

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 24 September 2020**

Time: **2.30 pm**

Place: **Online meeting**

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

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Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet

Membership

Chairperson Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ellie Chowns
Councillor Pauline Crockett
Councillor Gemma Davies
Councillor John Harrington
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Ange Tyler

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>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>	
3.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020.</p>	9 - 22
<p>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i></p> <p><i>9:30am on Monday 21 September 2020.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</i></p>		
4.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p>	
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p>	
6.	<p>HEREFORD LEISURE POOL RE-OPENING</p> <p>To recommend to Council the addition of a new capital budget to ensure the swift reopening of the Hereford leisure pool that has been closed since suffering from flooding in October 2019.</p>	23 - 28
7.	<p>MAJOR CONTRACT PERFORMANCE REVIEW</p> <p>This report shares the findings of a review of the performance of the council's major contract, the Public Realms Contract, and recommends improvements for approval by Cabinet.</p>	29 - 36
8.	<p>QUARTER 1 BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>To review performance for Quarter 1 2020/21 and the budget forecast.</p>	37 - 86
9.	<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK</p> <p>To propose a refresh of the councils Performance Management Framework; setting out the councils approach to business planning, risk management and performance monitoring.</p>	87 - 118

10. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY 2020 - 2023	119 - 140
To approve and endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Care Leavers covenant.	
11. FOSTERING AND ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORTS 2019/20	141 - 170
To review the Adoption and Fostering services performance report and approve related documents.	
12. TALK COMMUNITY STRATEGIC APPROACH	171 - 186
To approve the Talk Community strategic approach and its implementation, including the development and delivery of a comprehensive Talk Community programme and strategy.	

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- 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.
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¹ The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

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The council is making an official recording of this public meeting. These recordings form part of the public record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's web-site.

Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and six other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Cllr David Hitchiner (Leader) (Herefordshire Independents)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Felicity Norman (Deputy Leader) (The Green Party)	Children and Families
Cllr Gemma Davies (Herefordshire Independents)	Commissioning, Procurement and Assets
Cllr Ellie Chowns (The Green Party)	Environment, Economy and Skills
Cllr Liz Harvey (It's Our County)	Finance and Corporate Services
Cllr Pauline Crockett (Herefordshire Independents)	Health and Adult Wellbeing
Cllr John Harrington (It's Our County)	Infrastructure and Transport
Cllr Ange Tyler (Herefordshire Independents)	Housing, Regulatory Services and Community Safety

The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

Who attends cabinet meetings?

	Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
	Chairmen of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
	Political group leaders attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion. Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.

Herefordshire Council

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held as Online meeting on Thursday 23 July 2020 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)
Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett, Gemma Davies, John Harrington, Liz Harvey and Ange Tyler

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors Peter Jinman and Jenny Bartlett

Group leaders / representatives in attendance Councillors Jonathan Lester, John Hardwick, Alan Seldon, Bob Matthews and Trish Marsh

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Elissa Swinglehurst, Carole Gandy and Jonathan Lester

Officers in attendance: Chief executive, Director for economy and place, Solicitor to the council, Chief finance officer, Director for adults and communities and Assistant Director Education Development and Skills

158. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hardwick for item 6 – declared an interest as a resident of Fownhope although the matter under consideration did not affect him to any greater extent than others in that ward.

160. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

161. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 9 - 12)

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

162. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 13 - 14)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

163. ALLOCATION OF POTHOLE AND CHALLENGE FUND 2020/2021 GRANT FOR HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND REALLOCATION OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGETS FOR PRIORITY FLOOD WORKS

The cabinet member infrastructure and transport introduced the report. He explained the impact of the flooding experienced in the county and the scale of repairs needed. The council needed to identify how the remaining high priority flood repair schemes totalling approximately £4m were to be funded. An allocation of £7.674m had been made to Herefordshire from the Pothole and Challenge Fund. The government had confirmed that the council could use this funding to address the flood damage. Efforts to secure additional funding from the government had so far been unsuccessful.

The cabinet member felt that as the Pothole and Challenge Fund monies were originally intended to address other improvements to the road network it was unfair that the council should now be expected to use some of this money to undertake repairs from the extraordinary flooding that had occurred. The cabinet member proposed that the £7.674m be added to the capital programme and allocated for the original purpose and that the council be asked to agree adjustments to the capital programme to find the funds needed to address the priority flood repairs.

In discussing the options for allocating funding cabinet members noted the following points:

- It was very disappointing that additional funding had not been made available by the government and both Herefordshire MPs had been asked to pursue this as a matter of urgency;
- The Pothole and Challenge Fund allocation should be spent as intended on the road network for the whole county;
- Lack of investment in the wider road network would deter visitors, impact on economic recovery and there may be further flooding to deal with in the autumn / winter 2020;
- When presenting the budget in February it had been highlighted that the council had not exhausted its capacity to borrow so that it had capacity to deliver on additional projects in the county plan;
- The current capital programme had been approved by council less than six months ago and the projects currently on the programme were intended to deliver on the adopted county plan;
- There were no easy options to reallocate funding from other projects on the capital programme;
- The cabinet should make a recommendation to council on how to fund the repair works, it was then open to council to debate this and agree a way forward;
- Borrowing the additional funds required was proposed as the least worst option as it would not prevent the council making the capital investments it wanted to.

Group leaders were invited to put comments and queries from their respective groups, it was noted that:

- Full discussion would take place at the council meeting;
- The logic of the proposals was understood;
- There was reluctance to see monies taken away from other projects;
- The allocation of funds from the Pothole and Challenge Fund had been communicated to the council before the flood damage occurred, but the details had only been announced after the flooding took place and with the caveat that it could be used for flood repair;
- There might yet be further funding from government so it was right to have the option to readjust allocations if this happened;
- The government had recently announced significant funding for flood defences so there might be an opportunity to restate the county's case;
- The savings on the Hillside project were welcomed;
- The ultimate source of all the funding options was the tax payer and the council should take care to rigidly monitor the scheme;
- Roadside landowners should be made to fulfil their responsibilities to maintain drains and other infrastructure to reduce highway flooding;
- Managed decline of the road network could not be allowed to continue.

Taking account of the points raised, the cabinet member infrastructure and transport proposed an amendment to recommendation (e) in the report to state that extended borrowing would be the proposed source of funding for the priority flood repairs. This

was seconded by the cabinet member finance and corporate services. The revised amendment was unanimously supported.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Cabinet recommend to Council that the £7.674m (Pothole and Challenge Fund 2020/21 grant allocation) be added to the capital programme as a new programme;**
- (b) Subject to the decision taken at Council in regard to the Pothole and Challenge Fund 2020/21 grant allocation, authorisation be given to commit this funding to deliver highway maintenance works in the current financial year, as detailed in paragraph 23 of this report;**
- (c) The director of economy and place be authorised to agree, through the contract governance arrangements, adjustment to the programme and budget allocation in the public realm services contract annual plan to include programmes of work funded by the Pothole and Challenge Fund in 2020/21;**
- (d) Cabinet recommend to Council that the £4.027m (Priority Flood Repair Works) be added to the capital programme as a new programme;**
- (e) Cabinet recommends to Council that priority flood repair works totalling £4.027m, as set out in paragraph 24 of this report, are funded through the use of extended borrowing (Option 1);**
- (f) subject to the decision taken at Council confirming the changes to the capital programme, the director of economy and place be authorised to procure the priority flood repair works; and**
- (g) In the event that new funds are made available by Government specifically to address the priority flood repair works, then those funds would be added to the Priority Flood Repair Works programme.**

164. BETTER WAYS OF WORKING REVISED IMPLEMENTATION

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the item. She highlighted that the proposed changes had resulted from the council's response to the coronavirus epidemic. The staff survey carried out had a high response rate and showed positive feedback from staff regarding the new working arrangements that had been adopted. Increased remote working allowed the council to look at its property portfolio to see what savings could be made at a time when it would be facing financial pressures. The cabinet member noted an addition to recommendation (f) in the report whereby Ross-on-Wye town council would also be consulted regarding the reconfiguration and improvement works at the Ryefield Centre.

The assistant director corporate support explained that a decision on the future occupation of Elgar House needed to be taken now if the break clause was to be exercised. She set out the arrangement that would be in place for those staff members who needed access to an office and the options if social distancing measures were reduced. There would continue to be some services, particularly around social care, that would need to work from an office base and this had been taken into consideration. The capacity of the multi-agency offices in Leominster and Ross-on-Wye would be increased which would benefit the market towns and help reduce staff travel.

In discussing the report cabinet members noted that:

- Staff had responded positively and with flexibility to the changes in working practices;
- There might be unexpected and unintended consequences which the council should try to anticipate and be ready to respond to;

- Staff had reported better work-life balance as a result of increased home working;
- The council would need to make sure that staff working from home were given appropriate support to do so in a healthy way e.g. making sure appropriate equipment was used and regular screen breaks taken.

Group leaders were asked for the views and queries of their respective groups. It was noted that:

- The council workforce was very flexible and it was appropriate to consider the future of buildings that might not be needed any more;
- There was some concern that the response to the virus and expiring of leases was driving the changes and that the benefits of having staff under the same roof would be lost;
- Spaces such as the canteen in Plough Lane had been useful for making informal connections and it was hoped that these opportunities would not be lost;
- Moving to more remote and home working could have a positive impact for those with limited access to transport, disabilities or care responsibilities;
- Only 52% had responded to the staff survey, although this was a good rate compared with previous surveys it still meant that only just over half of staff had responded.

In response to queries raised it was explained that the decisions taken by cabinet in February had already set a lot in train and that the council had already taken steps to facilitate remote working such as replacing desk tops with laptops to aid flexible working and improving networks. This had allowed the council to move more quickly when the virus restrictions had been put in place. The changes had pushed teams to try new ways of working and had opened up opportunities.

It was agreed that:

- (a) based on an increase of home working, notice is served to terminate the lease of Elgar House by activating break clause making a base budget saving of £205k and disposing of the Old Priory in Leominster creating a base budget saving of £90k;**
- (b) Disposal of other sites in Hereford when operationally appropriate covering 1a, 8 and 10 St Owen's Street and Union Street offices creating a combined base budget saving of £100k with delegated authority to assistant director, technical services in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets;**
- (c) the timescale to serve notice on Nelson House is delegated to assistant director, technical services in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets;**
- (d) base budget of £60k is realigned from property services site running costs to cover annual revenue expenditure associated with the new model of working at Plough Lane;**
- (e) the Ryefield Centre in Ross on Wye is retained as a council base in the south of the county; and**
- (f) revised approved capital spend for BWOW of up to £850k based on:**
 - **reconfiguration and improvement works at the Ryefield Centre up to the value of £500k in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets and Ross-on-Wye Town Council;**
 - **allocation of up to £350k to deliver the better ways of working project through delegated authority to the assistant director corporate support in**

consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets.

165. HERITAGE ACTION ZONE - LEOMINSTER

The cabinet member environment, economy and skills introduced the report and welcomed the collaboration between the council, Leominster town council and the local community. It was hoped that this model would be built on going forward. It was noted that this was the first report to be brought to cabinet with an explicit section on climate and ecological impact.

The cabinet member summarised how the project would progress and highlighted a correction to paragraphs 48 and 49 which should both start with 'we will'.

The cabinet member children and families commented that as a resident, town councillor and ward member in Leominster she was pleased to see this project coming forward.

In discussion of the report cabinet members noted that:

- The match funding was proportionate from each grant that businesses made so the figure set out in the report was a conservative estimate, while there was some concern whether businesses in the area would invest in the current economic climate other funds had shown sustained level of interest;
- The programme would have to be condensed to meet the March 2024 deadline for expenditure, officers were confident that the projects in year 1 could be delivered and then the remaining grant schemes could be re-profiled into years 2 and 3;
- The council would look at including conditions on the use of local labour.

Group leaders were invited to set out the views and queries of their group. It was noted that:

- Ward members reported that businesses in Leominster were looking to invest;
- The outcome of the project should be reviewed with a view to learning lessons that could be applied to other market towns.

It was agreed that:

- (a) The council enters into a funding agreement with The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE) to deliver the Heritage Action Zone Programme in Leominster as per the Delivery Plan with an anticipated total budget of £3.6m from the capital programme (£1.8 of which is match funded) and £1.8m from HBMCE;**
- (b) The Director of Economy and Place, in consultation with Section 151 Officer, be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to secure the funding agreement between the Herefordshire Council and The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England;**
- (c) The Director of Economy and Place be authorised to sign all sub grant agreements (for the building grants) to grant recipients and take day to day operational decisions, including any variations to any sub grant agreements;**
- (d) The Director for Economy and Place, in consultation with Section 151 Officer, and approved by Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and skills and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport, be authorised to sign any programme changes which may include identifying new projects in light of Covid19;**

- (e) Section 151 Officer agrees that the Council provide forward funding grant payments to grant recipients up to a cumulative maximum of £500k over any quarterly period, pending drawn down of funds from the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.**

166. HEREFORDSHIRE MULTI - AGENCY PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX NEEDS - PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

The cabinet member children and families introduced the report and explained that the council wanted to ensure that young people with disabilities and complex needs had the maximum choice over their futures.

In discussing the report cabinet members raised the following key points:

- The protocol was an important document and this approach was a step forward in dealing with families differently;
- A smooth transition to adulthood was important;
- The equality and diversity statement was commended;
- The protocol would be kept under review;
- The children and adult teams worked closely together to produce this protocol and work was continuing to align processes beneath this protocol.

Group leaders were invited to express the views and queries of their group. The following points were noted:

- The importance of the protocol was recognised;
- Typographical corrections were needed for the final version of the protocol;
- It was suggested that the first paragraph under decision-making on page 9 of the policy could be better worded;
- It was suggested that the sections on resource panels and quality and monitoring on page 11 should better set out what was going to happen;
- The employment rate was very low and support to improve this was welcomed.

The chair of the children and young people scrutiny committee stated that employment, training and further education was always a challenge for this group of young people and would be made more so with the impact of Covid-19. It was particularly important for this group to have access to leisure and social activities with their peer groups although that might be difficult to deliver for the foreseeable future.

It was agreed to:

- (a) Approve the Herefordshire Multi - Agency Protocol for Children and Young People with Disabilities and Complex Needs - Preparing for Adulthood;**
- (b) Delegate the responsibility for reviewing and technical updating of the Protocol to the Head of Additional Needs.**

167. JOHN KYRLE HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM: NEW PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report. The assistant director education development and skills summarised the key points:

- The extension would be funded by grant monies from the Department for Education;
- There was a predicted growth in demand for secondary school places in Ross-on-Wye, as the only secondary school in the town John Kyrle High School was the logical choice to provide additional places;
- The extension would allow the school to provide an additional 30 places per year group starting in September 2021;

- It was proposed that the school would manage the build and manage the risk of any overspend, the council would pay grant monies on receipt of invoices to ensure appropriate expenditure;
- The grant was subject to the project obtaining planning permission.

In discussing the report cabinet members highlighted the importance of aiming for the highest environmental standards in buildings supported by the council and hoped that future projects would learn from this extension.

Group leaders expressed support for the proposal in light of housing growth in the area and the high standards at the school. The high environmental specification was welcomed as it was noted schools represented a large part of the council's carbon emissions.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Subject to securing planning consent, a grant of £2,300,900 be awarded to John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form to fund an extension to the John Kyrle High School & Sixth Form Centre to enable its permanent expansion from seven forms of entry (210 pupils per year group) to eight forms of entry (240 pupils per year group); and**
- (b) The grant being made subject to a requirement that the build be designed and completed with the objective of obtaining a BREEAM excellent or Passivhaus certification. £260k of the grant being allocated is specifically for this purpose.**

The meeting ended at 4.22 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 23 July 2020

Question 1

Mr T Pincham, Hereford

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

With reference to point 9, "Capital Outturn" in the End of 2019/20 corporate budget and performance report considered by cabinet at its meeting of 25 June, noting that various development projects have been delayed due to COVID-19, is now the time to actually speed up key projects to stimulate much needed economic activity locally e.g. football ground development?

Response

Over the last few months since the outbreak began the council along with other public partners have been focussed on the response phase of the outbreak, ensuring that communities are safe, that those shielded or self-isolating had the support that they need, and that businesses received the national grant funds to sustain them during the lockdown period. During this period the majority of construction projects (private and public) paused work on site, and as did the development of new activity until the impact of Covid 19 were better understood. As the restrictions imposed by Government were lifted, the construction industry was able to restart with appropriate measures in place to operate safely. I'm pleased to say that the Council current key projects that are on site, the Shell Store, Cyber Centre and Station Approach student accommodation are all now progressing well to completion. All these projects are contributing to supporting the economy. As we move into the recovery phase, I agree that the right capital projects will have a role in supporting the economy. We will be looking at what projects are still right to take forward at this time and whether they could be accelerated to meet the priorities of our County Plan, improve the quality of life for local residents and enable the development of sustainable higher value employment opportunities for the future.

Supplementary Question

I note the Cabinet was originally due to approve the £14.375m investment for student and / or key worker accommodation, a community room and spectator provision located on Blackfriars Street at Hereford Football Club. However, the cabinet meeting of 31st March was obviously cancelled due to COVID-19 - so a decision to approve was postponed.

All three elements of this specific project have the potential to provide significant economic and social value to the city centre.

As such, may I ask when the council will now proceed with a technical design and full planning submission as originally planned for discussion by the Cabinet in March?

