the need to prioritise funding. The Town Council therefore requests that an annual planned highway maintenance programme is published no later than 1st March each year, following full consultation with Town & Parish Councils. This must also include a draft

programme for the subsequent year to act as a reserve list in the event of additional funding becoming available.

Whilst the Town Council accepts the Planned Maintenance Programme must reflect network condition, this is neither absolute nor fixed, so we ask that the County Council with BBLP develops a mechanism to ensure future expenditure is equitable.

B. PUBLIC REALM SERVICES

What works well?

Response from the Locality Steward is helpful and positive, without making unrealistic promises.

Issues relating to vegetation overhanging the highway are generally dealt with effectively.

The highway grass cutting service has been more effective this year than previously.

The highway weed spraying service was effective when it eventually commenced. This needs to occur much earlier in future, details of this must also be communicated with Town and Parish Councils.

Responses from BBLP for other public realm services such as street cleansing and grounds maintenance are less encouraging.

Whilst this does not mean services are failing, Councillors and residents are generally dissatisfied with standards.

Potential improvements

Customer responses are generally perceived to be slow and often require chasing. There appears to be no published response times for responding to customer requests for public realm services. We therefore suggest the following;

- All customers must receive a response to their initial request within 5 working days, stating when the reported problem will be assessed and when a full response will be sent. This full response must be received within 10 working days.
- If for any reason that date slips, the customer must be informed why and given a revised date without having to chase.
- Once inspected, the customer must be informed what action will be taken, by whom and when. If no action is proposed a full explanation must be given.

	<p>We note from the most recent monitoring report that it is intended to develop more meaningful customer satisfaction performance indicators. We therefore request that one is developed which relates specifically to Town and Parish Council views of BBLP services.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council also needs to identify the mechanism by which BBLP will be incentivised to achieve the KPIs described here, as well as measures to tackle under performance by BBLP.</p> <p>Areas to explore</p> <p>A new and simplified measure of customer confidence in BBLP services should be developed with input from Town & Parish Councils.</p> <p>Any changes to service levels or specifications which have been agreed with the contractor since the BBLP contract started must be clearly identified and accessible on Herefordshire Council's website, showing when they were agreed and what cost saving they have delivered.</p> <p>Town and Parish Councils must be consulted not less than 28 working days prior to any future changes in specification being agreed.</p> <p>The current arrangement where Locality Stewards are employed by Balfour Beatty may be perceived to reduce duplication and double checking, but the perception of the Town Council and residents of a contractor policing itself means trust will always be limited. This is no criticism of the stewards who do an excellent job.</p> <p>The Town Council therefore requests a full review of the costs and benefits of transferring all Locality Stewards to the County Council and Ross Town Council would be agreeable to assist with a pilot scheme. This would be based on a TUPE transfer to the new host organisation of the existing steward, along with all equipment software licenses, etc. and the full budget for that post.</p> <p>The Town Council also requests a full review of the costs and benefits of transferring the Locality Stewards the Town Councils, on the same financial basis as the foregoing paragraph, using Ross Town Council as a pilot scheme.</p> <p>We believe these reviews must be completed no later than 31st March 2019, including full consultation with the Town and Parish Councils.</p>
	<p>From a Ross Town Councillor:</p> <p>I am responding to the General Scrutiny Committee's invitation for comments on - B. Public Realm Services What works well ? - sad to say, very little at the moment What areas for improvement are there ? – plenty ! I'll go through one very recent request for service to Balfour Beatty. That may encapsulate what is going wrong. On 23/8/2018, I used the online reporting tool to ask what had happened to several benches in an area in Ross-on-Wye which is owned by the County</p>

	<p>of Herefordshire District Council (CHDC) and notionally maintained by Balfour Beatty (BB). (they had disappeared.) Hearing nothing, I rang BB on 31/10/2018. I was told that area was maintained by Ross Town Council. My request for service had apparently been closed down in view of this. I told the BB employee that this area was not and has never been owned by the Town Council and that it was owned by CHDC. BB should therefore be maintaining it and were responsible for it. So:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) After a 68 day delay, the customer (me) had received no communication whatsoever from BB or CHDC. 2) The request for service had been shut down or marked as having been dealt with, without any reference to the customer, explanation or response. 3) An incorrect assumption was made – by whom, I do not know – that this area was not the responsibility of BB. An enquiry of BB’s or CHDC’s assets record would have shown – or should have shown - different. How is this error possible ? 4) The assumption that the area was not part of BB’s responsibilities gives rise to the question: how long has this been assumed or presumed and for how long have BB neglected this area ? Presumably an admittedly small part of their annual payment from CHDC relates to the cost of maintaining this area, something which was not being done. What is CHDC doing to monitor the contract and how many times is this same scenario being acted out in other areas in Herefordshire ? 5) I tend to follow up on my requests for service. However other customers have busy lives. They don’t have the time to follow up. How many times are customer requests closed down with no action taken and no explanation to the customer of why no action has been taken ? <p>So I invite the Committee to follow up on these sorts of questions and I wish them good luck. Many residents that I talk to have given up on reporting Highways defects, as their expectations of something being done about them is next to zero. Perhaps I should add that yesterday I rang BB asking for sight of the 2018/19 Annual Plan agreed between them and CHDC. I did this because I cannot reasonably ask BB to do something, say replace a vandalised litter bin, if I do not know that their promised level of service includes this contractual commitment. I was told that this document was “not in the public domain” and that if I wanted sight of it, I would have to put in a Freedom of Information Act request. How is this being open and transparent with the public and Council Tax payers ? Why is this document hidden away from view ? (I can see no sign of it on the CHDC website.)</p>
	From another Ross Town Cllr
	<u>What works well?</u>

Response from the Locality Steward is generally helpful and positive, without making unrealistic promises.

Responses from BBLP in terms of actually repairing potholes is less encouraging, with no instances reported or witnessed to suggest the pothole repair service is working well.

Whilst this does not mean the service is failing, residents seem generally dissatisfied with the service.

Potential improvements

Customer responses are generally perceived to be slow and often require chasing. There appear to be no published response times for responding to customer requests for potholes repairs. I therefore suggest the following;

- All customers must receive a response to their initial request within 1 working day, stating when the reported problem will be assessed and when a full response will be sent. This full response must be received within 10 working days.
- If for any reason that date slips, the customer must be informed why & given a revised date without having to chase.
- Once inspected, the customer must be informed what action will be taken, by whom and when. If no action is proposed a full explanation must be given.
- For most potholes it is not necessary to inform the customer when a repair has been carried out as this will be self evident.

Responses must also state whether the repair will be a full one, where the pothole is cut out before filling or a 'Jetpatcher' type repair where the pothole is repaired without cutting it out first.

I note from the most recent monitoring report that it is intended to develop more meaningful customer satisfaction performance indicators. I therefore request that one is developed which relates specifically to Town and Parish Council views of pothole repair services.

Herefordshire Council also needs to identify the mechanism by which BB will be incentivised to achieve the KPIs described here, as well as measures to tackle under performance by BB.

Areas to explore

A new and simplified measure of customer confidence in pothole repair services must be developed with direct input from Town & Parish Councils.

Any changes to service levels or specifications which have been agreed with the contractor since the BBLP contract started must be clearly identified and accessible on Herefordshire Council's website, showing when they were agreed and what cost saving or service improvement they delivered.

Town and Parish Councils must be consulted not less than 28 working days prior to any future changes in specification being agreed.

B. PUBLIC REALM SERVICES

What works well?

Response from the Locality Steward is generally helpful and positive, without making unrealistic promises.

Issues relating to vegetation overhanging the highway are generally dealt with effectively.

The highway grass cutting service has been more effective this year than previously.

The highway weed spraying service was effective when it eventually commenced. This needs to occur much earlier in future.

Responses from BBLP for other public realm services such as street cleansing and grounds maintenance are less encouraging, with no instances reported or witnessed to suggest other public realm services are working well.

Whilst this does not mean services are failing, residents seem generally dissatisfied with standards.

Potential improvements

Customer responses are generally perceived to be slow and often require chasing. There appear to be no published response times for responding to customer requests for public realm services. We therefore suggest the following;

- All customers must receive a response to their initial request within 1 working day, stating when the reported problem will be assessed and when a full response will be sent. This full response must be received within 10 working days.
- If for any reason that date slips, the customer must be informed why & given a revised date without having to chase.
- Once inspected, the customer must be informed what action will be taken, by whom and when. If no action is proposed a full explanation must be given.
- For most public realm service requests it is not necessary to inform the customer when remedial works have been carried out as this will be self evident.

I note from the most recent monitoring report that it is intended to develop more meaningful customer satisfaction performance indicators. I therefore

	<p>request that one is developed which relates specifically to Town and Parish Council views of BBLP services.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council also needs to identify the mechanism by which BB will be incentivised to achieve the KPIs described here, as well as measures to tackle under performance by BB.</p> <p><u>Areas to explore</u></p> <p>A new and simplified measure of customer confidence in BBLP services should be developed with input from Town & Parish Councils.</p> <p>Any changes to service levels or specifications which have been agreed with the contractor since the BBLP contract started must be clearly identified and accessible on Herefordshire Council's website, showing when they were agreed and what cost saving they have delivered.</p> <p>Town and Parish Councils must be consulted not less than 28 working days prior to any future changes in specification being agreed.</p> <p>The current arrangement where Locality Stewards are employed by Balfour Beatty may be perceived to reduce duplication and double checking, but the perception of residents of a contractor policing itself means trust will always be limited. This is no criticism of the stewards who do an excellent job.</p> <p>I therefore request a full review of the costs and benefits from transferring the Locality Steward for the Ross area a) to the County Council and b) to the Town Council. This would be based on a TUPE transfer to the new host organisation of the existing steward, along with all equipment software licenses, etc. and the full budget for that post.</p> <p>I believe this review should be completed no later than 31st March 2019, including full consultation with the Town Council.</p>
Shobdon	<p>The standard of pothole repairs is often poor with repairs needing to be redone within a year and this cannot represent value for money. When a pothole is repaired, potholes slightly further along the road are generally left until a later date when it would seem to be a more efficient use of resources to enable road crews to use their discretion to fill all potholes within a small area rather than have to return at a later date. The issuing of guidance on the 2018/19 lengthsman and PROW scheme 6 months into the year is not particularly helpful. The locality steward provides a vital and very helpful link between the Parish Council and BBLP and this role should be maintained.</p>
Sutton St Nicholas	<p>That pothole repairs should be on the basis of potholes adjacent to each other rather than the current pothole category basis, which would ensure that visits to the same location would be reduced and makes common sense, as anecdotal evidence is that a visit is made to the same location within weeks, to repair other potholes previously deemed to be a category not to be filled'</p>
Tarrington	As Ashperton

Welsh Newton and Llanrothal Group Parish Council	<p>Could a whole area of potholes be filled in one go rather than the rather piecemeal approach that happens at present?</p> <p>Could Parish Councils be asked where their key issues for repair are?</p>
Weobley	<p>HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE - POTHOLES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What works well? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Liaison with the Locality Steward locally. Accessible, responsive, knowledgeable. 1.2 Good response from Locality Steward regarding works that are requested by the Parish Council. 2. What areas for improvement are recommended? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 The inconsistent quality of work undertaken and level of repair made. 2.2 The Parish Council would like clarification on why potholes that have been reported in one area are not repaired at the same time. Better communication and clustering could save money and result in more efficient repairs being undertaken. 3. Questions for the Committee to explore? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Review the reinstatement of funding for the Lengthsman scheme. 3.2 Obtain information from Herefordshire Parishes on which Councils will continue to support the scheme and how much budget is being allocated.. <p>PUBLIC REALM SERVICES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What works well? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Good liaison with Locality Steward. 2. What areas for improvement are recommended? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Improved communication between BBLP, Herefordshire Council and Weobley Parish Council. 2.2 Improved notification regarding grass cutting, especially with regard to shared services. For example, volunteers will cut an area and a week later Balfour Beatty will attend. The volunteers could cut in-between the 6 visits per year undertaken by Balfour Beatty. 2.3 Improved notification on road sweeping visits. If the timing of the visits of the road sweeper are known in advance efforts can be made to encourage residents to remove vehicles so that an efficient

	<p>sweep is undertaken, especially during the autumn when drains frequently become blocked by falling leaves.</p> <p>3. Questions for the Committee to explore?</p> <p>3.1 The Parish Council has concerns regarding the amount of highways and other maintenance responsibilities which are being passed down without any funding.</p> <p>3.2 It would be useful to fully understand what responsibilities regarding highways, C & U roads, grip maintenance, visibility splays and other maintenance functions are now expected to be carried out by parish councils.</p>
Weston under Penyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pothole repair is always an agenda item and every month parishioners concerns are reported • There seems to be no logical approach to the repairs and no feedback on when the repairs may take place • Perhaps a dedicated email address could be set up for parish council use only to report potholes. Photos could be included. • A timescale of when the repairs will be done. At the moment potholes are continually reported until eventually they are repaired. • An understanding on how some potholes are repaired and others in the area are not. Surely size and depth should not be the only criteria. If the team is in the area then fix them all! • A bigger budget to get the roads in a better condition. This is especially relevant for rural Herefordshire. Weston under Penyard has C and unclassified roads which are regularly used by large, heavy agriculture vehicles thus degrading the roads further. • The A40 dissects the village and to get maintenance done on this road is very difficult. An easier way to report potholes, areas of tarmac layers degrading would be welcome. With the new housing development in the village and the new enterprise park/housing at Hildersley increased traffic on the A40 will only degrade the road further. • The Public Realm contract states that it should be 'accessible, safe, clean and well-maintained'. This is not being achieved. • Road gutters are not being cleaned and the verge cutting is mineable. • The Local Steward scheme works well and our Steward (Kevin Williams) is accessible and responds to our concerns.
Whitchurch and Ganarew PC (joint Response with Marstow PC)	<p>The Council members have confirmed how very satisfied they are with the Balfour Beatty organisation and the relationship they have developed with these two Parish Councils.</p> <p>The concept of the Locality Steward is a brilliant idea and we have both an outstanding relationship and assistance from them.</p> <p>Site meetings are always positive in that we know what can be achieved and what is not possible.</p> <p>Timings are always realistic.</p> <p>We are very pleased with the level of help and advice and service assistance.</p>

Wigmore	<p>1) <u>What Works Well</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reporting of pot holes can be done easily on line. The new reporting app should make the process even easier. The new reporting app also helps to show that BBLP are thinking about how to make the reporting of pot holes easier. ◆ The regular reports back from our locality steward are useful to show that significant work really is taking place to repair pot holes in our locality. ◆ The" Velocity Patcher" was in our Parish during May 2018 and the amount of work and the quality of the work that it did was phenomenal when compared to the standard system of repairing pot holes. Only a small number of operatives are required to operate it, many pot holes are repaired in a very short time and the repairs seem to be much more permanent. It appears to be much more efficient and effective than other existing methods. <p>2) <u>What Areas for Improvements are there</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unless the pot holes that have been repaired can be identified more accurately than they currently are in the Locality Steward's report it is difficult to tell which holes have been repaired and why others have been left unrepaired. It is hoped that the new reporting app will help identify which have been repaired and give reasons why others have not. If the app does not and cannot be amended to do so, then an alternative way of showing this information needs to be found. ◆ Often the Locality Steward will mark pot holes on the road using white or yellow markings. These markings then slowly fade until they have disappeared altogether. Often no repair has taken place before the markings have worn away completely (which usually means that no repair takes place at all). This gives the impression that HC/BBLP are trying to fool the council tax payers into thinking that they are taking pot holes seriously, when they are not. The time period between marking out these pot holes and the subsequent carrying out of repairs needs to be reduced and pot holes that are not going to be repaired should not be marked. ◆ Unless reported pot holes are repaired quickly, it is not easy to find out whether anyone at HC/BBLP has even noted the report let alone acted on it. Hopefully, the new reporting app will keep all interested parties (i.e. at least the person reporting, the Parish Council and others that want to find out progress on any previously reported pot hole) up to date on progress. If it is not currently able to do
---------	--

this, the app needs to be improved.