Response

I thank the questioner for their enthusiasm for this project. Clearly in light of the coronavirus crisis we do need to review our capital programme - that's work that's going on as we speak - and it is clearly of central importance to us as to the questioner to ensure that our capital investments deliver maximum economic and social value to the community and so that is the basis for doing this review and we will make decisions on specific projects as soon as possible.

Question 2

Mrs B John, Leominster

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

I was delighted when the Department for Transport announced funding to help local authorities like ours implement Emergency Active Travel measures, and know that many councillors are very enthusiastic about implementing them. However, like me, I expect they were really disappointed to hear that the scheme put forward by the Council did not secure the full provisional allocation of £40,000 in phase 1. Herefordshire is one of just fifteen councils awarded around 50% or less of the provisional allocation.

In order for the Council to ensure they receive at least 100% of the indicative funding of £160,000, provisionally allocated to Herefordshire in phase 2, they will need to act on the feedback on why their first bid was only partially successful. What was the feedback from Government which the Council received on the bid for tranche 1?

Response

We were very disappointed that government did not award the full indicative allocation of £40,000 funding for the first phase of Emergency Active Travel Measures. The Council's application set out a range of measures that would facilitate active travel and support social distancing in Hereford City and the five market towns in Herefordshire but it would seem it was felt our measures were not sufficient to receive the full first tranche allocation. Other authorities that did better proposed setting aside more road space and implementing more road closures, something more difficult to do in our market towns and City where we often only have one lane of traffic in each direction, unlike bigger urban areas like London or Manchester. The initial feedback we got was short and vague and we have requested further detailed feedback on our bid to help inform the development of our bid for the second allocation later in the summer and will do all we can to achieve the full allocation of funds for Tranche 2.

Supplementary Question

I think it's a very good idea for the council to challenge the vague and cursory feedback received on the last bid. I understand that it is hard to compare Herefordshire with a large city like Manchester, however I understand Shropshire Council received its full allocation. I suggest Herefordshire Council liaises with the transport team in Shropshire Council to see what they submitted and to find out what they can learn from them for the next bid.

When will Herefordshire Council publish the more detailed feedback from central government for tranche 1 please?

Response

The minute we have that advice we'll publish it, we simply haven't had it and we've been chasing it which is very disappointing but the minute we have it we will share it and we have asked I think for about the third time now. In relation to the other points about Shropshire that's a very interesting one and I will make sure that we do liaise with Shropshire and I've also asked that we liaise with other organisations such as Sustrans and cycling organisations to make sure that we get the very, very best advice so we can get the very greatest allocation for the second tranche.

Question 3

Ms K Jamieson, Ross on Wye

To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets

I see from the agenda that John Kyrle is to be allocated a grant for a new science block. I am delighted to see the grant being made subject to a requirement that the build be designed and

completed with the objective of obtaining a BREEAM excellent or Passivhaus certification. £260k of the grant being allocated is specifically for this purpose.'

The wording in the report recommendation part b however is somewhat unclear as it says 'with the objective of obtaining this certification' rather than 'obtaining' and this is repeated several times in the report. Would the Council confirm that, as the management of the project is being handed over to the school, that the council will be checking that the building does indeed achieve the BREEAM or Passivhaus certification?

Response

Thank you for your question Ms Jamieson. You will have seen that Herefordshire Council recently released its new Carbon Management Plan and that we are fully committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Schools are a key area of this plan, where we aim to reduce emissions by 40% over the next five years. To this end, Cabinet were unanimous in stipulating that as a condition of the grant, the extension at John Kyrle High school must meet BREEAM excellent or Passivhaus certification.

Since Cabinets condition to include sustainability features within this build, a significant amount of work has been undertaken by officers, the school and contractor to embed this ethos and alter design with BREEAM excellent the chosen method of sustainability. The contractor has confirmed that the extension itself will meet the standards of BREEAM excellent and it is extremely likely the overall project will achieve BREEAM Excellent certification, however this can only be confirmed once a BREEAM Pre Assessment has been conducted during the pre-design stage. The wording within the report is reflective for this reason.

Please be assured that although we are awarding a grant to the school, who will project manage the extension, they will still be accountable to Herefordshire council and funds will only be released on receipt of approved invoices. Officers have been and will continue to work closely with the school, meeting regularly with them and the contractor to make sure a number of obligations are being met, such as, achieving value for money, quality standards and that sustainability is at the forefront throughout both the design and build stage.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 23 July 2020

Question 1

Councillor Paul Symonds, Ross East Ward

To: leader of the council

In light of the proposed decision regarding the core strategy review, including community infrastructure levy, will the Leader please provide all Members with a proposed project plan for this showing when a report on adoption of CIL will be submitted for scrutiny.

Response

The report referenced by Cllr Symonds, which is currently in preparation, is due for a decision by the end of September and will include a recommendation regarding the preparation of a CIL alongside the Core Strategy Update. It will include a project timetable for the process required to develop, consider and adopt a CIL alongside the Core Strategy Update and this will be available for members to review as soon as the report is published. We will ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for scrutiny during the preparation of both the Core Strategy update and CIL, at key stages during the Core Strategy update process.

Supplementary Question

I take it then, that in the 12 months since this Council requested Cabinet to bring forward proposals for adopting Community Infrastructure Levy no work has been done to make this happen. Can the Leader therefore advise why this request has been ignored, or provide evidence of any work undertaken?

Whilst flooding and Coronavirus have been huge challenges, there were at least 6 months prior to these in which work could have been done to update previous draft proposals for Members' consideration. Whilst there were floods last year too of course, I don't imagine that led to the immediate disbandment of the strategic planning team.

A cynical person might think that the intention is to delay any decision until Herefordshire Council ensures it has captured all the income from planned major developments through s106, rendering adoption of CIL an academic exercise of little actual financial benefit to Town and Parish Councils.

Response

My belief Councillor Symonds is that this is a genuine delay - we have had exceptional circumstances. We are very open to either having a CIL or saying the current arrangement, we have no preconceived idea about which it should be so the process does need to be gone through correctly. There is a timetable in the answer which has been given and that will be followed through.

Question 2

Councillor Nigel Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty Ward

To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets

I would appreciate, in order to understand the financial rationale, a little more information in respect of Maylord Shopping Centre. Could such information as any rents outstanding from the

last quarter day (Jun 24th) and the business rate valuation for all units and empty units be made available?

Response

Thank you for your question Cllr Shaw.

We have 54 units in which the rateable value ranges from £6,000 to £94,500.

The question of arrears is somewhat complicated in that the previous owners invoiced the tenants for the June quarter rent, some of who made payment. The council's management company, Montagu Evans, is liaising with both the previous owner and the respective tenants to resolve this as soon as possible.

Given the complexities and potentially commercially sensitive information, I am happy to arrange a briefing for you, with officers, to go through the areas you have questioned including a full list of the rateable values for the premises within the Maylord purchase.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for your answer. I am concerned that the Council does not have an accurate grasp on the finances of its new purchase. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the economics of the centre further with officers. I would also welcome an opportunity to speak with the new centre manager who I understand has been in place only since March.

To attempt to make a commercial success of this acquisition will likely need an investment of several million pounds. I hope that the administration recognise that and I look forward to seeing a costed business plan being published soon.

Prior to this quarter rent arrears stood at over £1/4 million and service charge arrears at over £60k, the main debt being from the immediate previous quarter. Has the new managing agent been given instructions to minimise the landlords shortfalls through a business rates minimisation program and by vigorously chasing rent and service charge debts?

Response

Written response provided:

As per my original response, I am happy to arrange a more detailed briefing with officers to brief you on the details you have requested. I can confirm that our agents Montague Evans are instructed to minimise landlord shortfalls and actively pursue the payment of rent and service charges due. I would also be happy to introduce you to the staff managing the site on the Council's behalf.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Hereford leisure pool re-opening
Report by:	Cabinet Member Commissioning, Procurement and Assets

Classification

Open

Decision type

Budget and policy framework

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To recommend to Council the addition of a new capital budget to ensure the swift reopening of the Hereford leisure pool that has been closed since suffering from flooding in October 2019.

The majority of reinstatement work costs are funded from insurance cover however to open the centre to the public uninsured works require funding. The funding of these costs is proposed to be from a combination of existing and new capital budget, funded from prudential borrowing.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **To recommend to Council the addition of a new capital budget to fund un-insured regulatory and essential works required at the Hereford leisure pool. To be funded by existing budgets wherever possible and, failing that, new prudential borrowing not expected to exceed £505k.**

Alternative options

1. To not approve the decision at this time. Any delay in approval would result in the inability to complete the required works in tandem with the insurance funded works. This would result in additional time and cost.
2. To not fund the uninsured works required. The council could decide not to fund the uninsured works required, the contractors on site are able to complete the insured works and return the site to the council, as landlord, however the building could not re-open. To re-open the building the council would then need to scope and procure the essential and regulatory works that are needed. This would result in additional cost, time and delay.
3. To look at the longer term position of the pool. This report is to re-open a popular facility in a timely manner. The council could decide not to do this and instead seek an alternative site. This is expected to take a substantial time with no facility being available during that time. It would be preferable to approve this report and discuss with the tenant the potential future options.

Key considerations

4. Hereford leisure pool is a council owned asset with Halo, as tenant, responsible for the provision of leisure facilities. In October 2019 the Hereford leisure pool suffered a flood event that resulted in the electricity supply to the on-site water pumps failing. The site has remained closed whilst insurance funded works took place to reinstate the electricity supply however a subsequent flooding event in February 2020 extended the damage to the site before these works concluded.
5. A new electrical entry point is now in place and testing is on-going. The damage to the site is substantial and multi-million insurance settlement works are well underway however on site investigations have highlighted a need to spend additional funds on uninsured works to enable a certified building to be re-opened for public use.
6. The works required are not covered by insurance due to the site investigations discovering legacy remedial works that require addressing. Due to the nature of the uninsured works required the council has appointed a quantity surveyor and mechanical and electrical engineer to verify that the works are required, correctly allocated and appropriately costed.
7. It would be beneficial to complete the uninsured works at the same time as the insured works to save costs, time and duplication. The council is able to do this through utilising an available medium construction related works procurement framework agreement. This framework allows for a direct award of a contract to the contractor that has already undertaken significant works on the current site.

8. The recommendation is to approve the addition of a new capital budget to fund the works required. The exact value to be agreed following confirmation of costs and utilising existing budgets wherever possible, it is expected that prudential borrowing will be required.
9. The site is subject to future flooding however a permanent site pump has been agreed by insurers as a satisfactory mitigation measure. A new electrical entry point (higher than previously sited) and a back-up generator socket to the new pump will ensure flood water is effectively pumped outside of the building as future flooding events occur.
10. This report recommends using the on-site contractor to complete the uninsured works required to reopen the site to the public, this is expected to be before spring 2021.

Community impact

11. There is a need to re-open the site as quickly as possible to enable county residents to use the Halo facility, this includes the provision of swimming lessons to school children. Whilst the site remains closed a number of physical well-being activities are not being provided.

Environmental Impact

The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

Whilst this is a decision on re-opening an existing asset and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy wherever possible.

Equality duty

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.
12. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the

delivery of services. As this is a decision is to reinstate previous service provision, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

13. The regulatory and essential uninsured works required are expected to be in line with the table below:-

Site area	Regulatory works £
Plant room lighting	15,830
Electrical upgrade	169,802
Lightening protection	23,817
Fire alarm replacement	172,697
Plant room flat roof	14,736
Roof anti climb measures	8,358
Concrete repairs	77,000
Roof mounted pipework	22,000
Totals	504,239

14. The actual cost detail continues to be assessed and reviewed however the above is a good indication of the expected contribution required. Work continues in reviewing current budgets to identify underspends that could be redirected to fund this new commitment. However if the above sum requires funding from prudential borrowing the cost of repaying this borrowing in future years would be approximately £31k per annum.
15. The indicative costs exclude site preliminary costs based on the assumption that the works will be carried out on a concurrent basis to the main reinstatement program and overall period. If this was not the case the preliminary costs would be incurred in addition to the costs shown above.

Legal implications

16. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides for the council a General Power of Competence, which means that the council has the power to do anything that an individual may do. This power allows the council to both commission the recommended works and, if necessary borrow the money to fund the works. Any borrowing will have to be in accordance with the prudential code on borrowing.
17. The contractor undertaking the insured reinstatement works can be procured directly by the council through an available framework contract for such works and appropriate contractual documentation will be put in place to protect the council's interests in undertaking the additional essential non-insured remediation works.

Risk management

18. There is a risk of on-going site testing resulting in additional spend being required. This is mitigated by the good progress being made on site and the completion of an independent quantity surveyor cost review of the estimation provided.
19. There remains a risk that the site will flood at future dates. This is mitigated by the installation of an on-site pump coupled with a new electrical entry site and back-up generator plug should that be needed.
20. There is a risk that using the on-site contractor may not provide the best value. The onsite contractor is well regarded and cost estimations provided are subject to an independent quote comparison.

Consultees

21. Consultation on this key decision has been taken with the political groups whom support the recommendations proposed.
22. Cllr Kenyon supports bringing the swimming pool back online and the measures the council are taking to ensure value for money. At the same time suggesting an upgrade to the slide.
23. The true independents support the proposal.
24. The green party support the proposal with it being in clear public interest to re-open this important non-profit community facility that has clear public health benefits.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Major contract performance review
Report by:	Cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

This report shares the findings of a review of the performance of the council's major contracts for Public Realm services and Property and Facilities Management services, and recommends improvements for approval by Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The suggested improvements are implemented in a timely manner to improve the performance of the major contracts for Public Realm services and Property and Facilities Management services, specifically:-**
 - a. **Build technical knowledge within the Council**
 - b. **Improve internal communication and education**
 - c. **Increase the involvement of the procurement team**
 - d. **Set up a contract management framework**
 - e. **Consider an appropriate Contract Management System (CMS)**

Alternative options

1. This is a factual report with suggestions for improvements. The alternative option is not to implement some or all of the improvements suggested. This would result in reduced improvements to the performance of the major contract in place.

Key considerations

2. Herefordshire Council has carried out a review in relation to the Public Realm services and Property and Facilities Management services contracts provided by Balfour Beatty Living Places to identify possible improvements to the current contract management processes. The review was conducted via both desktop review of documents in relation to contract administration and contract management as well as interviews with key stakeholders in the Council to obtain qualitative data from multiple perspectives on what is considered to work well and does not with the contract.

Assessment of the contract administration process

3. Performance monitoring

- 3.1. The council outsourced the majority of highways and technical staff in 2008/9 as part of establishing a thin client model. This approach continued with the procurement of the Public Realm contract in 2013 with a transfer of staff from the previous provider to Balfour Beatty Living Places. As a result of this transfer of technical expertise, Balfour Beatty hold a strong bargaining position to deliver a wide range of works beyond the core programme. As a result, the Council has few in house technical resources and relies on Balfour Beatty for technical expertise and this can limit the ability to effectively monitor technical delivery performance.
- 3.2. The contract management team has 11 positions (including 4 vacancies) for Balfour Beatty contracts. There is a current proposal to reduce the team size to 9 positions. Based on this information, there appear to be sufficient resources within the contract management team to effectively scrutinise and perform sufficient number of checks on quality or price. However, the Council's contract management team's activities rely on tried and tested processes instead of evolving and continuing to improve the way in which the contract can be more effectively administered. This limits the Council's ability to act as an "intelligent client".

4. Financial monitoring

- 4.1. The Local Management Overhead (LMO) is calculated as part of the development of the Annual Plan. This covers only management activities as part of the core programme. The Council's contract management team is comfortable with LMO as it is currently charged. Other stakeholders within the Council believe that LMO should include any costs related to producing quotations and that a breakdown of LMO should be provided.
- 4.2. It is widely understood within the Council that Balfour Beatty charges a £500 fee to provide quotations on newly requested work. However, the contract management team clarifies that there is not a flat fee from Balfour Beatty for quotes.
- 4.3. Altogether, there is an opportunity to clarify and clearly communicate to all stakeholders how Balfour Beatty charges for LMO and quotations and what activities are accounted for within the charges. For example, the contract management explains that within the Community Commissioning Model (CCM), cost for the assessment of newly requested

work is quoted by Balfour but that this is not charged should the work not progress as it is accounted for in the LMO. As LMO is calculated for the core programme as part of the Annual Plan, it is unclear how a quote for newly requested work outside the core programme can be charged retrospectively under LMO.

5. Compliance monitoring

- 5.1. A contract compliance officer has been in post since March 2020 within the corporate commercial services team. There is limited evidence which demonstrates that sufficient compliance monitoring has been taking place to date.

Assessment of the contract management process

6. Risk management

- 6.1. The monthly Performance Report - Risk Register does not sufficiently log actions related to risks. Each risk should be accompanied by a strategic plan, which is to either accept, mitigate or transfer the risk. These strategic plans should also be accompanied by clear actions against each which are tracked and updated each month (even if there is no progress).
- 6.2. The current Performance Report - Risk Register updates actions every few months, which is not frequent enough. This may mean either that not enough actions are being identified to mitigate risks, the actions are not being performed in a timely manner or the risk register is not recording updates in a timely manner.