- ◆ It is difficult to tell what category has been given to which pot hole and why. It is often noticed that when there are 2 pot holes that look to be roughly similar in size, position in the road, etc., only 1 of these 2 holes has been repaired. Rightly or wrongly, the perception that this gives most people is that the work has been carried out inefficiently and that the work force will have to return again in the near future to fill the other hole. Given that it is common knowledge that the greatest cost of repairing a pothole is the cost of getting the work force and necessary equipment to the location, it is easy to come to the conclusion that there are inefficiencies in the system and that a lot of money is being wasted.
- ◆ The repair of pot holes is probably the most visible (and definitely the most discussed) public realm service that BBLP offers the citizens of Herefordshire. It is probably the area in which BBLP is judged by the public more than any other. Public perception of how the “pot hole repairing system” works is poor. Sometimes it is just a matter of making some simple changes to improve people’s perception. One example of this is in relation to the signs affixed to roadside furniture in May this year when the velocity patcher came to work on the C1019 which runs from Wigmore to Ludlow. These large warning signs stated that a 10mph speed limit applies due to “skid risk”. The signs are still in place (October!). I do not know how many times the Locality Steward or any other HC/BBLP employee travel along this road (at speeds higher than 10mph!), but they still remain. It is just the little things like this that give people a poor perception of both HC and BBLP. Any comments made about the work that the velocity patcher did do not focus any more on the good work done by filling pot holes but they do focus on these speed signs they have not removed!

3) Questions we would like the committee to explore

- ◆ What proportion of pot holes are reported by the public compared with those reported by Locality Stewards when conducting their A, B, C and Unclassified road inspections? The answer to this should reveal whether the public are using the reporting facility as much as would be hoped, and if they are not, then does this facility need promoting more?
- ◆ On many occasions it has been brought to Parish Councillors attention that a ridiculously large number of BBLP employees seem to be necessary to fill a single pot hole. Again, this is seen as being very inefficient. HC/BBLP response to this is often based on Health and Safety considerations and the need to have traffic control. Has

sufficient consideration been given to automated forms of traffic control such as simple portable traffic lights, or automated spinning “Stop/Go” signs that do not need to be manually operated?

- ◆ Have all the options been examined regarding the most efficient way for the work force to cover the maximum number of pot hole repairs in a day? It is accepted that priority must be given to those pot holes in the highest (most dangerous) category and that this must therefore involve travelling from high category pot holes in one location to high category pot holes in another (sometimes far away) location rather than staying in one location/parish to repair all its pot holes. However, there is at least one suggestion for a different way of working that should still allow the necessary travelling between high category pot holes, but which does also allow the work force to make a big difference to pot holes in each of the areas it works in. This suggestion is for the work force to attend a high category pot hole and whilst there for them to repair all other pot holes regardless of their category within (say) 100yards of that high priority pot hole before moving on to the next location. This would necessarily mean that there would be a slight reduction in the number of high category pot holes dealt with in a day, but there would be a significant increase in the number of pot holes dealt with in each location attended. This would be of more benefit to more communities and given that the main cost of dealing with a pot hole is the cost of getting the workforce and its equipment to the pot hole, it would mean that there would be a saving in cost and an increase in efficiency. It would also help ensure that the minor pot holes do not turn into high category pot holes, so over the longer term there should be even more savings and an overall increase in safety.
- ◆ Has sufficient thought been given to HC/BBLP purchasing their own Velocity Patcher. Although we were told that due to its high cost HC/BBLP could only afford to rent one for a short period, surely it would be more economic in the medium to long term to own at least one. If necessary HC/BBLP could then come to a financial arrangement with individual local parishes in need of quality pot hole repairs by making a request for a (modest) financial contribution from them to be able to have use of the machine (along with operatives) for particular jobs.

4) Further comments/suggestions

- ◆ Currently, most of the public (including Parish Councillors) are frustrated with the system currently used for categorising and subsequently carrying out pot hole repairs. It is believed that the improvements mentioned above (section “A, 2” in particular) will give the public and

	<p>the Parish Councils more confidence that HC/BBLP are tackling the problem of pot holes the best way. A lot of the frustration with the pot hole repairing system stems from perception just as much as reality, so more transparency regarding how decisions are made would also help restore confidence in the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The new reporting app is an improvement and it is easy to use. It has the potential to not only improve the processes involved reporting pot holes, but if used to its full potential will keep interested parties up to date on progress and help restore faith in the ability of HC/BBLP to keep our roads safe and comfortable. If it is not used to its full potential then an opportunity is being missed.
Wigmore – public realm	<p>A) Other public realm services provided by BBLP</p> <p>1) <u>What Works Well</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The majority of public realm services provided by BBLP other than repairs to pot holes take place relatively unnoticed. Not as many complaints are made to the parish council about other services as are made in relation to pot holes. This itself could be considered as a sign that there are not many major concerns over their provision. ◆ BBLP appear (using their own figures) to meet the majority of targets set them by HC. However, there are 2 main ways to meet targets and those are to improve performance or to reduce targets. Due to imposed austerity and financial constraints it has been necessary not just to become more efficient but to also set targets lower (in order to still keep targets achievable and realistic). <p>2) <u>What Areas for Improvements are there</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Again, as is the case with pot holes repairs, BBLP does not make a good impression when it fails to complete a task. A recent example in the WGPC area is in relation to cutting back of overgrown willow trees in Kings Meadow, Wigmore. BBLP had sub contracted the job to another contractor, but of course HC/BBLP retained full responsibility for ensuring the task was performed to a satisfactory standard and any shortfall in quality of work will reflect on them rather than their sub-contractor. The cutting of trees was carried out well, but all the clippings were just left where they dropped which was either in a ditch blocking a grid that often is the cause of flooding in Kings Meadow or on the bank ready to be washed down to the same grid once there was any rain. The Mortimer Ward councillor (Carole Gandy) was

	<p>informed by a resident and had to make arrangements for the clippings to be collected and the grids cleared. This left the residents of Kings Meadow with a bad impression of the work that HC and BBLP carry out. This could have been avoided if BBLP had paid more attention to the (very important) finishing element of the task. This is yet another example of BBLP’s “tunnel vision” – being too main task orientated rather than considering overall service to the taxpayer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As the parish council is being expected to take on more of the duties and responsibilities that were previously done by BBLP, then more training and ongoing support should be provided to them by BBLP. <p>3) <u>Questions we would like the committee to explore</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Are the targets that HC set BBLP at the right level? Whenever BBLP make a presentation to councillors they seem to demonstrate that they have over-achieved all their targets by a significant margin. In many organisations this would normally result in the targets being raised to make them more challenging for the next reporting period. Does that happen as it should? ◆ BBLP has reduced many services to the level that they now only carry out statutory and safety duties, leaving parish councils to do much more. Is the balance right between the work that BBLP do and the work that has now been delegated down to parish councils to do? <p>4) <u>Further comments/suggestions</u></p> <p>The public are aware of financial constraints imposed on local councils, and over a period of time they appear to have accepted that HC can no longer afford to offer such a comprehensive public realm service as they used to. People now generally have a lower expectation of all services councils provide. This lower expectation and the belief that it will make no difference if they do complain, probably explains why relatively few complaints are made to parish councillors regarding matters other than pot holes.</p>
Yarkhill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a pothole is reported and a repair takes place, why is there no autonomy given to the work crew so that they can repair a pothole nearby rather than that having to be reported requiring them to come out again? A good example is the A4103 coming into the 40mph zone at Newtown heading east. • Why, when a pothole is reported, is the full repair not always completed. On the Monkhide Village Road last winter, an extended pothole was reported at the side of the road, but not all of it was repaired. Part of it required digging out so perhaps this was the problem? • Why, when so much has been spent in recent months on resurfacing, are there gaps between areas of resurfacing where the road is still full of potholes. Examples are on the A4103 at the junction of the road to Bromyard near the Aylestone Hill roundabout, the road in the centre of

	<p>Stretton Grandison on the A417 and the road heading south out of Ashperton also on the A417. Even if a full resurfacing did not taken place, would it not have been sensible to at least effect some repair at the same time?</p>
Yarpole	<p>the standard of pothole repairs seems poor with repairs often needing to be redone within a year and this cannot represent value for money. When a pothole is repaired, potholes slightly further along the road are generally left until a later date when it would seem to be a more efficient use of resources to enable road crews to use their discretion to fill all potholes within a small area rather than have to return at a later date.</p>

i.

Appendix 5

Detail on the overall condition of the carriageway asset showing proportion rated green amber and red.

The following table illustrates the overall condition (following the 2017 condition survey, 2018 surveys are being processed) of the carriageway asset in Herefordshire. In the table red indicates the proportion of the network that is in need of maintenance, amber indicates the proportion of the network that is in a deteriorated state, the remainder of the network is 'green', in good overall condition. Overall 323 miles or 16% of the network is rated red.

Road Class	2013	2017
A Road Red	9%	6%
A Road Amber	36%	38%
B Road Red	8%	7%
B Road Amber	34%	33%
C Road Red	11%	8%
C Road Amber	36%	36%
U Road Red	32%	26%

8.

ROAD MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL BRIEFING – FEBRUARY 2019

In 2013 55% of our A roads were in good condition (Green) with 9% deemed (Red) in need of maintenance, the remaining 36% were Amber. In 2018 (surveyed over the summer) the % that is good has increased to 59% and just under 7% of this network is in need of maintenance. Our asset management strategy sets out to 'grow the green' and is doing so.

For the B roads in 2013 58% was Green, 8% Red and in 2018 this has improved to 61% Green and just under 7% Red.

For C roads in 2013 53% of the network was Green, 11% Red this has also improved to 60% Green and 6% Red.

Herefordshire Council is awaiting the Unclassified road results (they have SCANNER results for part of this network, these are focussed on the component that is more akin to C roads in their function, but await the CVI for these roads – they also await the FNS survey results for the footways). That said in 2013 32% of this network was in need of maintenance and in

2017 this figure had fallen to 26%. The 2017/18 winter will have undoubtedly impacted on the condition of these roads and the teams are working hard, within the bounds of the available resources to address this. However, we do anticipate a decline in overall condition and note the 2018 surveys will not have picked up on all of our work to address this impact yet.

We see these results as testament to the success (so far) of our asset management strategy. Prior to 2013 there had been an unacceptable decline in the condition of the county's roads, particularly the rural C and unclassified roads. This is a consequence of decades of under-investment. In 2013, we implemented a new highway asset management strategy which has the following key components:

1. Major investment over two years (2014/15 and 2015/16) - an extra £20 million of works targeted to fix roads that were in the greatest need of repair and have the greatest value to our local communities.
2. Sustained investment over the whole life of the highway asset - an on-going programme of works that is targeted at treating roads as they are showing signs of deterioration, fixing roads before they need larger, more costly repairs (we have been achieving this through Challenge fund success, incentive fund success and investment through the Council's own capital programme).
3. Reduce the need for reactive 'temporary' pothole repairs as a response to safety defects. (We were an immediate adopter of the Risk based approach as the latest code of practice, and are evolving that approach through our current review of our Highway Maintenance Plan, this following our 'live' experience of operating a risk based approach). We will aim to deliver a high proportion of our routine pothole repairs using permanent fixes that not only make the road safe, but improve the condition of the road and extends its useful life. (Following our major investment we did see a 90% reduction in the number of third party highway claims made against the council, the largest reduction in the nation, following the 2017/18 winter we have seen an upturn in numbers, but not a return to 2013 levels (at the last look). That upturn mirrors the national picture).
4. Shift our routine resources further towards preventative activities, such as the clearance of drainage. Well-drained roads decline at a slower rate and are more resilient to damage from severe weather (we have increased our investment in drainage clearance and have a risk based regime).
5. Provide the support that enables routine maintenance work to be delivered locally so that defects on the road can be responded to locally when they are recognised as an issue by local people. This means that more defects can be fixed before they become a hazard to road users. Through our approach to locality working we will ensure that this local delivery complements our countywide programme of works (We have a well-established Parish Lengthsman scheme, that enables pothole repair and is taken up by c100 Parish Councils across the County).

Through this five point highway asset management strategy we will reduce the cost of potholes to the council and the community by over £1.6 billion. We will reduce the whole life

cost of maintenance by over £72 million and the strategy will prevent over 386,000 potholes over the 34 year lifecycle of our roads.



Meeting:	General scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Wednesday 6 March 2019
Title of report:	Work programme
Report by:	Governance services

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose and summary

To review the committee's work programme.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the draft work programme as set out at appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to any amendments the committee wishes to make; and
- (b) the committee determines any other matter in relation to the appointment of task and finish groups their chairmanship and any special responsibility allowance or the undertaking of a spotlight review.

Alternative options

- 1 It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Governance Services on Tel (01432) 260239

Key considerations

Draft work programme

- 2 The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable. It must also be ready to accommodate urgent items or matters that have been called-in.
- 3 Should committee members become aware of any issue they think should be considered by the Committee they are invited to discuss the matter with the Chairman and the statutory scrutiny officer.
- 4 The draft work programme is attached at appendix 1.

Constitutional Matters

Task and Finish Groups

- 5 A scrutiny committee may appoint a task and finish group for any scrutiny activity within the committee's agreed work programme. A committee may determine to undertake a task and finish activity itself as a spotlight review where such an activity may be undertaken in a single session; the procedure rules relating to task and finish groups will apply in these circumstances.
- 6 The relevant scrutiny committee will approve the scope of the activity to be undertaken, the membership, chairman, timeframe, desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work. A task and finish group will be composed of a least 2 members of the committee, other councillors (nominees to be sought from group leaders with un-affiliated members also invited to express their interest in sitting on the group) and may include, as appropriate, co-opted people with specialist knowledge or expertise to support the task. In appointing a chairman of a task and finish group the committee will also determine, having regard to the advice of the council's monitoring officer and statutory scrutiny officer, whether the scope of the activity is such as to attract a special responsibility allowance.
- 7 The Committee is asked to determine any matters relating to the appointment of a task and finish group and the chairmanship and any special responsibility allowance or undertaking a spotlight review including co-option (see below).

Co-option

- 8 A scrutiny committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people as and when required, for example for a particular meeting or to join a task and finish group. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed workplan and/or task and finish group membership.
- 9 The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to exercise this power in respect of any matters in the work programme.