7. Relationship management

- 7.1. There appears to be little constructive tension between the Council's contract management team and Balfour Beatty. This may hamper the ability for the Council to effectively challenge and drive efficiencies in the contract including continuous improvement (e.g. year-on-year savings). From the minutes from operations meetings, there is a lack of evidence for competitive dialogue that typically takes place between the client organisation and the service provider.
- 7.2. Balfour Beatty is perceived by some stakeholders to provide a lack of strategic direction for how to most effectively operate and maintain the Council's assets. Balfour Beatty is perceived to also exhibit poor communication, particularly with regards to relatively small jobs related to the Community Commissioning Programme. The resulting impression is that Balfour Beatty does not always provide the level of proactive support as well as collaborative behaviour that would be expected from a strategic partner (e.g. prompt responses to requests, consideration of reduction in management fees).
- 7.3. The Council's contract management and the Balfour Beatty team are co-located in Balfour Beatty's offices. There are demonstrable benefits to the teams being co-located including efficiencies in communication, particularly as Balfour Beatty manages a complicated programme with regular changes to incorporate. Nonetheless, there is an opportunity to consider the teams being co-located at the Council's offices.

8. Change management

- 8.1. The Balfour Beatty contract is included in the Council's central contracts register. However, framework agreements with Balfour Beatty and call offs related to these frameworks are not included in the contracts register. As these framework agreements

and call offs are regularly used to commission work, it will be important for the Council to add them to the contracts register.

9. The Council's internal governance and processes that appear to directly impact how effectively the Council can manage the contracts with Balfour Beatty.

- 9.1. There is an expectation that the procurement team (at least partially due to lack of resources) focus on providing strategic guidance to commissioners rather than operational support. However, the procurement team has had limited involvement in the processes for commissioning work to Balfour Beatty. The procurement team manages a pipeline of upcoming work, which does not include works related to Balfour Beatty. This removes the ability for the procurement team to provide strategic advice or to conduct value adding activities such as social value checks.
- 9.2. The Council does not appear to be adhering to the Contracts Procedures Rules when commissioning works to Balfour Beatty for works outside the core programme. For instance, minimum 3 competitive quotes are not obtained nor is the opportunity openly advertised for works between £5,000 and £75,000. Similarly, open tenders are not conducted for works between £75,000 and £189,000 (below the threshold for EU compliant measures). The commissioning process for works not included in the Annual Plan has only one outcome, which is for Balfour Beatty to "receive SO (Standing Order) and conduct the works". This is not consistent with the Contract Procedures Rules. Stakeholders within the Council confirm that projects related to building maintenance below £250,000 are commissioned to Balfour Beatty without an open tender.
- 9.3. There appears to be a lack of clarity between the contract rules and procedures across the Property and Public Realm contracts, which are both with Balfour Beatty. During this review, which was focused on the Public Realm contract, information related to the Property contract was cited in each interview when addressing questions around contract management processes.
- 9.4. There also appears to be some confusion within the Council as to the first port of call when commissioning work to Balfour Beatty, the roles & responsibilities of the contract management team vs the internal client team, how charging works including fees for quotes, and what pricing structures are appropriate for what types of works. For instance, despite confirmation that the contract management team should not be involved in commissioning work but rather only focus on managing the contract, it is clear that the contract management team is directly involved in the commissioning process. This lack of clarity and consistent understanding negatively impacts the internal client teams' decision around whether Balfour Beatty will be best placed to deliver the required work.

Key findings from the assessment

10. The Council relies on Balfour Beatty for technical expertise and is unable to effectively monitor technical delivery performance. The contract management team's activities rely on tried and tested processes, which does not sufficiently challenge the service provider or emphasise continuous improvement in the way the contract can be more effectively administered. This limits the Council's ability to act as an "intelligent client".
11. There is an inconsistent understanding within the Council around how various charges are applied. Therefore, there is an opportunity to clarify and clearly communicate to all stakeholders within the Council (including the internal client teams) how Balfour Beatty

charges for local management overhead (LMO), quotations and what activities are accounted for within the charges.

12. There is a perception within the Council that the contract management team is too close to Balfour Beatty. As the Council's contract management and Balfour Beatty teams are co-located in Balfour Beatty's offices, there is an opportunity to consider the teams being co-located at the Council's offices instead. Meanwhile, the Council's procurement team has only had limited involvement in the process commissioning work to Balfour Beatty. This removes the ability for the procurement team to add value.
13. Framework agreements and call offs are regularly used to commission work but are not included in the contracts register. When commissioning works outside the core programme, the contract management team does not appear to be adhering to the Contracts Procedures Rules. In fact, there appears to be a lack of clarity between the contract rules and procedures across the Property and Public Realm contracts, which are both with Balfour Beatty. There also appears to be some confusion within the Council as to the first port of call when commissioning work to Balfour Beatty, the roles & responsibilities of the contract management team versus the internal client team, how charging works including fees for quotes, and what pricing structures are appropriate for what types of works.

Recommendations

14. Build technical knowledge within the Council

The limited in-house technical team increases the Council's reliance on Balfour Beatty and limits the ability to effectively scrutinise their performance. This can be addressed by either building in-house technical capabilities or by seeking second opinions more regularly (e.g. by receiving competitive solutions / proposals from other suppliers). There is a risk that the Council is over reliant on Balfour Beatty for end-to-end delivery of its infrastructure, property and public realms works. Considering the upcoming expiry of the Public Realms contract in November 2020, the Council does not appear to have fully assessed the risk of losing technical knowledge and expertise that is currently concentrated within the Balfour Beatty team.

15. Improve internal communication and education

The contract management team can help avoid conflicting views on a number of topics including LMO, fees on quotations and timing of gainshare calculations. There is an immediate opportunity for the internal client teams to better understand the Balfour Beatty contract. The contract management team is best placed to lead this initiative.

16. Increase the involvement of the procurement team

For a contract of this size and strategic importance, a representative from the procurement team would be typically involved in project governance meetings. The procurement team requires a better understanding of the Balfour Beatty contract in order to effectively inform decisions and options appraisals, which will ultimately help demonstrate value for money on each commissioning decisions.

17. Set up a contract management framework

The current contract management process and guidelines are not fully documented and some documentations are inconsistent such as the non-Annual Plan service process map

are inconsistent with the Council's governance policies. Put together a contract management framework which addresses performance of internal audits. This initiative can be led by the contract compliance officer who is in post since March 2020.

18. Consider an appropriate Contract Management System (CMS)

An appropriate Contract Management System (CMS) can significantly improve the quality of information, reduce ambiguities around contractual clauses and Service Level Agreements (SLA), and reduce manual workload related to contract management activities. The Council does not currently use the contract management module of the tender portal, which is considered too basic and insufficient for its requirements. The Council can consider the use of an appropriate CMS, which can significantly improve the quality of information, reduce ambiguities around contractual clauses and Service Level Agreements (SLA), and reduce manual workload related to contract management activities. It is recommended that an industry leading off-the-shelf CMS is considered in the first instance as such solutions translate good practice contract management processes into workflows, and there is an opportunity for the Council to adopt elements of these underlying processes.

Community impact

19. To ensure the optimum performance of the major contract for public realm supports the delivery of the best value for money and community impact of the services the contract provides.

Environmental Impact

20. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
21. Whilst this is a decision on reviewing a major contract in place, consideration is given to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy when procuring works through the contract.

Equality duty

22. 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.

23. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a report on the performance of an existing contract, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

24. The suggested improvements to improve the performance of the major contract for public realm will largely be resource implication neutral. Contract efficiencies can fund the resource implications of the recommendations proposed.
25. The contract provision is supported by council staff costs that total approximately £0.3m in revenue costs and £0.7m in capital costs, per annum. Council officers have agreed the proposed action plan and the cost of implementing this will be contained within existing budgets.

Legal implications

26. There are no legal implications as a result of the proposed improvements discussed in this report.

Risk management

27. To improve the performance of the major public realm contract will reduce the risk of mis-management and non-compliance with contract procedure rules. The monthly Performance Report - Risk Register does not sufficiently log actions related to risks. Each risk should be accompanied by a strategic plan, which is to either accept, mitigate or transfer the risk. These strategic plans should also be accompanied by clear actions against each which are tracked and updated each month (even if there is no progress).
28. There is a need to build technical knowledge within the Council to reduce the risk of the Council being over reliant on Balfour Beatty for end-to-end delivery of its infrastructure, property and public realms works.

Consultees

29. None

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	24 September 2020
Title of report:	Quarter 1 Budget and Performance Report
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review performance for Quarter 1 2020/21 and the budget forecast.

To provide assurance that progress has being made towards achievement of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.

The 2020/21 forecast outturn is a £15,919k overspend as at the end of June 2020, however the council has been allocated COVID-19 grants of £11,878k from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Leading to a forecast net overspend of £4,041k. It is important to note that this forecast is predicated on no further significant expenditure on COVID-19 matters.

The proportion of performance measures showing an improvement, or remaining the same compared to the same period last year is 74%; this is an improvement on the same period last year. At the end of the quarter, 49% of actions from the delivery plan are identified as complete or had progressed within planned timescales.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) Cabinet review performance and financial outturn for quarter 1 2020/21, as set out in appendices 1 - 9, and identifies any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvement;

Alternative options

1. Cabinet may choose to review financial and operational performance more or less frequently; or request alternative actions to address any identified areas of under-performance, including referral to the relevant scrutiny committee.

Key considerations

Revenue outturn

2. The 2020/21 outturn is £15,919k overspend as at the end of June 2020. In addition to this the council has received £11,878k of government grant, this reduced the overspend to £4,041k.
3. The table below sets out the directorate position at the end of June 2020. Further service detail is available in appendix 1.

Projected revenue outturn 2020/21 (as at the end of June)

	Working Budget	Outturn	Variance Overspend / (underspend)
	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Communities	57,963	62,418	4,455
Social Care	1,254	-	(1,254)
Children & Families	30,936	36,866	5,930
Economy & Place	29,328	32,936	3,608
Corporate	16,564	16,835	271
Directorates	136,045	149,055	13,010
Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves	21,072	20,589	(483)
Total Revenue	157,117	169,644	12,527
Covid 19 additional expenditure		3,392	3,392
Total Revenue	157,117	173,036	15,919

4. The outturn position forecasts a £15,919k overspend, £11m of this position relates directly to the COVID-19 impact on both expenditure and income.
5. All of the directorates have significant overspends due to COVID-19; including the 10% ex-gratia payment to care homes and home care providers within Adults and Communities, a reduction in income across services in Economy and Place. In addition the revenue budget includes the COVID-19 pressure of PPE and community support.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Paul Harris, Tel: 01432 383675, email: Paul.Harris1@herefordshire.gov.uk

6. Central government has awarded grants to local authorities to manage the COVID-19 pressures, this is expected to cover around 70% of the pressure although this is ongoing discussion between government and the local authority. The council is completing monthly Delta returns to central government on expenditure pressures, and we are currently awaiting guidance on income losses, this will enable the council to determine the net impact of COVID-19 on the financial position. The remainder of the pressures will be funded through changes in the councils operations to reduce costs as a result of COVID-19 and by the resilience reserves if required.

Capital outturn

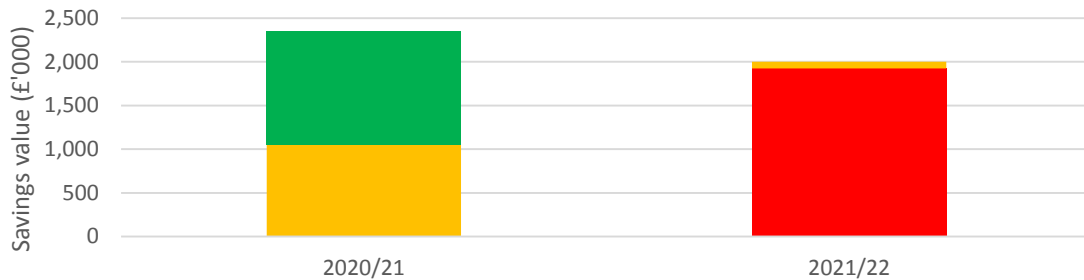
7. The capital Budget for 20/21 has been revised to £75.042m, the summary breakdown is shown in the table below, but this consists of £51.713m 2019/20 carry forwards of unspent budget, additional grants of £0.146m. Also an exercise to re-profile project budgets was carried out, based on current timing of delivery moving into future years due to recent delays, grants not available to apply for and the transport review, full details are in appendix 2.
8. Based on this re-profiling the amended budget is £75.042m and forecast spend is £66.678m, detailed in appendix 2. This forecast underspend consists of projects that are anticipated to deliver below the project budget, may no longer be required or where grants may no longer be available. There are a few outstanding items that may affect the overall budget, these are the recent additional Local Transport Plan/Pothole fund, and once the detailed letter is received an amendment to the programme can be actioned. Also the LEP have announced additional allocations but these will only be added to the capital programme if the decision is taken to accept the terms of the grant.

	2019/20 Budget £'000	2020/21 Budget £'000	2021/22 Budget £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	Total
February 2020 Council Approved Budget	121,796	47,386	29,531	21,113	219,826
Re-profiled	(98,613)	46,510	52,103	-	-
2019/20 Carry Forwards	51,713	-	-	-	51,713
Additional Grants	146	-	-	-	146
Revised Capital Budget	75,042	93,896	81,634	21,113	271,685

Savings Delivery

9. The graph below shows the confidence in delivery for savings identified for 2020/21. Further detail on savings delivery can be found in appendix 4

Savings confidence



Green = achieved, Amber = in progress, Red = delay or at risk

Performance

10. Council approved the new County Plan in February 2020, identifying three key areas for prioritisation across the four year period 2020-24;
 - ECONOMY: support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resource; and
 - COMMUNITY: strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together; and
 - ENVIRONMENT: protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live

11. In February 2020 Council also approved the 2020/21 budget. To follow as a cabinet decision later in the calendar year will be the Delivery Plan linking both finance to ambitions of the County Plan. Due to the impact of COVID-19, production of this document has been delayed, in this delay however, the plan will now be able to provide a refreshed set of deliverables for the year, considering the impact that COVID-19 has had across the council. As agreed at Cabinet in June 2020, progress in appendices 5-8 is based on deliverables and performance measures from the 2019/20 delivery plan.

12. At the end of the June 2020, 49% of actions are reported as complete or had progressed within planned timescales. This is slightly lower than previous quarters, but is predominantly due to the impacts of COVID-19.

13. The impact of the delivery plan is supported by a number of agreed performance measures. The measures are incorporated in to the appendices 5-8, and contain the latest performance outturns available. Where monitoring information is only available annually, these measures will be reported at the point it becomes available. The proportion of performance measures showing an improvement, or remaining the same compared to the same period last year is 74%.

14. The council holds a corporate risk register holding the most significant risks to the council. These risks have been aligned to strategic themes and are found in the relevant appendices 5-8. Between April 2020 and the end of June 2020, the following risks were added to the risk register:
 - Repair of damage following Storm Dennis; due to the likely shortfall in funding from Government

- COVID-19 funding issues; recognising the immediate financial impact of COVID-19.
15. The council has maintained a separate risk register in relation to COVID-19 risks. This has allowed a more flexible, project style recording and response to the risks. A copy of the June register can be found at appendix 9.

Economy

16. In 2019 Hereford was selected by Government to be included in the Stronger Towns programme, providing the potential to access up to £25m to support the regeneration and growth of the city. To meet requirements, a Towns Board has now been established ensuring a diverse and balanced representation from across the public, private, higher education, and third sectors. The Board will oversee the development of a Town Investment Plan (TIP), including public engagement, for submission to government in January 2021. The TIP will set out the long term vision for the development of the city, and identify the priority projects required to meet the vision. The council has also secured control of the Maylord Shopping centre in June 2020, a key strategic site in the centre of Hereford. There was a significant risk that the shopping centre would continue to fall into disrepair, having a negative impact on the city centre as a whole. Through securing the strategically important site, the council can ensure it plays a key role in the long term diversification and growth of the city centre.
17. The council has commenced the development of market town Economic Development Investment Plans. Working in partnership with the town councils and local stakeholders, the plans will identify the long term vision for the growth of the market towns, and priority projects required to deliver the vision. Last year, the council secured a £1.8m of Heritage England funding to support the development of the Leominster Heritage Acton Zone, in particular the significant range of heritage buildings located in the town. Following a cabinet decision on the 23rd July 2020, the project will soon commence delivery.
18. Following a review of the existing Core Strategy, a formal decision indicating that a comprehensive update of the Plan is required is expected to be agreed in September 2020. Work is continuing to update the evidence base upon which the policies and proposals of an updated plan will be based. This includes the commissioning of a new housing needs and requirements study and the transport review. Work is continuing upon an audit of rural facilities and services as part of reviewing the settlement hierarchy and a “call for sites” is about to be launched to help identify potential housing and employment land suitable for inclusion with the updated plan. The intention remains to undertake a consultation upon issues and potential options in the first part of 2021.
19. As a result of COVID-19, there have been significant impacts felt by the local economy; this can be evidenced by the increased number of people making claims for employment related benefits which has increased by 140% since March (greater than the national impact of 114%), and approximately 28% of employees resident in the county have been furloughed. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak the council has sought to provide assistance to businesses wherever possible. Over £58 million of grant funding has been distributed to more than 5,000 businesses, over 700 of businesses have been given advice and support.
20. The council working with the Herefordshire Business Board have secured £444K from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to support the soonest possible recovery of the visitor economy. The project will establish an extensive tourism marketing and PR campaign promoting day and ‘staycation’ opportunities in the county during the summer and autumn 2020, and into the spring 2021. The council has taken a non-key decision to accept the grant funds, and procurement of marketing and PR support has commenced.