Tracking of recommendations made by the committee

- 10 A schedule of recommendations made from April 2017 and action in response to date is attached at appendix 2.

Forward plan

- 11 The constitution states that scrutiny committees should consider the forward plan as the chief source of information regarding forthcoming key decisions. Forthcoming decisions can be viewed under the forthcoming decisions link on the council's website:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgdelegateddecisions.aspx?XXR=0&DAYS=28&RP=0&K=0&DM=0&HD=0&DS=1&META=mgdelegateddecisions&V=0>

Community impact

- 12 The topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Equality duty

- 13 The topics selected need to have regard for equality and human rights issues.

Resource implications

- 14 The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny will be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

Legal implications

- 15 The council is required to deliver an overview and scrutiny function.

Risk management

- 16 There is a reputational risk to the council if the overview and scrutiny function does not operate effectively. The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

- 17 The Chairman and Statutory scrutiny officer meet on a regular basis to review the work programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – draft work programme

Appendix 2 – schedule of general overview and scrutiny recommendations made and action in response – May 2017 onwards.

Background papers

- None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Governance Services on Tel (01432) 260239

General Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19

Meeting/items	Purpose	Comment	Notes
Unallocated			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoople Service Level Agreement 	To review performance and comment on the agreement for the forthcoming year.	Suggested September 2019	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policing – checking policing cover given shift of resources by PCC to urban setting 	Requested 30 November that an invitation to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable and chief Fire Officer to attend to discuss community safety matters.		
	Waste Disposal Contract review (t&f) in preparation for end of current contract in 2023	Summer 2019 options available for consideration	
TBC	Performance indicator - killed and seriously injured on roads (will involve partner agencies)		<p>Possible task and finish topic.</p> <p>Road maintenance/verge maintenance chairman of road safety partnership</p> <p>Check with Chairman of Road Safety partnership as witness.</p> <p>Highways England</p>

			<p>Balfour Beatty</p> <p>Police</p> <p>NHS</p>
<p>One off spotlight: All aspects of enforcement (parking/planning/environmental health)</p>		<p>Too broad</p> <p>Summer onward Parking supply/enforcement/charges</p>	<p>Suggested this is too broad.</p> <p>Summer onward - Parking supply/enforcement/charges could be considered.</p>
<p>Planning Policy (Hereford Area Plan/Rural Area DPD/Core strategy late 2019)</p>			
<p>Unallocated cross-cutting review suggestions</p> <p>Support for voluntary sector</p>		<p>View expressed that this might be worth progressing given reference in corporate peer challenge.</p>	<p>Peer challenge extract</p> <p>The Council has a stated intent to build community resilience but needs to further articulate what this means and how it will be supported in a strategic and coordinated way. The relationships with parish and town councils will have an important role to play. Alongside this, the Council should consider other options for connecting and assisting residents and communities to support each other, including the role of ward councillors, digital technology and the voluntary and community sector. We recognise that different areas of Herefordshire will not suit a 'one size fits all' approach;</p>

			<p>nevertheless, the Council's engagement and resilience activity needs to be part of a coherent framework that is developed and delivered in partnership with others.</p> <p>Proposal</p> <p>Consider in light of response to peer challenge.</p>
<p>TBC</p>	<p>From GSC 18 July</p> <p>A high level members briefing seminar for all members on understanding the process of delivering a new road scheme be provided, from which councillors can disseminate that understanding to members of the public and the information be placed on the council website;</p> <p>(d) detailed proposals on the active travel measures come back to the committee for their own scrutiny once a decision on a preferred route has been taken, with identification of those active travel measures that can go ahead regardless of delivery of the by-pass at the appropriate time;</p>		

	(e) detailed proposals on the biodiversity measures come back to this committee for their own scrutiny once a decision on a preferred route has been taken with a detailed design at an appropriate time; and (f) a range of discretionary powers to compensate households impacted by the proposed route are considered and options are presented back to this committee at the appropriate time.		
TBC	Minerals and Waste Panel Report on draft Minerals and Waste Plan		
TBC	Community Safety		
Keepmoat Homes Ltd and Engie Regeneration Ltd Contracts (Also suggestion of importance of good design as per council motion 7 March 2014.)	<p>Presentation is to be given to all Members on the contracts.</p> <p>Consider whether any issues warrant scrutiny following that seminar (at which standards inc design) could be addressed.</p>	September 2019	Presentation held 31 July 2018

Water Quality – (mindful of role of Nutrient Management Board)	Update seminar for Powys and Herefordshire members to be held. Await outcome of seminar on 28 September 2018.		Anything?
• Planning enforcement – consistency /S106 agreements	Briefing note requested.		Briefing note then possible scrutiny 6-12 months???
• Use of Green space – keeping people well and looked after – note CCG interest in this	Considered this was a county-wide issue. Clarification to be sought.		Check briefing note
• Commissioning and procurement	Briefing note requested.		
• Scrutiny of the traffic management in and around Commercial Street/Aylestone Hill	No Scrutiny consideration at the current time but kept under review.		Briefing note at end of year
• Council's policy on roadside verges grass cutting and what changes in policy may be appropriate.	Briefing note requested.		
• Annual review of earmarked reserves	Following consideration by cabinet on 28 June, agreed briefing note would be prepared on progress.		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Economic master plan. • Implications of new university (note member seminar 5 October) 		<p>Summer 2019 – how devt working</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider Development Partnership Outline work programme 		<p>Summer 2019 – how devt working</p>	<p>To include Edgar Street Stadium.</p> <p>14 November 2016 Committee requested further report setting out the long term proposals for the Edgar Street stadium following an appraisal by the football club, council and potential development partners of the options.</p>

Schedule of General Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations made and action in response (May 2017 on)

Meeting	item	Recommendations	Action	Status
11 July 2017	Sustainable modes of travel to school strategy	That (a) the strategy should clearly link targets to the strategy’s aims and objectives and ensure that it showed how actions can deliver on those objectives;	Cabinet response 18 January 2018 The table setting out targets will be updated to demonstrate show the link to objectives. (Page 16)	Completed
		(b) the wording in relation to the vacant seat payment scheme should be modified	The table setting out targets will be updated to demonstrate show the link to objectives. (Page 16)	Completed
		(c) the strategy should contain a clear timetable for review of the strategy;	Timetable for review has been added. (Page 19)	Completed
		(d) the executive should again be asked to request schools to update their school travel plans making clear to them the potential benefits to schools of doing so and drawing on the support of councillors who are school governors to encourage this work to take place;	In addition to officers promoting up to date travel plans and providing support directly to schools, local members will also be engaged to promote travel plans in their local communities. (Included in Action Plan at page 16)	Completed
		(e) officers be requested to liaise with public health colleagues to	Liaison between officers has commenced with officers from public health and this is enabling	Completed