21. As part of the response to lockdown on the council introduced a “Keep Connected Grant” as part of the work of Fastershire. This was instigated to help community groups, social enterprises and parish councils to keep digitally connected to their members and the wider public – even those not familiar with using the web. The Fastershire website includes a number of case studies of where and how the grant was used, including one quote "Without this grant we wouldn't have been able to carry on, but thanks to it we've actually massively expanded our service offering." There were 70 grant awards totalling offers of £15,604.
22. The council has commissioned work on social value to assess how its purchasing power through contracts and procurements can bring additional benefit to Herefordshire's residents and businesses. Though the council also has social value intentions in its procurement and commissioning strategy, Social Value Business will see how this can be strengthened across the organisation.
23. The table below summarises delivery, measures and risk within the economy theme. Further detail on the specific deliverables, measures and risks can be found in Appendix 5.

	Deliverables	Measures	Risks
Green	4	7	-
Yellow	NA	NA	2
Amber	10	1	3
Red	2	2	1
Blue	-	NA	NA
Not applicable	NA	5	NA

Community

24. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Emergency Discharge Guidance was issued by central government in March, mandating the approach to discharges from hospital and hospital avoidance. This approach set out the ceasing of NHS to undertake decision support tool assessments to identify individual's eligibility for health funding. The guidance placed a duty on all adult social care departments to support with all discharges from hospital regardless of previous criteria regarding self-funders and Health Funded. This has created an additional financial pressure on the council, which is anticipated to be supported by money from government. Refreshed guidance is due from the government at the start of September which will set out an updated process for new hospital discharges, as well as a phase of restoration; where all cases discharged during COVID-19 will have to be re-assessed to establish whether they require ongoing support from social care services, or need moving to a more appropriate pathway such as continuing health care or will return to self-funding status subsequent to a financial assessment.
25. The Council completed the reopening and refurbishment of the Hillside Care Centre in just 7 weeks. The Centre reopened in June and already has 14 residents. Hillside Care Centre, was initially refurbished in response to the need for more capacity resulting from the severe flooding Herefordshire experienced earlier in the year, but has now reopened to initially support the COVID-19 response and to operate as a residential/rehabilitation facility thereafter. The 22-bed building required a substantial re-design and fit-out to bring it up to appropriate standards to meet the requirements of the Care Quality Commission. The complete refurbishment programme, involving new electrics, a water heating system, ICT cabling, lighting, decor, door systems, work areas and new kitchen appliances, patient hoists and a repainted and refreshed car park and gardens, was undertaken safely, on budget and on time by Balfour Beatty and the council.

26. During the last quarter the council has allocated the governments Infection Control Grant to care homes which totalled over £2 million covering over 2000 care beds in Herefordshire. In June the council published and is progressing its care home tactical action plan underpinning the sustainability and quality of the care home sector as required by the Department of Health and Social Care. During COVID-19 the council increased payments to homecare and care home providers by 10% which was in line with the recommendation of the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, this has now ceased. In addition, the council and NHS partners have created a Care Provider Support Hub which has supported the care sector with practical, hands on support and guidance throughout the emergency. This multi-agency approach has been very successful and this resource has now become a permanent collaboration. Adults and Communities continues to engage jointly with partners with all care providers on a weekly basis.
27. The Council has utilised around £600K of the government's Infection Control Grant to procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and has also procured an additional £1million of PPE. Since early April the Council has provided care providers with over 7 million pieces of PPE including over 1.4 million surgical face masks. Throughout, the council has sourced the majority of its masks, plastic aprons and sanitiser from Herefordshire based suppliers; the only exception being gloves which are not generally produced in the UK. A key element of the council's enhanced PPE response was the procurement of 12,000 reusable face shields manufactured and delivered locally by NMITE. The council was one of only a handful of local authorities that operated at a PPE level known as Table4+, this higher level of PPE compliance helped to keep infection rates low and save lives. In recognition of the easing of some restrictions, the wider availability of PPE to care providers via their normal supply chains and a lowering of infection rates a review of the council's PPE approach was concluded resulting in continuing to supply PPE for council commissioned placements and a move to PPE use level known as Table2+ from August 2020.
28. During the initial three months of the COVID-19 pandemic Talk Community developed and implemented a community and voluntary response to support the most vulnerable people across Herefordshire co-ordinating work across council services and departments. This included support with a telephony based service, link worker roles, proactively contacting people, supporting those shielding and the Talk Community infrastructure.
29. A call to action for volunteers was undertaken with nearly 1500 people volunteering to provide support with food supplies, medication delivery and a befriending service. A 7 day central telephone coordination centre was implemented for those needing support with supplies or a befriending service, these requests were then transferred to one of the council's redeployed link workers to work with community groups, leaders or volunteers to support their needs. The response also provided targeted support to those shielding across the county, approximately 5000 people on the shielded list were contacted by telephone to understand whether they needed a trained volunteer shield buddy to provide dedicated support for supplies or befriending.
30. The Talk Community response also worked closely and in partnership with a full range of local community and voluntary groups supporting joint working on a number of areas.
31. On the 28 March the council established the Food Delivery hub which was able to start distribution to shielded individuals that day. The service continued until the 21 May 2020 whilst the arrangements for the Government's food parcels were being embedded and the council established "Shield Buddies" as a network of volunteers to support individual who were required to isolate based on an existing medical condition that made them vulnerable

to COVID-19. Over 120 buddies were trained to support over 250 people on the shield list, along with specific support from the Veteran Support Centre.

32. Project Brave is a partnership initiative between the council and the voluntary sector with the aim of making independence and sustainable homes inevitable for homeless people in Herefordshire. The council received 156 presentations as roofless since lockdown began and in response to the government's 'Everyone In' policy, the Housing Solutions Team have sourced accommodation for up to 80 homeless people accommodated at any one time during the emergency –primarily from the private rented sector and local independent hoteliers and B&B providers. This is in addition to 38 people who were in existing temporary accommodation when lockdown began.
33. The service has found sustainable long term housing for 46 of those who presented as roofless during lockdown and have assisted 8 people into employment. Nevertheless 62 people remain accommodated following the introduction of the 'Everyone In' policy. The new accommodation providers have been briefed on Project Brave and have committed to the ongoing provision of accommodation to enable staff to source long term sustainable accommodation for those in need. A new Rough Sleeper Out Of Hours service has been implemented to support new landlords and those newly off the streets.
34. This work has informed a bid to a central government funding programme, awaiting a decision, which will enable the purchase and development of properties for long term sustainable accommodation specifically for those who are street homeless, and provide revenue to put support in place to help the newly housed maintain their tenancies and licences. Project Brave signals a long term re-shaping of the way services are being delivered for those who are roofless.
35. Key performance measures in Childrens and Families indicate that overall, the directorate has maintained delivery throughout the lockdown changing practices where necessary in the quarter with a number of performance areas improving including visit timeliness and supervision. Measures of assessment, strategy discussion and visit timescales have remained consistent and increased in some instances. To support ongoing delivery, the service has reviewed operating procedures throughout the last quarter, to focus on staff safety and compliance. Arrangements were made for meetings to take place with children, parents and carers virtually as well as face to face for children supported by child in need and child protection plans, with the use of PPE where necessary. Cases were risk assessed to determine what should take place. These protocols continue to be reviewed as lockdown measures ease and as guidance continues to be updated. Children with Disabilities Social Care Team worked with families to identify when they were feeling under significant stress. Officers worked closely with special schools and community paediatricians to get a multi-agency picture. A small number of families have had additional short breaks or other support as a result to help their situation.
36. Family support services have been reconfigured to enable families to be supported on a child in need plan with family support to promote a culture of intervention at the lowest level possible. This is supported through the ongoing implementation of Signs of Safety, the practice framework that the council has adopted to underpin practice in children's social work, family support work and also with partners. A leadership pledge was developed in the quarter to underpin and drive the approach with staff, different staff groups have started to use the methodology and this has started to show some practical examples of a different way of working with families. A detailed implementation plan is in place including a full training programme that will now be delivered virtually in many instances. The Edge of Care service has now been put in place and has started to work with families over the quarter to

lessen the need for children to come into the care of the local authority. Performance information will be available for quarter 2.

37. All schools remained open for some pupils throughout the pandemic (a small number migrated to other sites for a period) which compares favourably to national performance. As schools reopened fully, attendance increased to around 24% of all pupils; this is the best in the West Midlands region and well above national averages. At the end of school term there were 100% of schools open with 5,100 pupils attending, 1553 of which were children of key workers. Schools and colleges have engaged successfully with the blended on line learning offer. This will continue into autumn including as an option if local lockdowns are required.
38. The cancellation of the national testing regime in schools and colleges for 2020 has been a challenge, with no reliable data for 2020. However the directorate remains focused on working with secondary schools during this academic year to improve the attainment and progress measures at key stage 4 which have been below national levels and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is larger than the national gap. The aspiration remains for all measures to be in the top 25% in the country.
39. In order to aid keyworkers during the emergency, vacant student accommodation was procured and made available until the end of July 2020 at the College Road Campus, Hereford.
40. The table below summarises delivery, measures and risk within the community theme. Further detail on the specific deliverables, measures and risks can be found in Appendix 6.

	Deliverables	Measures	Risks
Green	13	9	-
Yellow	NA	NA	1
Amber	7	-	5
Red	-	3	1
Blue	3	NA	NA
Not applicable	NA	8	NA

Environment

41. A new Carbon Management Plan was agreed by Cabinet in June 2020; setting out a new 75% carbon reduction target by 2025/26. This is the first of two 5 year plans which sets out the council's pathway to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This new plan builds on excellent progress to date and has a strong focus on minimising energy consumption, investing in renewable energy, supporting schools and academies, and working with partners and contracts to reduce carbon. In addition, we are currently working in partnership with a number of stakeholders to develop a new countywide carbon reduction strategy, due to be published later this year.
42. Following Storm Dennis the council has paid out hardship grants to 525 residential properties and 176 businesses across the county to support people dealing with the aftermath of flooding of their homes and businesses. At the start of July the Property Flood Resilience scheme was launched which will enable payments of up to £5,000 to be made available to households and businesses for flood resilience measures. The council will invite applications for grant to be submitted online until 31 December 2020 and for successful

applications, up to £5,000 to install measures to make their properties more resilient to future flooding.

43. Storm Damage repair works to the B4224 at Fownhope have been progressed with works to one of the two sites about to be completed. The design for the solution to the more complex retaining wall failure are progressing well. Cabinet considered the funding options for this and the remainder of the c£4m of priority flood damage works across the county on 23 July and recommend to council that this be progressed and funded from prudential borrowing. Council considered this matter on 4 August and confirmed that works would be progressed and funded as cabinet recommended and this work will now be progressed over the coming months.
44. Following consideration of a number of options to further reduce phosphate levels the council is allocating £2m in the council's 2020/21 capital programme. Here the council is seeking to;
 - Design, construct and manage up to 8 integrated wetland sites in order to provide tertiary treatment to waste water treatment works within the Lugg catchment;
 - Commission an interim plan setting out a phosphate calculator and a suite of recommended mitigation measures appropriate to the River Lugg, enabling developers to calculate the phosphate load of their proposals.
 - Appoint an environment officer to lead on reductions in levels of diffuse pollution.
 - Acquire existing agricultural land that can be repurposed as a complementary solution for reducing phosphate pollution in the river catchment
45. Additional funding of £1m has also been awarded to the Marches LEP to support this project and it is hoped that this funding will be allocated shortly. The council is continuing to liaise with all interested parties through the Nutrient Management Board. All parties are working to find an effective solution which will both seek to reduce phosphate levels within the River Lugg and River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and allow development to proceed in the north of the county. It is envisaged that a the long term the solution will be provided through the revision of the Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) which will reflect the measures implemented by Welsh Water through their Asset Management Programme and the Environment Agency from more stringent requirements placed upon land owners to minimise diffuse pollution through appropriate infrastructure and updated environmentally friendly farming techniques.
46. The Department for Transport (DfT) announced in May funding for local authorities to implement a programme of emergency active travel measures to respond to COVID-19. These measures were to provide increased space for social distancing, allow for reduced use of public transport and encourage the public to maintain the increased rates of walking and cycling that occurred during the lockdown period. Tranche 1 measures have been developed and consulted on with local members, town and city councils and local businesses and organisations. These measures cover Hereford and the Market Towns and include footway widening, 20mph zones, cycle lanes, road closures and supplementary signage. These measures are being implemented over an eight week period from the 27 July. Development of possible measures for tranche 2 of the funding is now underway. The DfT require local authorities for tranche 2 to show real ambition in their plans and require them to make a meaningful reallocation of roadspace for walking and cycling with segregation from traffic. Initial submissions for the funding are to be made at the beginning of August with the measures to be completed by the end of March 2021.
47. The waste management service has successfully maintained the household and commercial waste services without interruption throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There

has been a significant increase in the levels of household waste collected as residents have been at home, equating to an increase of between 10-20% compared to previous years. Following the essential closure of the Household Recycle Centres in March, all sites have now been safely re-opened with the introduction of strict social distancing, improved hygiene control measures and the successful development of an online booking system at Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury and Ross sites. A Waste Task & Finish group of the General Scrutiny Committee is currently looking at future options for both waste collection and waste disposal as the existing contracts are due to expire in 2023. A report highlighting potential options will be presented to General Scrutiny Committee in the autumn.

48. The table below summarises delivery, measures and risk within the environment theme. Further detail on the specific deliverables, measures and risks can be found in Appendix 7.

	Deliverables	Measures	Risks
Green	1	1	-
Yellow	NA	NA	-
Amber	-	-	2
Red	-	-	-
Blue	-	NA	NA
Not applicable	NA	2	NA

Corporate Performance

49. To manage the demands of the COVID-19 emergency, the council redeployed over 200 members of staff, and many more took on additional roles as part of their existing function. This is into a variety of roles, from staffing a help line for vulnerable residents to supporting the police to enforce social distancing and providing additional staffing at the crematorium to manage any anticipated increase in deaths. The council was well placed for this redeployment exercise as in 2018 a redeployment policy was endorsed by employment panel and this has enabled the council to make redeployment a normal expectation for staff in such situations.
50. The council has distributed £58.4 million pounds in small business grants and retail, hospitality and leisure grants to 5,000 businesses as part of the Governments grant scheme. In addition 1,944 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses and nurseries were awarded business rate relief for 2020/21. By the end of June 2020 6,591 households have been awarded support under the COVID-19, hardship fund for 2020/21.
51. Throughout the last quarter staff have worked remotely. This has been a rapid change in practice and has required flexibility and has resulted in an increase in the activity on the IT helpdesk as staff were required to use new systems and practices. Plough Lane offices have now been made COVID secure following government guidelines. The council were well prepared for the flexible working approach with measures that were already in place and established technologies.
52. As a result of COVID-19 new regulations for the council's committee meetings were quickly implemented allowing meetings to be held virtually. There have been minimal delays and impact to council business and all scheduled committees have progressed in accordance with their original timetables with the exception of annual council, which has been rescheduled for September. Other legislative changes made in response to the pandemic have been supported by legal services covering each of the directorates.

53. There has been a significant number of Emergency Decisions made in response to the pandemic. A report to Council in July identified more than 50 decisions covering the breadth of council services. A detailed list can be found on Council papers online.
54. The table below summarises delivery, measures and risk within the corporate work. Further detail on the specific deliverables, measures and risks can be found in Appendix 7.

	Deliverables	Measures	Risks
Green	5	3	1
Yellow	NA	NA	10
Amber	2	-	8
Red	1	1	1
Blue	1	NA	NA
Not applicable	NA	-	NA

Community impact

55. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, and ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner.
56. Regularly reviewing performance with a view to identifying actions which will deliver further improvement in outcomes or efficiencies helps ensure the council achieves its corporate plan priorities.

Equality duty

57. 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.
58. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As part of the decision making processes, individual directorates and service areas assess the potential impact of any proposed project, leading to fairer, transparent and informed decisions being made.
59. This report has no direct equality implications. It is a report to cabinet on work undertaken by the local authority in the last quarter, each of these workstreams will consider their

individual equality duties. This report will have no detrimental impact on people with a protected characteristic.