147

		assist in the development of effective targets;	closer coordination between the SMOTS and public health objectives. (Included in the Action Plan at page 16)	
		(f) the executive be asked to ensure that relevant council held data is actively shared with schools to prompt them to share their own data for the SMOTS;	Any data relevant to the SMOTS will be made available to schools and will be used to help encourage schools to engage in travel planning.	Completed
		g) the executive be requested to explore means of data collection for the SMOTS, to seek to secure more robust data to inform policy and assist in prioritising actions, with regard also being had to NHS data;	The SMOTS has been updated to include the most recent robust school travel data set (Page 9). The action plan addresses how we will explore additional data sources, including NHS data to assist with implementing the SMOTS (Page 16).	Completed
		(h) accident information in the strategy and methods of data collection should be clarified;	Accident information is collected by the police using their own reporting system. The accident data is then passed over to the Department for Transport for release to the public. Detailed methodology on how this happens can be found on the Government's website on the link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/259012/rrcgb-qualitystatement.pdf	Completed
		(i) the executive be requested to seek support from local MPs to assist in resolving transport issues and that their attention	A letter was sent by Cabinet Member for Transport and Roads and from the Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing and reply received.	Completed

		should be drawn to the value that Plasc surveys had previously been in assessing needs;		
		(J) the executive is requested to ensure that the SMOTS makes clear the evidence used to inform the strategy, the efforts made to secure evidence and any deficiencies in collecting evidence;	Amended within the strategy. (page 9)	Completed
		(k) the executive be requested to ensure that the capacity and performance measures in the Sustrans contract are aligned to the strategy;	We will review the Sustrans contract to ensure the contract goals will be compatible with the SMOTS. (Included in the Action Plan at page 16) Sustrans contract was reviewed and found to be compatible with the SMOTS.	Completed
		(l) the executive is requested to ensure that an implementation plan translating strategy into action was developed to accompany the strategy;	An implementation plan will be developed for delivery to a pilot school by 2019. (Page 16) This is being developed in line with schools and a letter is being drafted to members to request support to promote the message to schools.	
		(m) the Sustrans contract was part way through its duration yet the	The Sustrans delivery project was taken into account when developing the SMOTS.	Completed

			strategy had not been published. The relationship of that work to the strategy needed to be considered to ensure that that work contributed to the delivery of the strategy; and		
		(n)	the Statutory Scrutiny Officer be informed of the annual review of the action plan and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman consider whether there are any material matter requiring consideration by the Committee.	The annual review is being finalised with a copy made available to the Statutory Scrutiny Officer upon finalising.	
	Herefordshire local flood risk management strategy	That	(a) the strategy should recognise the importance of clear and effective communication of responsibilities in respect of all relevant parties;	Response considered by cabinet 28 September 2017 <i>a: Accepted – there is already a section on communication (7.2) which addresses this point</i>	Completed
		(b)	the executive be advised of the importance of preparing a joined up implementation plan;	<i>b Accepted – this will form part of the action plan.</i>	Completed
		(c)	careful consideration be given to how land use and management affect flood risk, ways of educating people on this point and developing mitigating measures;	C Accepted – this is already covered under section 10, particularly these summary actions: Work collaboratively through the Natural Flood Management Partnership for the River Lugg and Wye to deliver the Wye Nutrient Management Plan and influence land use and management practices to reduce the risk of flooding and deliver wider	Completed

			environmental benefits; and Work with landowners, communities, Town and Parish Councils, NFU, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and other similar organisations to promote changes in agricultural land management practices, which can reduce the impact of flooding and provide opportunities to incorporate wider benefits.		
		(d)	a public facing document be produced setting out what to do in the event of flooding and relevant legal remedies for those affected;	d Accepted – this will form part of the non-technical summary (easy reference guide summary document).	Completed
		(e)	BBLP be requested to seek information from lengthsman and local councillors on local conditions and identified flood risks as a matter of course; and	e Accepted – this will be captured within the 'Water on the Network' Annex of the Annual Plan.	Completed
		(f)	the Statutory Scrutiny Officer be informed of the annual review of the action plan and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman consider whether there are any material matters requiring consideration by the Committee.	Action plan received and to be considered.	
21 August 2017	West Mercia Police and	RESOLVED:	That a draft submission to cabinet be circulated to members of the committee for	Response submitted. Submission to PCC made by Executive opposing PCC proposal.	Completed

	Crime Consultation on Fire Governance	comment and the statutory scrutiny officer authorised to finalise the submission on the committee's behalf following consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee.	Home Office approve PCC proposal 26 March 2018.	
11 September 2017	Travellers' Sites Development Plan Document	RESOLVED: That (a) the executive be recommended to consider whether an additional temporary stopping place should be identified;	Cabinet Response 28 September 2017 (a) The occurrences of unauthorised encampments across the county will continue to be monitored and this information will feed into future reviews of the GTAA and be a relevant factor in consideration of the need to review the DPD. The effectiveness of providing the temporary stopping place at Leominster will also be monitored.	Completed
		(b) co-operative working with neighbouring authorities should be pursued;	(b) Agreed, local planning authorities are required to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with regard to relevant strategic matters under the Localism Act.	Completed
		(c) clarity be provided on how the TSP would operate in practice, including protocols for the allocation of places on the site including the management of different families, so that there is a clear public understanding;	c) it would be beneficial to expand on the text in paragraph 4.20 – 4.25 to clarify the purpose and characteristics of this type of site. This will now refer to a management policy that will explain how the temporary stopping place will be managed by the Licensing, Traveller and Technical Support team. A management policy for the site will be produced in consultation	Completed

			with the Police to ensure that a fair, transparent and accountable method of allocating pitches on the temporary stopping place is set out. The lengths of stay for each encampment will be negotiated on a case by case basis but will not exceed 14 days.	
		(d) consideration be given to specifying when a review of the policy should be conducted;	(d) Response – Agreed, it is recommended to strengthen section 7 to refer to a five yearly review of the accommodation requirements of travellers. It is also recommended to include reference to the monitoring of the effectiveness of the policies through the Annual Monitoring Report using the following indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of new traveller pitch commitments and completions. Finally it is recommended that the records of both unauthorised encampments and turnover of site kept by the council are reviewed to help monitor the effectiveness of the policies.	Completed
		e) dialogue continue with the Showmans' Guild to identify an appropriate site to meet their needs;	e) Response – Agreed, officers will continue to engage with the Showmans Guild in order to help identify and bring forward sites to meet the identified requirement. The progression of the draft plan to adoption will not prevent such a site being brought forward during the plan's lifetime.	Completed
		f) the scope to acquire land for sites by	f) Response - Legal advice has been sought on the suitability of this process in	Completed

		<p>Compulsory purchase order to increase the options and select sites in the most suitable locations be explored;</p>	<p>relation to this matter. CPO could be used in the context of gypsy and traveller sites and there are several acts which enable public bodies to compulsory purchase land for a particular purpose but they would have to justify and demonstrate that the required criteria have been fulfilled. Before a CPO can be implemented, the acquiring authority will have to justify it to the Secretary of State and must be able to demonstrate (in respect of the CPO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o that it is authorised by statute to purchase land compulsorily for a particular purpose and the CPO is necessary to achieve this purpose; o there is a compelling case in the public interest that sufficiently justifies interfering with the rights of those with an interest in the land affected; o the provisions of Article 1 (protection of property) of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights 1950 (and if a dwelling), Article 8 (protection of a person's home), should be taken into account <p>Therefore at this stage it is not recommended that the CPO process be pursued to identify land whilst there are options available to meet the requirement in the GTAA.</p>	
--	--	--	---	--

		(g) site allocation policy on residential sites should be clear;	g) Response - Site allocation policy is not a matter for the DPD. There is an existing Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation and Management Policy for Herefordshire 2015 which covers the existing residential sites managed by the council. However to aid a comprehensive picture to be provided, a document explaining the management and pitch allocation policy relating to the management of the Temporary stopping place will also be produced to accompany the DPD though the publication and examination processes.	Completed
		(h) officers be requested to ensure that existing sites are appropriately managed and maintained and that appropriate resources are in place for both capital improvements and maintenance.	h) Response – the management of the sites and allocation of resources are not matters for the DPD. Revenue and capital requirements for existing or planned sites in the council’s ownership will be considered and prioritised through the council’s normal budget planning process, and sites will be managed in accordance with the relevant policies	Completed
11 September 2017	Youth Justice Plan 2017-2018	RESOLVED: That (a) the Youth Justice Plan (at appendix A to the report) be endorsed and submitted to Cabinet for recommendation to full Council for approval; (b) the Cabinet Member (young people and children’s wellbeing) be asked: (i) to request the West Mercia	Reported to Cabinet 28 September 2017 Response: Resolutions are for the cabinet member young people and children’s wellbeing to consider as the plan is developed for 2018/19 (Annual report now made to Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee – see 17/9/2018)	Completed

		<p>Youth Justice Service Management Board to review the process for preparing the Youth Justice Plan in order to permit the scrutiny committee to comment on next year's plan at an earlier stage so that its comments can be taken into account in the plan's preparation;</p> <p>(ii) to request that an evaluation of informal disposals be included in next year's plan;</p> <p>(iii) to request that next year's plan be drafted so as to enable performance year on year to be compared;</p> <p>(iv) to request that mindful of the fact that the low numbers of offenders in Herefordshire can distort statistical comparison with other authorities information be presented within the Plan in a way that enables the circumstances of the Herefordshire cohort of offenders and performance of the service in addressing their needs to be assessed and compared year on year; and</p> <p>(c) a briefing note be requested setting out: how the statistics quoted at paragraph 2.4/2.6 of</p>		
--	--	--	--	--

		the draft plan compare in full with the 2016/17 plan; and also providing clarification on the operation of transition protocols and reassurance that there is a seamless and fully effective transition from youth to adult services.		
13 November 2017	Construction and Facilities Management Services to Herefordshire Council	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That (a) a further report/scoping statement be presented to the Committee to enable it to decide how it wishes to be involved in any further consideration of this matter and to what timetable and to include a review of matters of concern identified during the debate; and</p> <p>(b) officers be requested to be mindful of the importance of communicating any contractual changes to those potentially affected by them.</p>	<p>Cabinet decision 12 April 2018: Contract agreed for one year from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019.</p> <p>Deleted from work programme - 8 October 2018</p>	Completed
13 November 2017	Task and Finish Group Report:	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That (a) the findings of the task and finish group report: devolution be approved for submission to the executive with the addition</p>	<p>Cabinet considered on 15 February 2018.</p> <p>Recommendations accepted.</p>	Completed

	Devolution	<p>of reference to exploring the possibility of forming connections with non-contiguous areas with shared values and interests; and</p> <p>(b) the Committee be advised of the executive's response.</p>		
1 December 2017	Call-in of cabinet member decision in respect of charity shop waste disposal	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>(a) (i) there was inadequate evidence on which to base a decision and that not all relevant matters were fully taken into account; and</p> <p>(ii) the decision is disproportionate to the desired outcome; and</p> <p>(b) the decision be referred back to the Cabinet Member – contracts and assets and he be asked to reconsider it, reviewing: · the reputational implications for the Council, · the charity shop waste disposal policy as set out at appendix 4 to the report prior to the policy being implemented, such review to include the cost of administering the proposed policy and its enforcement;</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Decision 5 February 2018.</p> <p>Original decision confirmed</p>	Completed

		and actively considering partnership working to minimise waste tonnage from charity shops, and with the request that he consider an exemption for local county based charities that help to fulfil the council's corporate objectives.		
13 December 2017	Setting the 2018/19 budget and updating the medium term financial strategy	RESOLVED: That (a) the budget papers should make more open and transparent use of the public consultation responses in the commentary;	Cabinet response 12 January 2018. http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=48062#mgDocuments Consultees section of the report enhanced in response to this feedback	Completed
		b) a clearer narrative be provided on how the 3% uplift in the precept for adult social care is proposed to be used;	Paragraph 21 has been expanded to include this	Completed
		(c) as part of the review of the constitution it be recommended that all three scrutiny committees are able to review the budgets of their directorates, with all recommendations being fed in to the General Scrutiny Committee before submission to Cabinet;	This has been referred to the audit and governance committee for their review	Completed
		(d) that there be ongoing review of the deliverability of the looked after children budget, with reports provided every 2 months to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee accompanied by a profile of how savings are projected throughout the year with this information	To be added into the committees work plan	Completed

		also to be made available to Group Leaders for their performance challenge meetings;		
		(e) a clear breakdown of how income from car parking is being spent on transport services is shown in the budget papers for council together with a breakdown of the ECC 12 directorate efficiency savings.	Attached at appendix 7 to cabinet report	Completed
13 December 2017	Proposed 2018/19 capital bids and approval	RESOLVED: That it be recommended that the council makes funding available to enable the model farm development at Hildersley, Ross-on-Wye to proceed.	(Cabinet report 12 January 2018 para 27) A new line has been added to Appendix 1 for funding towards the development partnership activities with the detail of the activity to be provided as part of the approval to spend decision. In addition the committee asked for clarity on the proposal scores and funding, additional tables have been included in paragraphs 8 and 13 to provide this detail.	Completed
13 December 2017	Public Accountable body for NMiTE	RESOLVED: That (a) Council be recommended to put in place a robust and appropriate governance framework to supervise the discharge of its responsibility as the accountable body itself, or delegate this role to a Committee/Sub-Committee providing sufficient detail on the mechanism by which this role is to be discharged is provided to any such body to enable it to fulfil its role;	Responses submitted to Cabinet on 14 December 2017 http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=251&MId=6424&Ver=4 Concluded that the functions of the Audit and Governance Committee already covered assurance. Report to be made to Audit and Governance Committee in July 2018. Annual report to A&G on discharge of accountable body role expected.	Completed
		(b) the wording of paragraph 23 in the report to the Committee	b- the risk identified is the ability for the Department of Education to require a	ongoing

		<p>mirrored at paragraph 23 of the report to Cabinet on 14 December 2017 in relation to risk management be reviewed and amended as appropriate; and</p>	<p>clawback of funds. Such a provision has not currently been included in the revenue grant determination letter but provision is contained in relation to the capital grant. The circumstances where such clawback can be required will need to be clarified with the Department and if there is any provision this will need to be reflected in the drawn down agreement with NMiTE to ensure that the council is able to clawback monies paid to NMiTE where ineligible funds have been released. Any risks in relation to clawback of the Local Enterprise Partnership funding for the project are mitigated through payment of grant being made against defrayed costs only and therefore ineligible expenditure will be discounted before any grant is released. The council should only be responsible for repayment where there is a failure as accountable body in making appropriate checks</p>	
		<p>(c) subject to the above, Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the proposal that the council acts as accountable body for public funding to support establishment of a new university in Hereford, provided assurances are given that no costs will be incurred by the Council.</p>	<p>C - the chief finance officer will ensure that costs incurred in providing the accountable body role are recovered from the grant funding allocated to the project.</p>	Completed
29 January	Herefordshi	RESOLVED:	Additional communications resources have been	Completed

2018	re Council public Realm Service Report	That (a) the Council as client and BBLP as contractor consider how communication with parishes and ward members can be improved without incurring material cost;	employed by BBLP and HC to improve communications with all stakeholders.	.
		(b) the Council as client and BBLP as contractor be requested that in presenting information on performance for publication actual numbers should be provided alongside the %ages in the report to provide improved public understanding of the amount of work being carried out and outcomes delivered, with consideration also being given to disaggregating the data to present it along urban and rural lines, again without incurring material cost;	Strategic and operational performance indicators are under review to ensure that they continue to present the outcomes being achieved through the Public Realm services contract and reflect the change in investment made by the council through that contract.	Completed
		(c) the executive be recommended to consider whether funding can be made available to support the lengthsman scheme;	Under consideration in line with changes in the funding environment, results will be captured in the coming year's Annual Plan.	ongoing
		(d) the executive be recommended to consider whether a discretionary fund can be established to which parishes with fewer resources available to them could apply to support part/match funding of schemes;	Under consideration in line with changes in the funding environment, results will be captured in the coming year's Annual Plan.	ongoing