Resource implications

60. The recommendations have no direct financial implications, however cabinet may wish to revise how money is utilised in order to meet the council's objectives.
61. The council has a good track record on delivering planned savings and has managed to deliver financial outturns within the agreed overall budget envelope over recent years, delivery has proven challenging in the last few years, however, partly due to slippage in capital spend resulting in lower revenue capital financing costs, the council has managed to balance its budget.
62. The COVID-19 pandemic has added significant pressure to the council's finances, both in terms of expenditure, and reduced levels of income. The pandemic is ongoing, and the council is responding accordingly. The forecasts in this report need to be treated as such, and there is reasonable expectation that future events in the coming months could drive a variance in the final outcome. Central government is collecting details this month in respect of income losses and has only recently declared its support in relation to businesses facing local lockdowns so this is expected to be a continuing evolving position through this year and possibly into 2021/22.
63. At the beginning of the financial year the council held a reasonable level of reserves relative to its revenue expenditure. The CIPFA Financial Resilience index provided a useful comparison to other councils. This index confirmed that Herefordshire Council is at a lower level of risk of financial distress when compared to other unitary councils. This meant that the council entered the COVID-19 pandemic with a reasonable level of reserves and no particular individual high areas of risk are shown. The social care ratio is identified as being at higher risk and this is reflected in the budget pressures reported in the costs associated with looked after children.
64. Government are supporting local government in a variety of ways during the COVID-19 pandemic this includes issuing a range of grants. For a number of these grants there has been delays in providing the exact details of the schemes. As noted in the report the council has been awarded £11.8m of grant to help support the additional expenditure of the council. Government have announced a national scheme to provide a level of financial support for some of the lost income streams for councils, government are working on the precise details of the scheme. The council will benefit from this grant scheme, but it is not possible to predict the scale of this benefit at this point.
65. The S151 officer continues to monitor the financial position of the council on a daily basis, and is satisfied that the council continues to be financially solvent, and has sufficient liquidity. This is based on the assumption that reserves and balances will be called upon to support any residual overspend. Reserves and balances are not meant to be a long term solution to structural budget disconnects. However they enable the council to deal with the emerging pressures such as the COVID-19 pandemic and will enable the council to recalibrate its expenditure and income plans for the future.
66. The S151 officer is satisfied that the reserves and balances held by the council are still adequate allowing for the forecast overspend in 2020/21. Council will need to ensure that as it refreshes its medium term financial strategy and sets future budgets it takes appropriate consideration of the longer term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as responding to the comprehensive spending review scheduled for Autumn 2020. Forecasts

are that the pandemic is likely to result in a recession, signs of which are closely monitored to consider the impact on the council's costs, income and funding including council tax billing and collection. In addition is response to the government's commitment to conduct a fundamental review of business rates. HM Treasury is leading a fundamental review of business rates with the call for evidence consultation closes ahead of the review's conclusion in spring 2021.

Legal implications

67. None.

Risk management

68. The risks associated with the councils business, and any delivery plan objectives or projects are entered onto the relevant service or directorate risk register and escalated as appropriate. Risks on the Corporate Risk Register are found in appendices 5-8.
69. The COVID-19 Risk Register has also been included at appendix 9. This register records the risks regarding COVID-19 as at the end of June. These risks have been recorded on a separate risk register to allow a more flexible, project style approach to managing COVID-19 specific risks.

Consultees

70. None in relation to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Revenue forecast
Appendix 2	Capital outturn
Appendix 3	Treasury Management Report
Appendix 4	Savings performance reports
Appendix 5	Economy Scorecard
Appendix 6	Community Scorecard
Appendix 7	Environment Scorecard
Appendix 8	Council Scorecard
Appendix 9	COVID-19 Risk Register

Background papers

None

Abbreviations

DfT - Department for Transport

HVOSS – Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Services

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership

LTP – Local Transport Plan

PPE - Personal Protective Equipment

TIP - Town Investment Plan

SAC - Special Area of Conservation

NMP - Nutrient Management Plan

Appendix A: Revenue Budget Position 2020/21 as at June 2020

	Working Budget	Outturn	Variance Overspend /(underspend)
	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Communities	57,963	62,418	4,455
Social Care	1,254	-	(1,254)
Children & Families	30,936	36,866	5,930
Economy & Place	29,328	32,936	3,608
Corporate	16,564	16,835	271
Directorates	136,045	149,055	13,010
Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves	21,072	20,589	(483)
Total Revenue	157,117	169,644	12,527
Covid 19 additional expenditure		3,392	3,392
Total Revenue	157,117	173,036	15,919

Movement in Net Budget:

Adults & Communities: £381k Additional pension budget allocation, £500k rural monies from the sparcity reserve and £800k social care pool funding.

Childrens & Families: £83k IT budget moved to Corporate. £152k drawn down from reserves

Economy & Place: £41k transfer to reserves

Adults and Communities: Revenue Budget Position 2020/21 as at June 2020

	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Learning Disabilities	21,868	22,380	512
Memory & Cognition	2,691	2,964	273
Mental Health	3,691	3,416	(275)
Physical Support	25,081	25,330	249
Sensory Support	389	386	(3)
Client Sub-Total	53,720	54,476	756
All Ages Commissioning	1,708	1,706	(2)
Care Operations	8,482	8,114	(368)
Commissioned Services	3,276	3,825	549
Transformation & Improvement	598	612	14
Prevention & Support	3,262	3,351	89
Directorate Management	(13,083)	(9,666)	3,417
Public Health	0	(0)	(0)
Adults & Communities	57,963	62,418	4,455

The key variances are:

Client budgets/Directorate Management and Commissioned Services - pressures mainly attributable to Covid-19 circa £4.265m.

Care Operations – underspend due to vacancies across most of the operational teams.

Children and Families: Revenue Budget Position 2020/21 as at June 2020

	Working Net Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Children's Commissioning Directorate	609	598	(11)
Directorate	641	610	(31)
Additional Needs	2,160	2,168	8
Commissioning Management	621	609	(12)
Development and Sufficiency	899	840	(59)
Early Help	760	731	(29)
Early Years	69	72	3
Education Improvement	327	353	26
DSG	0	0	0
Education & Commissioning	4,836	4,773	(63)
Safeguarding and Review	829	892	63
Children in Need	3,315	3,257	(58)
Looked After Children	18,981	25,058	6,077
Safeguarding Development	377	385	8
Safeguarding & Early Help Management	1,957	1,891	(66)
Safeguarding & Family Support	25,459	31,483	6,024
Children & Families	30,936	36,866	5,930

The key variances are:

The placement costs of the LAC population continues to be a pressure in children and families, the budget setting allowed for this pressure through creating a social care pot and contingency.

Economy and Place: Revenue Budget Position 2020/21 as at June 2020

	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Economic Growth	1,234	1,234	0
Highways & Transport	15,024	15,107	83
Housing and Growth	2,529	2,643	114
Management	213	213	0
Regulatory, Environment & Waste	14,727	15,799	1,072
Technical Services	(4,400)	(2,061)	2,339
Economy & Place	29,328	32,936	3,608

5

The key variances are:

Highways & Transport – COVID-19 related pressure £288k – mainly due to loss of vacant seat income whilst still paying 90% school/college contract costs

Housing and Growth – income pressure caused by COVID-19 closure of libraries and museums

Regulatory, Environment & Waste – pressure on planning income £690k, £435k COVID19 related pressure on waste income and £100k reduction in licensing income

Technical Services – significant loss of income due to COVID-19. Car parking £1.5m, Building Control £116k, Registrars £84k, Fairs and Markets £92k. Property Services pressures - £190k relating to Hereford Leisure Pool and Ross Swimming Pool, £300k COVID19 slippage in capital projects and BWOW, £61k expenditure to create PPE storage and distribution unit

Corporate: Revenue Budget Position 2020/21 as at June 2020

	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Support Services	5,914	5,914	0
Finance, Legal & Governance	8,388	8,416	28
People & Performance	2,263	2,505	242
Corporate	16,564	16,835	271

The overspend reflects the additional resource supporting the councils COVID-19 work.

Appendix B

Table A - 2020/21 Capital Budget Forecast

Adjustments include reprofiling to future years and additional grants allocations	2020/21 Budgets £000s	Adjustments in Year £000s	2020/21		
			Budget £000s	Forecast £000s	Variance £000s
Adults and Communities					
Disabled facilities grant	1,853	146	1,999	1,999	-
Hillside	-	2,550	2,550	-	(2,550)
Carehome & Extra Care Facility	-	250	250	250	-
Technology Enabled Communities	300	700	1,000	1,000	-
Super Hubs	2,000	(1,800)	200	200	-
Private sector housing improvements	-	199	199	-	(199)
Total Adults & Communities	4,153	2,045	6,198	3,449	(2,749)
Corporate					
Fastershire Broadband	8,607	(5,036)	3,571	3,571	-
PC Replacement	641	(10)	630	630	-
Widemarsh Gardens	80	-	80	-	(80)
Electronic Document Management Storage	380	-	380	380	-
Better Ways of Working	850	-	850	850	-
Children Centre Changes	-	116	116	-	(116)
Total Corporate	10,557	(4,930)	5,627	5,431	(196)
Children's and Families					
Colwall Primary School	-	85	85	40	(45)
Schools Capital Maintenance Grant	1,200	564	1,764	1,464	(300)
Peterchurch Primary School	5,000	(4,700)	300	300	-
Expansion for Marlbrook school	2,000	1,348	3,348	3,348	-
Brookfield School Improvements	167	577	744	744	-
C&F's S106	-	649	649	649	-
Healthy Pupils	-	24	24	24	-
Individual Pupil Needs	-	38	38	38	-
Short Breaks Capital	-	118	118	118	-
Blackmarston SEN	-	52	52	52	-
Basic Needs Funding	8,891	(7,700)	1,191	1,191	-
2 Year Old Capital Funding	-	27	27	27	-
Preliminary works to inform key investment	-	986	986	186	(800)
Temporary school accommodation replacement	300	-	300	300	-
Total Children's & Families	17,558	(7,932)	9,626	8,481	(1,145)
Economy and Place					
Hereford City Centre Transport Package	1,500	132	1,632	1,632	-
South Wye Transport Package (detailed below)	14,795	(14,653)	142	142	-
Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)	2,000	(1,000)	1,000	1,000	-
Hereford ATMs and Super Cycle Highway	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-
Passenger Transport Fleet	7,800	(7,800)	-	-	-
Hereford Transport Package (detailed below)	350	1,640	1,990	1,990	-
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	12,272	-	12,272	12,272	-
E & P's S106	-	-	-	-	-

Investment in C & U Roads	2,000	-	2,000	-	-
Investment in Infrastructure Assets	2,000	-	2,000	-	-
Highway asset management	3,750	1,786	5,536	1,536	(4,000)
Hereford Enterprise Zone	1,831	169	2,000	2,000	-
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone Shell Store	1,298	1,710	3,008	3,008	-
Ross Enterprise Park (Model Farm)	4,174	(3,174)	1,000	1,000	-
Marches Renewable Energy Grant	764	76	840	840	-
Marches business improvement grants	1,125	(408)	717	717	-
Empty Property investment & Development	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-
Employment Land & Incubation Space in Market Towns	843	(843)	-	-	-
Leominster Heritage Action Zone	238	57	295	295	-
Development Partnership activities	25,000	(17,185)	7,815	7,815	-
Property Estate Enhancement Works	-	869	869	869	-
Corporate Accommodation	-	142	142	142	-
Leisure Centres	-	368	368	368	-
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	1,473	(1,228)	245	245	-
SEPUBU Grant	-	670	670	670	-
LED street lighting	-	119	119	-	(119)
Estates Capital Programme 2019/22	2,095	833	2,928	2,928	-
Three Elms Trading Estate	-	240	240	240	-
Energy Efficiency	46	48	94	94	-
Warm Homes Fund	397	429	827	827	-
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch development	899	188	1,087	1,087	-
Car Parking Strategy	-	110	110	69	(42)
Car Park Re-Surfacing	-	115	115	-	(115)
Office and Car Park Lighting Replacement	58	134	192	192	-
Upgrade of Herefordshire CCTV	136	(4)	132	132	-
Schools Transport Route Planning	30	(14)	16	16	-
Courtyard Development	611	-	611	611	-
Corporate Fleet Procurement	-	325	325	325	-
Vehicle Replacement	19	-	19	19	-
Strangford Landfill Site Toilet Facilities	25	-	25	25	-
Hereford Library	-	211	211	211	-
Total Economy and Place	89,528	(35,936)	53,592	49,316	(4,275)
Total	121,796	(46,754)	75,042	66,678	(8,364)

Table B – Reprofiled budget details

	2020/21 Budgets Adj £000s	2021/22 Budgets Adj £000s	2022/23 Budgets Adj £000s	Reason
Children's and Families				
Peterchurch Area School Investment	(5,193)	2,000	3,193	Building works to commence later than planned
Expansion for Marlbrook school	(1,600)	1,600	-	Building works will not complete in 20/21
Brookfield School Improvements	(2,000)	2,000	-	Building works to commence later than planned
Basic Needs Funding	(7,700)	5,700	2,000	Finalising plans on where pupil places are required
Temporary School Replacement	(150)	150	-	Building works to start commence than planned
Total Children's & Families	(16,643)	11,450	5,193	
Corporate				
Fastershire Broadband	(13,414)	6,707	6,707	This profile is based on BT, Gigaclear and future contracts and is based on contractual milestones but with this financial years figures accounting for slippage.
Total Corporate	(13,414)	6,707	6,707	
Adults & Communities				
Carehome & Extra Care Development	(669)	669	-	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in taking forward due to Covid 19. Budget retained in 20/21 to carry out initial feasibility works.
Technology Enabled Communities	700	(700)		Plan to deliver earlier due to current working practices.
Super Hubs	(1,800)	1,800	-	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in taking forward due to Covid 19. Budget retained in 20/21 to carry out initial feasibility works.
Total Adults & Communities	(1,769)	1,769	-	
Economy and Place				
Hereford City Centre Transport Package	-	(2,000)	2,000	Spend profile revised to reflect delivery programme for consultation on public realm and transport hub projects and associated revised programme for delivery.
South Wye Transport Package	(18,200)	4,000	14,200	Spend profile revised to reflect project has been paused whilst transport review is undertaken.
Hereford City Centre Improvement	(2,500)	1,000	1,500	Spend profile is revised to reflect revised delivery programme of High Town refurbishment and development of additional area around Broad Street and King Street areas. This later work has been impacted by current COVID restrictions which limit stakeholder engagement.
Passenger Transport Fleet	(7,800)	-	7,800	Spend profile revised as grant funding has not yet been secured.
Hereford Transport Package	(1,000)	1,000	-	Spend profile revised to reflect project has been paused whilst transport review is undertaken.

Hereford Enterprise Zone	(1,965)	1,965	-	A delay to approval of the budgets in 2019 delayed the HEZ programme, which is reflected in the re-profiling. The re-profiling also considers the likely impact of additional £5m of funding secured from the Marches LEP in March 2020 (awaiting contract from the LEP prior to seeking a decision to add these funds to the capital programme).
Ross Enterprise Park	(5,279)	5,279	-	Budgets re-profiled to reflect delays to the development of the project, with funding sought from the LEP to meet an identified gap available funding.
Marches Investment Business Programme	(465)	(444)	909	MHCLG have agreed for the programme to be re-profiled due to the current impact of COVID. Project Change Request is in the process of being submitted.
Empty Property Investment & Development	(452)	452	-	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in agreeing the grant element of schemes due to Covid 19.
Employment Land & Incubation Space in Market Towns	(843)	843	-	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in taking forward the Employment Land and Business Space market town programme due to Covid 19.
Leominster Heritage Action Zone	58	(585)	527	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in taking forward the Leominster Heritage Action Zone project due to Covid 19. Heritage England have approved the project delivery plan, but they have delayed the commencement of their national programme due to Covid 19.
Development Partnership Activities	(26,535)	13,268	13,267	Budgets re-profiled to reflect the delay in taking forward DRP projects primarily due to Covid 19. For example a decision regarding the development of student accommodation at the Hereford Football Club site, and progressing development option assessments of sites along the City Link Road and on College Road Campus have been paused until the impacts of Covid 19 are better known.
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	(1,286)	1,286	-	Spend profile revised to reflect project delays due to Covid and also seeking legal advice on feasibility of potential new projects.
Warm Homes Fund	165	(165)	-	Spend profile revised to reflect project delays due to Covid as home assessments are delayed. Project will continue as restrictions are lifted.
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Development	(700)	700	-	Spend profile revised to reflect part of the delivery programme being delayed. Planning permission is yet to be agreed to continue with the 4 new pitches works, therefore expected to not be fully delivered until 21/22.
Schools Transport Route Planning	15	(15)	-	In line with agreed contract, remains within overall budget.
Total Economy & Place	(66,787)	26,584	40,203	
Total	(98,613)	46,510	52,103	

Table C – Capital Programme position June 2020/21

Scheme Name	Prior Years £000	2020/21 budget £000	2021/22 budget £000	2022/23 budget £000	2023/24 budget £000	Total scheme budget £000
Economy & Place						
Hereford City Centre Transport Package	33,665	1,632	3,353	2,001	-	40,651
South Wye Transport Package (detailed below)	8,155	142	10,422	16,281	-	35,000
Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)	-	1,000	3,000	1,500	-	5,500
Hereford ATMs and Super Cycle Highway	-	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
Passenger Transport Fleet	-	-	7,800	15,600	15,600	39,000
Hereford Transport Package (detailed below)	3,970	1,990	1,625	625	-	8,210
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	-	12,272	-	-	-	12,272
E & P's S106	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment in C & U Roads	-	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Investment in Infrastructure Assets	-	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Highway asset management	-	5,536	4,250	-	-	9,786
Hereford Enterprise Zone	12,035	2,000	1,965	-	-	16,000
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone Shell Store	4,309	3,008	-	-	-	7,316
Ross Enterprise Park (Model Farm)	284	1,000	5,786	-	-	7,070
Marches Renewable Energy Grant	12	840	336	-	-	1,188
Marches business improvement grants	41	717	892	1,350	-	3,000
Empty Property investment & Development	-	1,000	752	300	-	2,052
Employment Land & Incubation Space in Market Towns	-	-	5,052	3,066	5,513	13,631
Leominster Heritage Action Zone	-	295	841	2,664	-	3,800
Development Partnership activities	6,250	7,815	13,268	13,268	-	40,600
Property Estate Enhancement Works	1,871	869	-	-	-	2,740
Corporate Accommodation	2,759	142	-	-	-	2,901
Leisure Centres	-	368	-	-	-	368
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	603	245	1,286	-	-	2,134
SEPUBU Grant	64	670	-	-	-	734
LED street lighting	5,536	119	-	-	-	5,655
Estates Capital Programme 2019/22	517	2,928	1,390	-	-	4,835
Three Elms Trading Estate	235	240	-	-	-	475
Energy Efficiency	5	95	-	-	-	100
Warm Homes Fund	133	827	-	-	-	960
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch development	51	1,087	739	-	-	1,877
Car Parking Strategy	136	110	-	-	-	246
Car Park Re-Surfacing	1	115	-	-	-	116
Office and Car Park Lighting Replacement	108	192	-	-	-	300
Upgrade of Herefordshire CCTV	52	132	-	-	-	184
Schools Transport Route Planning	59	16	15	-	-	90
Courtyard Development	-	611	-	-	-	611

Corporate Fleet Procurement	413	325	-	-	-	738
Vehicle Replacement	-	19	-	-	-	19
Strangford Landfill Site Toilet Facilities	-	25	-	-	-	25
Hereford Library	134	211	-	-	-	345
Total E & P Capital Projects	81,399	53,592	62,772	56,653	21,113	275,529
Corporate						
Fastershire Broadband	18,754	3,571	6,707	6,707	-	35,738
PC Replacement	489	630	397	-	-	1,516
Widemarsh Gardens	-	80	-	-	-	80
Electronic Document Management Storage	-	380	-	-	-	380
Better Ways of Working	-	850	-	-	-	850
Children Centre Changes	314	116	-	-	-	430
Total Corporate Capital Projects	19,557	5,627	7,104	6,707	0	38,994
Children and Families						
Colwall Primary School	-	85	-	-	-	85
Schools Capital Maintenance Grant	-	1,764	1,200	-	-	2,964
Peterchurch Primary School	7	300	7,353	3,193	-	10,853
Expansion for Marlbrook school	1,193	3,348	1,600	-	-	6,141
Brookfield School Improvements	6	744	3,195	-	-	3,945
C&F's S106	-	649	-	-	-	649
Healthy Pupils	75	24	-	-	-	99
Individual Pupil Needs	233	38	-	-	-	271
Short Breaks Capital	-	118	-	-	-	118
Blackmarston SEN	32	52	-	-	-	84
Basic Needs Funding	-	1,191	5,700	2,000	-	8,891
2 Year Old Capital Funding	79	27	-	-	-	106
Preliminary works to inform key investment	29	986	-	-	-	1,015
Temporary school accommodation replacement	-	300	150	-	-	450
Total C & F Capital Projects	1,654	9,626	19,198	5,193	0	35,671
Adults and Communities						
Disabled facilities grant	-	1,999	1,853	-	-	3,852
Hillside	-	2,550	-	-	-	2,550
Carehome & Extra Care Facility	-	250	669	13,081	-	14,000
Technology Enabled Communities	-	1,000	500	-	-	1,500
Super Hubs	-	200	1,800	-	-	2,000
Private sector housing improvements	-	199	-	-	-	199
Total A & C Capital Projects	-	6,198	4,822	13,081	-	24,101
Total	102,609	75,042	93,896	81,634	21,113	374,294

	2020/21 Budget £'000	2021/22 Budget £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	2023/24 Budget £'000	Total
February 2020 Council Approved Budget	121,796	47,386	29,531	21,113	219,826
Reprofiled	(98,613)	46,510	52,103	-	-
19/20 Carry Forwards	51,713	-	-	-	51,713

Additional Grants	146	-	-	-	146
Revised Capital Budget	75,042	93,896	81,634	21,113	271,685

Grant Additions since February Council

	£000
Disabled Facilities Grant	146
	<u>146</u>

Appendix C Treasury Management Interim Report (30 June 2020)

This report ensures the council demonstrates best practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations in their Code of Practice for Treasury Management, by keeping members informed of treasury management activity.

1. The UK Economy

- The dominating factor so far this year has been the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to minimise the risk of transmission, we have seen individuals subjected to 'lockdown', staff working from home, and shops, restaurants and businesses having to cease trading for a period of time. All of this has had a major effect on the UK economy and economies worldwide, and with only those classed as 'essential' retailers being able to sell goods from their shops, there has been a major reduction in consumer expenditure.
- In the UK, businesses have been able to furlough their staff in an attempt to prevent job losses with the government meeting 80% of the salary payments, and over 25% of the UK workforce have been furloughed. However, current forecasts and opinions are it is inevitable that we will be entering a period of recession.
- The Bank of England made two emergency rate reductions, from 0.75% to 0.25% on 11th March and a further cut to 0.10% on 19th March. The rate remained at 0.10% following the decision on 18th June when the MPC increased its Quantitative Easing target by £100bn to £745bn to help the UK economy fight the unprecedented coronavirus-induced downturn.

1. The Council's Investments

2.1 At 30 June 2020 the council held the following investments:

Investment	Term	Maturity Date	Interest Rate	Amount £m
<u>Instant access bank accounts:</u>				
Handlesbanken	N/A	N/A	0.15%	5.00
NatWest	N/A	N/A	0.30%	2.32
<u>Instant Access Money Market Funds:</u>				
Federated	N/A	N/A	0.24%	10.00
Aberdeen Standard	N/A	N/A	0.24%	10.00
Deutsche	N/A	N/A	0.15%	5.00
Insight	N/A	N/A	0.10%	5.00
Blackrock	N/A	N/A	0.11%	5.00
Morgan Stanley	N/A	N/A	0.14%	5.00
Invesco	N/A	N/A	0.24%	5.00
CCLA	N/A	N/A	0.26%	5.00

95 Day Notice Bank Accounts:				
Santander	N/A	N/A	0.85%	5.00
Fixed Term Deposits:				
Lancashire County Council	182 days	14/07/20	0.87%	5.00
Monmouthshire Council	215 days	14/09/20	0.92%	4.00
Total			0.32%	71.32

2.2 The council continues to select counterparties suitable for investment based on the credit worthiness service provided by their treasury advisors, Link Asset Services. The service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies. The modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system to which Capita Asset Services allocate a series of colour coded bands with suggested maximum durations for investments as shown below;

- Yellow 5 years
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or part nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days
- No colour not to be used

2.3 The council has earned interest on its investments as follows:

Month	Average amount invested		Average rate of interest earned		Amount of interest earned / Forecast £000	Budget £000	(Surplus) /Deficit £'000
	Actual / Forecast £m	Budget £m	Actual / Forecast %	Budget %			
Apr-20	78.5	40	0.50	0.50	30	17	(13)
May-20	63.2	40	0.47	0.50	25	17	(8)
Jun-20	67.0	40	0.39	0.50	21	17	(4)
Jul-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Aug-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Sep-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	16	16	-
Oct-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Nov-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	16	16	-
Dec-20	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Jan-21	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Feb-21	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	15	15	-
Mar-21	40.0	40	0.50	0.50	17	17	-
Total					225	200	(25)

2.4 Interest income earned has been higher due to high balances following the receipt of COVID-19 grants from central government and the time taken to pay some of these grants over to businesses.

2.5 In addition to investment income the council earns interest on the provision of loan finance to the waste disposal PFI provider, this is expected to generate loan interest payable to us of £2.2m in 2020/21, this will be recharged through the waste disposal PFI arrangement.

3. The Council’s Borrowing

Short-term borrowing

3.1 The council is continuing its policy of using short-term borrowing (if required) from other local authorities for short-term liquidity needs. These short-term interest rates are significantly below levels available from other sources avoiding a large cost of carry when comparing fixed interest debt to current (variable) investment rates.

3.2 The council can only borrow up to its Capital Financing Requirement, which represents the need to borrow for capital spend, and cannot borrow beyond this to finance the revenue budget. This is approved at budget setting in the Treasury Management Policy.

3.3 At the end of June 2020 there were no short-term loans outstanding.

Long-term borrowing

3.4 At 30 June 2020 the council held long-term borrowing of £129.6m, no new long-term borrowing has been secured. Rates are monitored and discussed with our treasury advisors to determine the optimum timing of securing any new long-term borrowing.

3.5 The current capital financing budget position is summarised below:

Summary of Borrowing Budget	Budget	Forecast	(Surplus) /Deficit
	£m	£m	£m
Minimum revenue provision	7.6	7.4	(0.2)
Interest payable on all loans	6.2	5.9	(0.3)
Total	13.8	13.3	(0.5)

4. Summary of forecast outturn

4.1 The current net treasury forecast outturn is expected to be a surplus (underspend) of £0.5m, the main reason being the delayed need to borrow, following lower capital investment in 2019/20 compared to the capital budget in 2019/20.

Savings Performance 20/21

The savings plans for the council for the next two years were set out in the 20-21 budget papers. The savings requirement to balance the budget is £2,350 for 2020/21, this is shown in the breakdown below by directorate and by savings plan.

Savings	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	Total £000
Reducing the need for formal care services	600	500	1,100
Adults and Communities Directorate Total	600	500	1,100
Manage inflation and secure contract efficiencies	300	450	750
Organisational restructure to reflect the service requirements		200	200
Children and Families Directorate Total	300	650	950
Efficiency savings	523	273	796
Corporate Accommodation efficiencies	150		150
Commercial waste collections	200		200
Economy and Place Directorate Total	873	273	1,146
Efficiency savings	77	77	154
Corporate Services Total	77	77	154
Pension deficit	500		500
Treasury management - in house cashflow management		500	500
Central Total	500	500	1,000
Total Savings	2,350	2,000	4,350

Achieved
In progress
Delay or risk of none delivery

Adults and Communities

The savings are dependant on the LD and Complex Cases Project which was re-started due to Covid-19 on the 26th June.

Childrens & Families and Economy & Place

It is anticipated the savings will be made within the financial year.

Corporate Services and Central

These savings have been achieved.

Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment

Use council land to create economic opportunities and bring higher paid jobs to the county

Invest in education and the skills needed by employers

Enhance digital connectivity for communities and business

Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism

Spend public money in the local economy wherever possible

Delivery

Action	Status	Comments
Deliver Herefordshire's school capital investment strategy to ensure that demand for school placements can be met and that agreed refurbishment work on schools is completed	Amber	Discussions have taken place with all potentially affected secondary schools and options generated in terms of locations for additional places with feasibility being developed to identify the exact costs. A review of primary school provision took place in Autumn / Winter 2019/20. Cabinet have since approved that expansion work at JKHS can proceed (awaiting ratification on 23/07.20) and major premises repair work approved in several primary schools. The decision regarding Peterchurch is due for discussion at council in July. Progress on the builds at Marlbrook and the new Free School (Beacon College) has continued, but COVID-19 has had an impact.
Develop the countywide economic master plan to deliver our Invest Herefordshire vision to ensure a vibrant and successful local economy	Amber	Work is underway to establish a Hereford Investment Plan and similar investment plans for each of the market towns. Hereford was previously selected by government for inclusion in their Stronger Towns programme, providing access to up to £25m of funding to enable the regeneration and growth of the city. A public/private Towns Board has been established to meet requirements and an Investment Plan is in development for submission to government in January 2021. The plan will identify the long term vision for the development of the city, and the interventions required. The council has also engaged the market towns to develop similar investment plans for each town.
Undertake major investment in maintaining the county highway assets to fix roads and bridges, particularly those that are strategically important for trade and the resilience of the county's economy	Amber	Annual plan investment ongoing which comprises capital investment in the highway asset. Additional challenge and pothole fund capital totalling £7.64m has been secured from central government to fund investment in highways and bridges. Further investment supported by additional £4m to the capital programme to support investment in maintenance of the C&U network and to provide resilience to the county's highway network through resurfacing, bridge and drainage works. Remaining £1.5m of the Highways Asset Management budget from the capital programme will deliver further maintenance of the highways asset.
Increase the coverage of superfast broadband across the county through the Fastershire programme	Green	Coverage continues to expand across Herefordshire
Operate the Marches & Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant to provide bespoke connectivity to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) not covered by the main Fastershire programme	Green	Second phase of EU funding agreed for Business Grant that provides 100% capital costs for businesses to install a high speed connection.
Run a series of training, seminars and one to one advice sessions for businesses to increase the adoption and exploitation of superfast broadband	Green	Webinar continue for businesses with 113 attendees at six weekly sessions. Moving forward the frequency of these sessions decrease and will return to monthly.
Commence construction of the southern link road and continue development of proposals for walking, cycling and public space improvements in the South Wye area as part of the South Wye Transport Package	Amber	The Hereford Transport Strategy Review is progressing well with public consultation and stakeholder engagement helping to inform technical work. COVID-19 restrictions have required a rethink on the original plan to engage with stakeholders and more time has been allowed to ensure that representative groups were able to engage with the cabinet member and project team through video conferencing. The Review is moving into its final stage to test a range of packages which will be progressed to inform strategy development. Cabinet is scheduled to consider the outcome of the review at its October meeting
Develop the Hereford Transport Package including proposals for walking, cycling, buses and public realm and undertaking detailed design of the preferred route for the Hereford bypass to inform the submission of a planning application	Amber	
Develop proposals for a transport hub at the train station and improvements on Commercial Road, Blueschool and Newmarket Street as part of the Hereford City Centre Transport Package	Amber	Consultation on the transport hub and public realm scheme which form part of the Hereford City Centre Transport hub have been impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. It is anticipated that the cabinet member will consider a report shortly to approve an online consultation later this year to enable the development of the scheme to progress.
Progress developments within Hereford City, including improvements to the Edgar Street ground, bring forward sites for development within the urban village area and progress a city centre multi-storey car park	Red	The proposed redevelopment of the Blackfriars Street stand at the Football Club and student accommodation has been paused due to COVID-19. A decision was due to be taken to move to the detailed design and planning stage in March, but this has been paused until the impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy and future demand for student accommodation are better known. A masterplanning exercise for the urban village sites along the City Link Road has been completed, and plans to develop affordable housing and assisted living provision, alongside open green space are being considered.

Support the delivery and administration of grants and programmes that provide improvements in the built environment, housing, energy efficiency and all aspects of the regeneration and growth of the county	Green	A wide range of business focussed grant schemes continue to be delivered. Despite the impact of COVID-19 on businesses, interest in the majority of the schemes remains high. The council has also delivered a range of additional grant schemes introduced by government to assist businesses impacted by COVID-19 and the associated lockdown.
Deliver the Hereford Enterprise Zone delivery plan, including the Shell Store incubation centre and the cyber security centre	Amber	Despite the impact of COVID-19 pausing a number of construction projects on site, Hereford Enterprise Zone continues to receive a high demand for sites. Development of the North Magazine has significantly progressed with the Shell Store and NMITE's proposed development of the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology and the Centre for Advanced Automotive Engineering are due to commence construction in the near future. The Shell Store development, the first bespoke business incubation space in the county, is now due for completion in August 2020. In addition, the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, a joint venture with the University of Wolverhampton to establish specialist facilities to enable the development of cyber security businesses on the HEZ, is scheduled for completion before the end of 2020.
Commence first phase of development of the Ross Enterprise Park	Red	The Ross Enterprise Park project is no longer progressing at this time
Use the Development and Regeneration Partnership to identify and develop proposals for the regeneration of sites in council ownership that can support economic growth, including key worker housing	Amber	The council continues to work closely with Engie to identify opportunities to utilise sites in the council's ownership to support economic growth and/or provision of affordable housing. The first project established through the DRP, the 178 bedroom student accommodation on Station Approach, is due to be completed in December 2020.
Support Higher Education provision in Herefordshire through enabling development of student accommodation.	Amber	As above, the first bespoke student accommodation development in Herefordshire will be completed in December 2020, providing 178 bedrooms to support the growth of higher education provision in the county.
Commence development of student accommodation for those in higher education in the city with a first scheme at Station Approach to commence	Amber	
Continue to develop the detailed planning policies to support housing and economic growth; including progressing the development of the Hereford Area Plan and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan for submission to the Secretary of State, the adoption of the Travellers sites Development Plan Document and increasing the number of adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan Documents to 60	Amber	The Herefordshire Core Strategy Review and Transport Strategy Review paused further development of the Hereford Area Plan which was under development as a Development Plan Document to the Core Strategy 2011-2031. However, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan continues to make progress as a County-wide DPD with adoption expected in 2021. Adoption of the Travellers Sites DPD has been secured and whilst NDP progression was halted as a result of COVID-19 legislation, work has now re-started although referendums remain on hold till May 2021.