		(e) the executive be recommended to continue to explore all external funding opportunities to support road maintenance;	No further Highway maintenance bid opportunities have materialised from DfT yet. Background work on bid content is underway. Evidence is being prepared for the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into the funding for and governance of Local Road maintenance.	ongoing
		(f) the executive be recommended to consider allocating 1% of the Council's core budget increase to highways maintenance to continue the long term investment in the network;	Under consideration	ongoing
		g) the executive be recommended that sums secured from legal proceedings in relation to the Amey contract should be allocated for highways maintenance;	To be considered in the forthcoming Capital Programme allocations	Ongoing
		(h) the Council as client and BBLP as contractor be requested to ensure that parish councils are aware that salt deposits are available to be delivered to parishes if they apply;	Pre-season communications are underway.	Completed
		(i) the Council as client and BBLP as contractor be requested to review the snow contractor system to ensure that operatives have appropriate equipment available to them;	The winter service plan and associated operational arrangements have been the subject of review.	Completed
		(j) the executive be requested to review whether the claims management system in relation to damage to vehicles as a result of road defects is working fairly and	To be progressed	Ongoing

		appropriately;		
		(k) the executive be requested to give further consideration to how landowners can be encouraged to discharge their riparian responsibilities;	Work on this has been initiated	ongoing
		(l) the executive be requested to reappraise the classification of category 1 and 2 defects and whether the approach to the repair of potholes is satisfactory; and	This is the subject of detailed consideration in the review of the Highway Maintenance Plan.	ongoing
		(m) action to be taken on behalf to the Committee to engage with parish councils possibly through a spotlight review to provide the Committee with a representative picture of views across the county and demonstrate to parish councils that account is being taken of their views.	Task and finish review has been planned and information sought from parish councils.	ongoing
9 April 2018	Future delivery of museum, library and archive services	RESOLVED: That (a) the case for bringing the first floor room in Hereford library into use should be set out in more detail for cabinet to consider, including an assessment of community benefit;	Response in Cabinet report 28 June 2018 Agreed. Appendix 3 includes business case profile with community benefit and options.	Completed
		b) cabinet is requested to ensure that whilst recognising the need for services to be sustainable any proposals should aim to preserve and/or enhance quality of services and provide for their development;	Agreed. Included in recommendation to retain service standards for any contracted service and short-term savings have minimum impact on quality of service.	Completed
		(c) the resource implications of the report to cabinet should be expanded and clarified in relation to the impact of charitable relief;	Agreed and additional information included in the resources section:	Completed

		(d) the option of not outsourcing the services should be fully explored in the cabinet report;	Agreed. The alternative options to recommendations included in the report, also refer to appendix 2 for profile of services	Completed
		(e) the different nature of the three services should be fully recognised and taken into account in considering future options in whatever process is pursued	Agreed.	Completed
		(f) the legal implications section of the report should be reviewed to ensure it fully reflects provisions relating to archives;	Agreed and additional information included in the legal section.	Completed
		(g) income generation opportunities should be explored including charges for those using archive services and the scope for shared use of council buildings with commercial and charitable operations;	Agreed and reflected in the recommendations.	Completed
		(h) the opportunity to secure income from those storing records at HARC but not making them available for public use be explored; and	Agreed. Reflected in the recommendation in first making records available to the public and charging as an option.	Completed
		(i) the breakdown of the various usage figures in the report should be revisited and clarified for cabinet.	Agreed. See appendix 2 for full range of usage figures.	Completed
2 July 2018	Work Programme	Various Actions relating to work programme agreed		Completed

18 July 2018	Hereford Transport Package	That (a) the executive be recommended: I. that Natural England and Highways England are requested that they make a consultation response on the route selection, if they wish;	Cabinet response 27 July: Accepted. Both Natural England and Highways England were invited to provide a response to the consultation and sent reminders of the opportunity to do so. We will continue to engage with both organisations and ask that they provide a response during the phase three consultation.	Completed
		II. the landlord and the operators of Hereford Community Farm be asked if they would be prepared to write a statement as to the impact of the preferred route on the deliverability of their service;	Accepted. This will be done as part of the phase three consultation and any submission will inform the equality impact assessment.	Completed
		III. presentations delivered to the scrutiny committee be made publicly available with the cabinet member papers; and	Completed	Completed
		IV. it be ensured that all reports presented to cabinet are formally signed off by BBLP, to provide assurance;	Completed	completed
		(b) the executive be advised that the committee feels able to support the proposed red route based on the current evidence presented, subject to the above recommendations;	Reported to Cabinet 27 July 2018.	ongoing

		(c) a high level members briefing seminar for all members on understanding the process of delivering a new road scheme be provided, from which councillors can disseminate that understanding to members of the public and the information be placed on the council website;		ongoing
		(d) detailed proposals on the active travel measures come back to the committee for their own scrutiny once a decision on a preferred route has been taken, with identification of those active travel measures that can go ahead regardless of delivery of the by-pass at the appropriate time;	Reflected in Work programme	ongoing
		(e) detailed proposals on the biodiversity measures come back to this committee for their own scrutiny once a decision on a preferred route has been taken with a detailed design at an appropriate time; and	Reflected in Work programme	ongoing
		(f) a range of discretionary powers to compensate households impacted by the proposed route are considered and options are presented back to this committee at the appropriate time.	Reflected in work programme	ongoing
8 October 2018	Economic Development Strategies	RESOLVED: That (a) the executive be encouraged to ensure that in developing the strategic	Submitted to executive.	ongoing

	Review	economic plan the plan includes more detail on market towns, supporting service centres and the voluntary sector and energy projects and reflects the unique selling points of the county; and		
		b) the Director of the LEP be invited to discuss with the Statutory Scrutiny Officer when it might be timely for the Committee to give consideration to progress on the strategic economic plan or other Marches LEP matters and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer be authorised following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to put forward any matters requiring consideration by the Committee as part of its work programme.		ongoing
30 November 2018	SETTING THE 2019/20 BUDGET, CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND UPDATING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY	RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND THAT: (a) the executive considers a strategy of committing the council's capital budget to being allied to those of their funding partners and funding regimes; (b) the executive continues to work with other local authorities, especially the more rural authorities, to lobby government and local MPs, on business rates and fairer funding settlements and requests that the earliest notice possible be given of funding changes;	Submitted to Executive	

		(c) the executive consider the recommendations made by the Adults and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:		
5 February 2019	ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL 2019-20	<p>RESOLVED: That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This committee notes the recommendations from the Children and Young People and Adults and Wellbeing scrutiny committees (see below). 2. The committee welcomes the progressive procurement proposals set out in the alternative budget. 3. The committee notes the proposals in paragraph 4.13 of the alternative budget proposal and recommends that additional neighbouring local authorities are considered, namely Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. 4. The committee would welcome added clarity from It's Our County in connection to the alternative budget by naming the existing council plans that it is aligned to, including, the local transport plans, the carbon management plan, sustainable modes of travel to school strategy and local flood risk management strategy. 5. The committee would welcome added clarity from It's Our County in defining 	Reported to Council 15 February 2019.	

		<p>the activities associated with some of the investment proposals, where they are able to do so, to provide confidence that they represent value for money.</p> <p>6. The committee recommends that It's our County welcomes the suggestion to invite parish councils to engage in a debate around how local priorities and spend are set. And, that It's Our County note the offer to utilise the parish summits as a mechanism for doing this.</p> <p>7. The committee shares the concerns of the other scrutiny committees over the short term nature of the funding which does not extend beyond 2019/20. This presents difficulties in determining, with certainty, the outcomes that can be delivered.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--