Performance Measures				
Measure	Q1	Improve-ment?	Target Met?	Comments
Herefordshire young people meeting or exceed: Attainment 8	NA			Results not available due to COVID-19
Herefordshire young people meeting or exceed: Progress 8	NA			
Increase the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds participating and training (including apprenticeships and work based learning)	89.9%		TBC	England = 92.4%
Minimise the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions in Herefordshire (3 year rolling average)	91 (27 YTD)		TBC	
Percentage of Category 1 defects (immediate or imminent hazard) made safe/dealt within target times	100%			
Percentage of Category 2a defects made safe/dealt within target times	84.2%			Down due to increased numbers following flooding and COVID working requirements
Improvement in the overall condition of roads and bridges	NA			Annual figure
Improve the proportion of strategically important routes that are in good condition and the proportion that are in need of maintenance	NA			Annual figure
Percentage of Major planning applications dealt with within 13 weeks (24 month rolling)	86.40%			
Percentage of Non-major planning applications (minors/others) dealt with within 8 weeks (24 month rolling)	79.00%			
% of county premises with access to Next Generation Access (NGA)	91%			
Supply of ready to develop housing sites	NA			Annual figure
Increase in number of people interacting with council services on-line	190,140		TBC	Increase website usage during 1st quarter
Website satisfaction: percentage of visitors that confirm that they were able to do what they set out to do in a satisfaction survey	71.30%		TBC	
Rateable value of new business rates registrations	£21,320,620		TBC	Lower than previous years due to the expanded retail relief discount offered by government

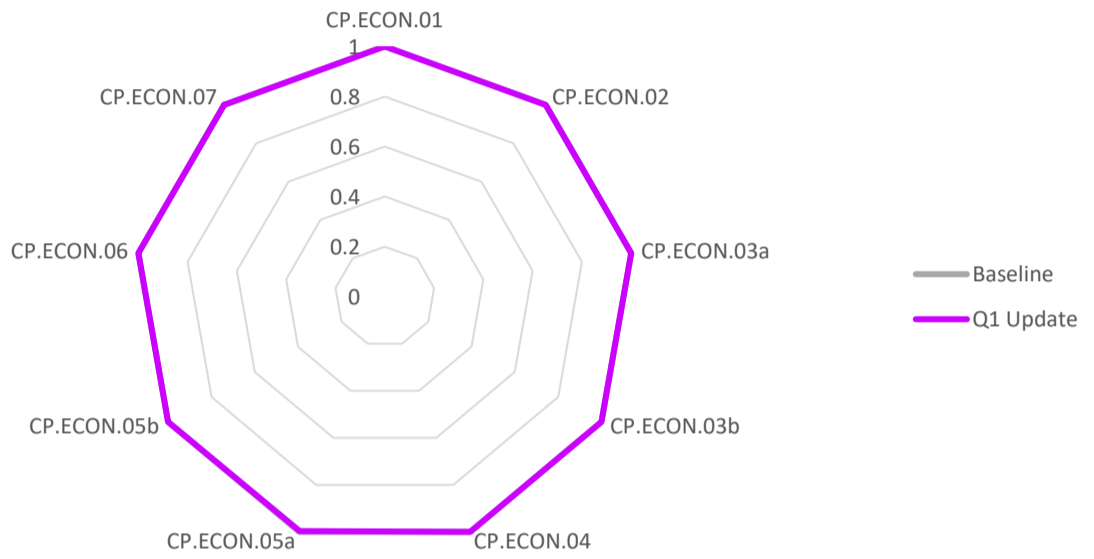
Corporate Risks

Risk
 CRR.09 - EU Exit
 CRR.19 - NMITE
 CRR.21 - Economic Masterplan resilience
 CRR.31 - South Wye Transport Package
 CRR.33 - South Wye Transport Package
 CRR.37 - 5 year housing land supply/Housing delivery test

		Impact				
		1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Significant
Likelihood	5 Certain					
	4 Likely				CRR.09	CRR.31
	3 Possible			CRR.19	CRR.37	CRR.33
	2 Unlikely				CRR.21	
	1 Rare					

County Plan - Success Measures

Outcome Measure
 01 Average Workplace Earnings
 02 Unemployment rate
 03a Educational Attainment: Progress8
 03b Educational Attainment: Attainment8
 04 Sustainable travel
 05a Killed/Seriously Injured
 05b Overall Highway Condition
 06 Gross Value Added
 07 Broadband coverage



Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve

Ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices

Build publicly owned sustainable and affordable houses and bring empty properties back in to use

Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people

Use technology to support home care and extend independent living

Support communities to help each other through a network of community hubs

Delivery		
Action	Status	Comments
Increase the functionality of the council website and WISH (wellbeing information and signposting) portal to aid people's easy access to information and advice, along with conducting services online	Green	Increased functionality has recently been deployed through a system upgrade improving access to information and local services.
Increase the quality of information that is published, and provide more information in accessible formats for openness and transparency	Green	Additional information on the council website provided for Covid-19, along with social media. Revised website in progress that will allow for more on-line forms.
Continue the support and delivery of the armed forces covenant in Herefordshire to help the armed forces community (including family and carers), shaping and supporting access to advice and services	Green	The DG team through the Grants Manager, the Veteran Support Centre Manager and the Armed Forces Covenant Support Officer continue to provide the support and secretariat to the Covenant Partnership in delivering the aims of the covenant. This past quarter has been facilitating online meetings with partners, the Ops Group, Covenant Partnership and wider covenant Partnership. Introduction of a Veteran to Veteran volunteering Scheme from the Veteran Support Centre in response to the Covid19, update and monitoring of the Council's website that hosts the Armed Forces information to ensure that organisations had the correct and up to date information, newsletters, virtual Armed Forces Day coverage, etc. Most specifically work towards the Council's Gold Award and completion of the Armed Forces Needs document for Herefordshire.
Develop and increase the uptake of a range of activities aimed at identifying early risk factors and improve the overall health and wellbeing of Herefordshire residents such as NHS Health checks	Amber	NHS Healthchecks were paused due to COVID-19, due to limited GP availability. The services is looking to restart in Sept/Oct and will focus on individuals known to be high risk; using both postcode data (indicating levels of deprivation) and targeting large workforces (particularly those in routine and manual work). Smoking cessation services have continued delivered online and over the phone; the service this year has been opened up to all residents. Substance use services have remained open, albeit showing a downturn in activity. Sexual Health services have continued; those with a clinical need have been seen in person, whilst there has been an increase in the use of online STI test kits.
Explore new models of delivery for high demand services such as nursing provision for people with dementia	Green	The local authority is supporting the work around enhanced health in care homes which is a national programme to improve health in care homes and link to the wider local PCN model of delivery. Work continues on both the market position statement and accommodation needs plans.
Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the urgent care system to avoid admission or enable people to leave hospital earlier	Green	We continue to work closely with system partners after a united and successful approach to COVID-19 providing an integrated approach to discharge and hospital avoidance. We continue to work together in preparation for the forthcoming discharge guidance due to be in place from September with the aim of continuing an integrated approach with health and community partners.
Develop and embed effective community hubs across the county (referred to as the Talk Community programme) which can demonstrate impact on health, wellbeing and independence of local residents	Green	Relationships that have been established through the link workers with community groups/organisations across Herefordshire during lockdown are being further developed by the talk community team; and with the groups that had been engaged prior to lockdown those connections are being re-established. The focus therefore has been on re-establishing and developing those connections in order to continue and capitalise on the fantastic community response during the pandemic and with support from the talk community team establish these groups as a talk community hub.
Maximise the use of the disabled facilities grant to support people to remain in their own home with appropriate advice, equipment, adaptations, technology and essential repairs	Amber	Technology offer extended during covid -19 to support hospital discharge. Use of DFG adversely affected by Covid-19; Building Contractors returned to working in people's homes in July 2020 with appropriate guidance.
Implement a new housing allocation policy and system through which residents in housing need are nominated for affordable housing in Herefordshire	Blue	New Housing Allocations Policy introduced on 24 June 2020
Support people to access technology and increase their ability to use technology to enhance daily living and overall wellbeing	Green	Technology offer extended during covid -19 to support hospital discharge and to support access of adults in care homes to connect with their families and friends whilst COVID-19 is preventing face to face contact.
Redesign social care resources to align better within the locality based community health services	Blue	Locality remodelling has been completed and is now embedded

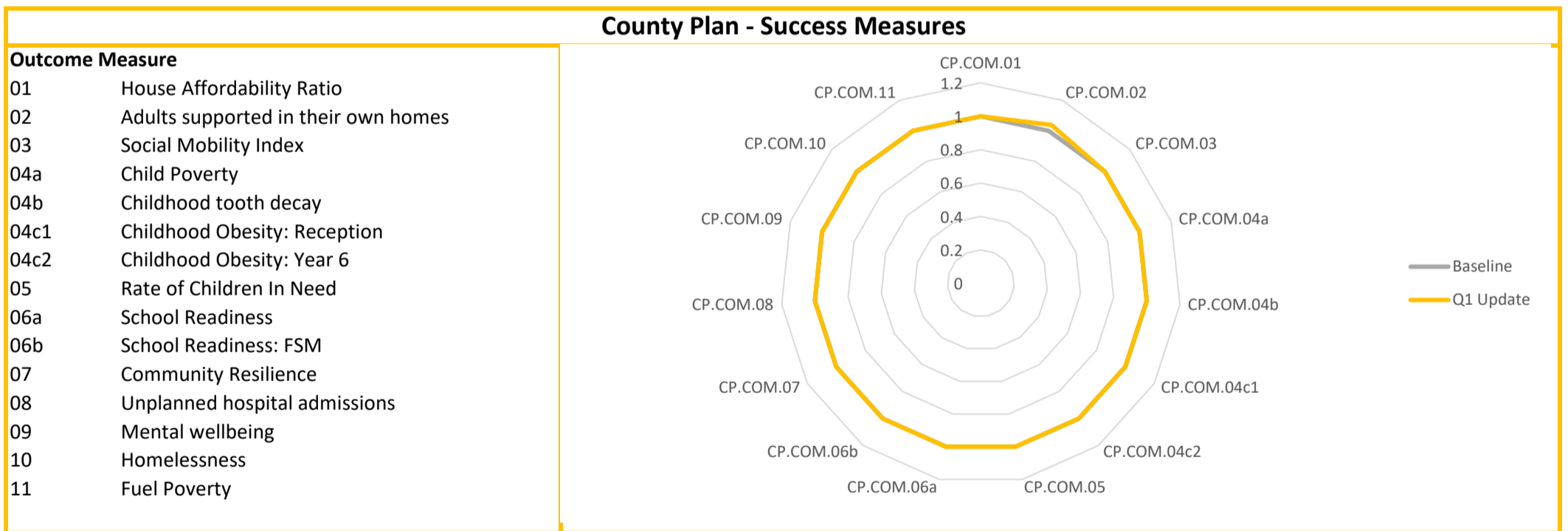
Increase early help resources through effective targeting of commissioned services and increase in direct family support workers	Blue	The internal Early Help resources have been increased by family support workers and early years support workers. This increase in resource has led to an increase in the number of children and their families who receive specialist support from 147 families (298 children) April 2019 to 283 families (611 children) in June 2020. The Troubled Families programme started a years extension from April 2020. To date the target of 15 Payment By Results claims has been achieved for the first 3 months.
Support and challenge early years settings, schools and colleges to continue to improve the outcomes for children and young people to achieve our aim of having education outcomes in the top 25%	Amber	Standards visits have been completed and follow up visits to monitor progress towards actions have taken place. Targets have been set for schools and schools have been risk assessed. Support is being provided through a variety of means including school to school support (8 schools) and Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership projects (Raising the attainment of boys in English at GCSE). Use of National Leads in Education and Teaching Schools to support and challenge schools. Due to COVID 19 and the closure of schools to most pupils, these projects have been put on temporary hold. As a result of CV19 there will be no EYFS, KS1, Phonics or KS2 results this year, therefore no measurement of outcomes in the primary phase in 2020. KS4 and KS5 exams (GCSE and A Levels) have been suspended with results being awarded on teacher assessment. The projects above will resume when the schools return in September.
Develop and implement a strategy to tackle the growing issue of childhood obesity and dental health in Herefordshire	Amber	An oral health action plan has been approved including a targeted approach across early years settings to tooth brushing; identifying options to increase the numbers of children accessing fluoride varnish; a training programme and marketing and promotion of good oral health. Actions for a comprehensive and consistent approach for services and settings for under 5s have been identified in relation to healthy eating, oral health and physical activity, including multi-disciplinary training, building on the Solihull parenting training, ensuring consistent messages and guidance around appropriate resources. This approach will be taken to CYP Board for consideration in due course as no further progress has been made due to external circumstances.
Develop speech and language skills of under 5's through education and training in early years settings	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elklan speech and language project – communication friendly settings accreditation, communication champions within settings. A new completion date for the Elklan contract has been agreed and extended until end September 2021 due to CV19. There is a completion rate of 87% • Training for parents via 'let's talk' courses; settings and children centres have successfully continued to run 'let's talk' courses for parents via video calls, with good engagement. Elklan parent toolkit went live on WISH on 27.6.20 to support parents with their child's language development whilst at home. The professional toolkit will be ready to launch in September 2020. • Solihull Approach; licence has been extended to make it a 5 year project. Engagement is being monitored and some targeted marketing is being released for parents during lockdown to encourage language development. • Training for EYFS professionals and home learning environment initiatives such as library membership for under 5s, bookstart packs and associated activity, including dual language books and information for parents; home learning environment bursaries for settings to engage parents in their children's learning at home; translated leaflets to encourage use of home language to develop good communication skills for children with EAL; signing courses for practitioners and settings to support communication. • The Maths project has been completed, with the last 2 sessions being run via video meetings during lockdown. More sessions to run in the new term. • Forest school training has been adapted by Forest School Alliance so that it can continue to go ahead with blended learning now taking place. We currently have 2 participants engaging in this. • COVID-19 has meant a temporary halt to some of these programmes due to the closure of settings.
Undertake a mental health needs analysis for young people	Amber	The Herefordshire Mental Health Profile is drafted; the scope of the profile has been revised in the light of COVID-19 and has expanded to embrace the range of risk and protective factors for mental health. The profile focusses on key lifestyle, social and environmental factors affecting mental wellbeing. The children's survey is now planned for early in 2021 and the Talk Community survey of a representative sample of Herefordshire residents will provide an indication of the mental wellbeing of the wider population.
Develop and implement a care leavers covenant that sets out the council's commitment to care leavers as part of our corporate parenting role	Green	Accepted as a "trailblazer" local authority and working with the national covenant team. A local care leavers covenant has been drafted and is due to be considered by Scrutiny Committee in July and Cabinet in September.
Implement new model for social care to ensure consistency and quality of practice so that children and families are supported effectively within the right part of the system	Green	Signs of Safety is being progressed following the delays due to COVID-19; governance and reporting arrangements have been finalised and the project board has been established, a refreshed implementation plan has been agreed and signed off, and project workstreams leads have been identified. Training is being arranged for the C&F staff to be completed virtually during Q2 and Q3.

Develop and implement an enhanced support offer to those families who are at risk of escalation to higher levels of intervention from social care	Green	The new ECHO (Edge of Care/Home) service is now live and began accepting referrals in April '20. 19 cases have been referred and assigned to an ECHO support workers; one of these cases for reunification, has already been closed successfully with the child returning to live with parents. There are a further three roles to be implemented during the next quarter, to support therapy, domestic violence and substance misuse. Once these roles have joined the team over the summer, the project implementation will be completed and work will move to a business as usual phase, with further progress and impact being reported routinely.
Enhance information and support to parents	Green	The EH page on the website has been updated and improved. The Early Years Family & Community Connectors have identified 209 community assets for children and their families, of which 131 agreed for their details to go on WISH. Services not registered on WISH are on an internal directory available for council staff and shared with partner agencies. Services suspended delivery of group Parenting Courses in March 2020. Courses on the Solihull Approach are available on line free for anyone living in Herefordshire. The EHFST and the EYST are both developing short parenting sessions to be delivered virtually. Early Years Support Workers (EYSW) also filming sessions of some of their evidence based programmes to be sent out to parents virtually.
Develop new models of housing and accommodation to support vulnerable young people	Amber	The refurbishment of Widemarsh Street accommodation for care leavers has been completed and opened in July. Pathways are now in place. Recommissioning of housing related support services for vulnerable young people was reviewed and procurement is now live, with new service to be operational from Feb 2021 - this has been impacted by COVID-19, and planned for cabinet in November 2020.
Continue significant development of affordable and social housing through planning gain and the Development and Regeneration Partnership, also contributing to accommodation for vulnerable people and analysis of projection of population and demographic changes	Green	Whilst impact of COVID-19 led to the closure of housing development sites, development has re-started with Registered Providers reporting difficulties due to materials shortages. Annual delivery target is being reviewed in light of COVID-19 impacts. Ongoing challenges in securing vacant possession continue to hamper delivery of housing at Bromyard through DRP with Keepmoat but the completion of supported units for Care Leavers with complex needs in Widemarsh Street is a positive outcome for Herefordshire improving housing options for priority need groups. The Herefordshire Housing Market Area Needs Assessment has been commissioned and is due to report in October and will inform the Council on housing need in Herefordshire.
Seek to acquire new sites to encourage new housing development within the county and commence development of the former depot site at Bromyard to deliver 45 new homes.	Amber	Registered Providers in Herefordshire continue to work hard to identify sites for affordable housing delivery and a review of Council-owned sites is ongoing. Work to progress delivery at Bromyard remains on hold pending possession of the agricultural land critical for the development.
Further develop the council website including WISH to communicate with residents and increase the ability to access services on-line, with streamlined services making the most of technology to create an improve customer experience	Green	Increased functionality has recently been deployed through a system upgrade improving access to information and local services.

Performance Measures				
Measure	Q1	Improve-ment?	Target Met?	Comments
Reduce the rate of younger adults needing permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes (aged 18-64)	0 (0 people)			Recording of DTOCs has been suspended nationally during COVID-19.
Reduce the rate of older people needing permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes (aged 65+)	65.04 (31 people)			
The number of Delayed Transfers of Care (delayed days) from hospital attributable to social care	NA			
Increase the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into Reablement/rehabilitation services	70.1%			Delays in construction has impacted on delivery target of 210 new and acquired dwellings in 2020/21. Building works have now resumed, but limited availability of some building materials and social distancing rules on sites have resulted in a predicted decrease in units delivered. Regular contact with Registered Providers (RPs), and discussions are taking place to try and accelerate delivery this year
Increase the number of affordable housing units delivered	8			
Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	34			Figures delayed due to COVID-19
Improve the overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	NA			
Increase the number of community hubs throughout the county	8			* figure as at February. Postponed due to COVID-19
Increase the take up of the NHS Health Checks from the most "at risk" population groups	45.2%*			
Reduce the attainment gap at age 16 between free school meal pupils and their peers.	NA			Annual figure
Increase the proportion of pupils attending a school and or setting that is good or outstanding: Primary	96.8%		TBC	

Increase the proportion of pupils attending a school and or setting that is good or outstanding: Secondary	78.3%		TBC	
Improve education outcomes at age 5 (Ensuring they reach a good level of	NA			Annual figure
Improve health outcomes for: 0-5 year olds (Percentage of 2 to 2.5 year olds	NA			Annual figure
completing a developmental health review)				
Improve health outcomes for: 5-19 year olds (Percentage of Year 6 children who are	NA			Annual figure
overweight or obese)				
Reduce the number of children being referred to children's social care for a service	1938 contacts 366 referrals		TBC	
Reduce the number of children looked after by the local authority	345			
Reduce the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for young people at	13		TBC	Increased number of parental evictions as a
risk of homelessness				result of lockdown
Reduce the number of children subject to child protection plans	115		TBC	
Increase flu vaccination uptake for Herefordshire Council staff and other defined staff	NA			Figure reported later in year
groups				

Corporate Risks						
Risk	Likelihood	Impact				
		1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Significant
CRR.01 - Childrens operational staffing/workforce	5 Certain					
CRR.02 - Market Workforce Economy	4 Likely				CRR.01, CRR.02, CRR.04	CRR.03
CRR.03 - Budget & Savings Plan - Childrens & Families	3 Possible			CRR.17	CRR.07	CRR.40
CRR.04 - Human Rights Claims	2 Unlikely					
CRR.07 - Deprivation of Liberty	1 Rare					
CRR.17 - Demographic Pressures						
CRR.40 - Ofsted Outcomes						



Minimise waste and increase reuse, repair and recycling

Invest in low carbon projects

Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county

Identify climate change action in all aspects of council operation

Protect and enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards

Build understanding and support for sustainable living

Seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources

Delivery

Action	Status	Comments
Reconfigure space at central and satellite offices so that employees can work flexibly and the council can maximise its facilities and resources	Green	The council's Better Ways of Working (BWOW) programme has been updated in response to COVID-19 and a decision was made by Cabinet on 23 July 2020 to move to a home working model and to release leased properties creating a financial and an environmental benefit. Survey work conducted show the workforce have adapted well supported by the IT infrastructure and could see themselves continuing to work from home longer term – this is not the case for everyone and some teams need an office location therefore Plough Lane has been made Covid Secure following Governance guidelines.

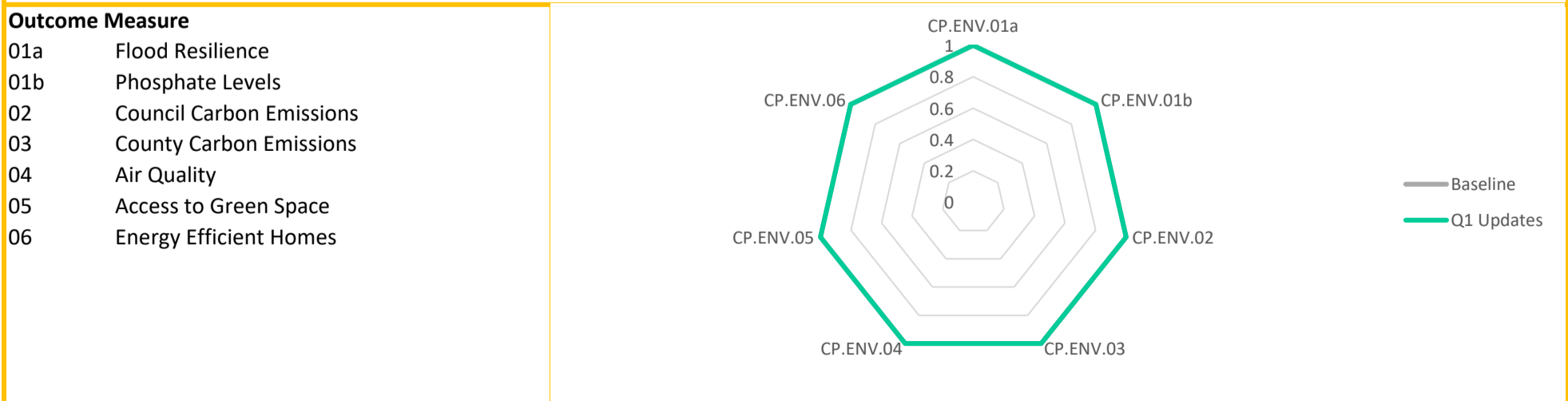
Performance Measures

Measure	Q1	Improvement	Target Met	Comments
Reduce the amount of household waste per person (kg) per year	86.59Kg (YTD)			
Improve average journey time in Hereford in morning week-day period	Annual			This data is published later in the year
% reduction in Herefordshire Annual Domestic Energy Consumption (reduce fuel poverty)	Annual			This data is published later in the year

Corporate Risks

Risk	Impact					
	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Significant	
CRR.35 - Phosphate pollution in the Lugg catchment CRR.41 - Ability to deliver County-wide net zero carbon	5 Certain					
	4 Likely					
	3 Possible				CRR.41	CRR.35
	2 Unlikely					
	1 Rare					

County Plan - Success Measures



Delivery		
Action	Status	Comments
Effectively deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), and implement change to the Capital Budget process to improve transparency and accountability	Green	
Prepare for a second round of community governance reviews consulting with parish councils and their communities to develop outline terms of reference on possible governance alterations	Amber	Community Governance Reviews were due this year, but postponed due to COVID. CGRs require a high degree of consultation with parishes which requires drp in sessions. Options for rescheduling are being considered; CGRs can only take place in years without elections. Guidance indicates that it is good practice to conduct these every 10-15 years; Herefordshire's last round of reviews was in 2018.
Ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities in relation to data protection, elections and cyber security	Green	Ensure all policies and procedures are updated to reflect the current and future ways of working. Develop staff training to ensure that we are able to deliver face to face training virtually. Completion and submission of the IG Toolkit, PSN Code of Connection and Cyber Essentials. Reporting of incidents at the IG Steering Group to maintain an overview of risks. Completion of DPIA's and Security Assessments for all existing and new systems.
Support evidence based decision making through a refreshed Understanding Herefordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website, and make it easier to find key information about a topic or local area	Blue	Updated Understanding Herefordshire website live in 2019/20. This is regularly refreshed as more up-to-date information becomes available
Improve the council's engagement with residents, its standards and communication approach with employee wide training on good customer services	Green	Updated and revised engagement standards agreed. Training on Unconscious Bias available for staff.
Further improve commissioning and procurement to deliver greater revenue efficiencies and savings	Green	Update to CPRS and associated advice and guidance being completed. Development of new procurement & contract management toolkits. Social Value Business contracted to assess and improve the council's approach to increasing and retaining local wealth locally.
Implement a workforce strategy that ensures there is an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the changing needs and demands of the council	Red	Draft strategy about to be launched, however this needs further consideration to reflect the changes to working environments in relation to COVID-19
Make better use of children centre facilities through sharing space, community involvement and income generation	Green	Majority of work is now completed. Relocation of children centre in Leominster into share site with MAO freeing the old site for a nursery to generate an income. Redevelopment of Widemarsh Centre in Hereford as a retained key site now completed including space for private nursery generating an income. Relocation of children centre at Ross with shared space at the Library and use of the Old Chapel next door with MAO Other sites transferred use and operation to schools and nurseries to meet local need.
Optimise the use of the property assets held by the authority, ensuring assets are in the right location and fit for purpose, considering shared and dual use as well as maximising income	Amber	A programme which arises from the Corporate Estate Asset Management Plan for the period 2020 to 2024 is being developed to align estate assets with Directorate business plans, and to follow the Estate Asset Strategy.

Performance Measures				
Measure	Q1	Improve-ment?	Target Met?	Comments
Reduce sickness absence (12 month rolling)	8.18 days			
Spend to the council's revenue budget	£15,919k			COVID-19 related spend
Progress against delivery of savings targets				
Increase completion rates of mandatory training	52%			

Corporate Risks					
Risk	Impact				
	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Significant
CRR.06 - Council Redesign/Resources					
CRR.08 - Recruitment Strategy					
CRR.10 - Failure of the council to adhere to policy					
CRR.11 - Emergency Events					
CRR.12 - Health & Safety					
CRR.13 - Cyber Attack					
CRR.15 - Workplace/Accommodation Programme					
	5				

CRR.18 - Property Services support to Capital Programme
 CRR.20 - Good decision making
 CRR.23 - Good internal controls
 CRR.24 - Medium Term Financial Strategy
 CRR.25 - ICT Platforms
 CRR.26 - Partnerships
 CRR.29 - Information Governance
 CRR.30 - Litigation
 CRR.34 - Response to police investigation
 CRR.38 - Dispute with major contractors
 CRR.39 - COVID-19
 CRR.43 - Repair of storm damage following Storm Dennis
 CRR.45 - COVID-19 Funding Issues

Likelihood	5					CRR.39
	Certain					
	4			CRR.11	CRR.45	
	Likely					
	3			CRR.15, CRR.18, CRR.20, CRR.38	CRR.06, CRR.08, CRR.10, CRR.12, CRR.13, CRR.43	
	Possible					
2		CRR.30	CRR.24, CRR.25, CRR.26, CRR.29	CRR.23, CRR.34		
Unlikely						
1						
Rare						

Ref	Overarching risks	Specific Risks	Corporate Ambition			Opened	17/06/2020			15/07/2020			3 Month Trend	Comments
			Environ-ment	Comm-unity	Economy		Likelihood	Impact	Score	Likelihood	Impact	Score		
CV1	Risk to the vulnerable people in Herefordshire (children not in education, not in social care)	Ability to carry out business as usual to support vulnerable people in the community National focus is largely on protecting the NHS, which might result in poor practices generating increased (long term) pressures on social care Residents impacted by the recent flooding are unlikely to be able to repair properties and will remain in temporary accommodation Assurance that Care Home are effectively managing the COVID risks and contamination control within their settings Adequacy of Infection Protection control	x	x		Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 May-20	3	3	9					
CV2	Risk to our staff	Availability of PPE Staffing levels will make BAU, and COVID responses under pressure Risk of infection/death to frontline staff working in the community Working from home H&S and well being Risk to BAME workforce Covid secure workplaces	x			Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 May-20 May-20	3	4	12					
CV3	Risk to the council's finances	A reduction in council tax income A reduction in business rate income A reduction in income for other sources, such as car parking Additional unbudgeted spend including PPE @ significant cost Uncertainty over central government support and unavoidable costs Timing deadline for central government support	x	x		Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 May-20 Jun-20	5	5	25					
CV4	Risk to the local economy	Local economy will suffer as a result of the COVID measures Increased likelihood of businesses failing Delays in progressing some of the key council developments which will increase the capacity to Market failures for LA services Impact for market towns not covered by specific grants Increased unemployment Ability for transport services to provide covid secure service and still be viable difficulty in recruiting in some areas ie agriculture Uncertainty of pandemic on top of flooding this year	x	x		Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20	5	5	25					
CV5	Risk to the Talk Community COVID response	Fragile processes have been developed to support immediate resolution, which rely too heavily on individuals and single points of failure.	x			Apr-20 Apr-20	Closed	Closed						
CV6	Risk to the Shield, BRAVE and other vulnerable groups COVID response	Due to numerous lists being issued from health, there is a risk that some people are missed and not contacted Fragile processes have been developed to support immediate resolution, which rely too heavily on individuals and single points of failure. sufficiency of foster care places availability of volunteers and shelf bodies as normal duties resume impact of public realm changes for the visually impaired	x			Apr-20 Apr-20 Apr-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20	3	3	9					
CV7	Risks to Communications and national messaging	Herefordshire council might not agree with the national messaging The requirement to respond to the national governments decisions quickly poses a risk to the council Messages not understood due to unclear messaging and different counties/welsh border. inaccessible communications not reaching audience	x	x		Apr-20 Apr-20 May-20 Jun-20	3	3	9					
CV8	Risk to delivery of Strategic Objectives	non compliance by members of public Transformational projects stalling due to inability to build/develop/transform services HE ability/pressures	x	x	x	Apr-20 Apr-20 May-20 Jun-20	4	5	20					
CV9	Risk of non compliance with advice/guidance by general public	Pressure on council enforcement resources	x			Jun-20 Jun-20	5	5	25					
CV10	Risk of larger outbreaks leading to wider lockdown	LA not have powers for wider lockdown Community tensions rising Local authority and local system capacity being overwhelmed if multiple large outbreaks occur simultaneously	x	x		Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20 Jul-20	5	5	25					
CV11	Missed education for herefordshire learners	Impact of lack of learning /virtual learning capability Parental and school tensions	x	x		Jun-20 Jun-20	5	5	25					
CV12	Lack of digital inclusion /IT	Superfast broadband not accessible to all digital inclusion - feeling more excluded Cyber security risk increasing given increase of matter online			x	Jun-20 Jun-20 Jun-20	4	3	12					



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Performance Management Framework
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To propose a refresh of the councils Performance Management Framework; setting out the councils approach to business planning, risk management and performance monitoring.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The Performance Management Framework, at appendix 1, is approved; and**
- (b) Delegation is given to the Solicitor to the Council, to update the Risk Management Plan annually**
- (c) Delegation is given to Assistant Director Corporate Support, to update the Service Business Planning Guidance annually**

Alternative options

1. The previous Performance Risk and Opportunity Management Framework is extended. However, this is out of date, and needs refreshing to improve current practices.

Key considerations

2. The current Performance Risk and Opportunity Management Framework (PROM) was approved by Cabinet in July 2016. This set out the council's approach to Performance Management; including business planning, risk management and performance monitoring.
3. Effective triangulation of planning, risk management and performance monitoring is key to ensuring that the strategic priorities within the County Plan are achieved, and where unexpected events occur, these are understood and integrated in to the plan in order to minimise, or mitigate their impact.
4. The new Performance Management Framework, or PMF, is found at appendix 1. This one page approach was chosen in order to increase the accessibility of the framework and therefore boost organisational understanding of what is included within the Framework. This view provides a summary of;
 - the benefits of an effective and embedded performance management framework,
 - the overarching Plan, Do, Monitor, Review cycle
 - the overview and hierarchy of business planning within Herefordshire Council; demonstrating how the County Plan should filter down to individuals' Personal Development Plans
 - the tiers of risk monitored within the authority
 - The annual timings of individual elements within the framework
5. The PMF mandates that the council plans its activities, starting with a Corporate Plan (the County Plan); this plan sets out the key strategic ambitions for the council. These ambitions should cascade down through the organisations planning structure and provide a link all the way through to individuals in their PDP's.
6. The council must also document and monitor risks, and where necessary act to reduce risks. Clearer escalation processes will help to make the process more transparent and ensure that focus, and action, is maintained on the highest risks.
7. Development of this refreshed framework has included engagement with staff who currently manage services, Management Board and with the Audit and Governance Committee.
8. The Risk Management Plan and the Business Planning Framework are found at Appendix 2 and 3. These documents are designed to provide the detail for workers involved in business planning, performance monitoring and risk management.

Risk Management Plan

9. The Risk Management Plan, at appendix 2, has been redeveloped in order to strengthen the council's approaches to risk monitoring whilst also attempting to support staff's understanding and engagement with risk management by providing a simple set of processes.
10. Fundamentally the process for all risks is identification, assessment, addressing risk, monitoring and reviewing, and reporting risks.
11. Changes within the process include;

- A more definitive criteria for escalation and de-escalation of risks between registers
- Recognition of our risk appetite, by mandating all risks over a certain score must have a plan for mitigation, whereas risks below this score can be accepted if the resource, either financial or workforce, would be disproportionate to the risk mitigated
- Greater internal checks, and comparisons, to support a more complete view of risks

Business Planning Framework

12. The Business Planning Framework at appendix 3, provides more information on how planning within the council is undertaken. It is intended to strengthen existing planning processes; ensuring that as part of the planning process services undertake a self-assessment, consider risks, performance and a range of other commitments in planning their activity to the year. This should provide the basis for managers to undertake the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process.
13. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the development and sign off of the 2020/21 delivery plan was delayed. This has had a knock on effect for the completion of service business plans. The 2020/21 delivery plan has now been re-developed to include COVID related impacts and programmes of work, and will now look at an 18 month period. The guidance in appendix 3, shows an “ordinary” year’s timetable.
14. Delegation is sought to allow both the Risk Management Plan and Service Planning Guidance documents on an annual basis in order to refine the processes and mechanisms. This will allow a flexible approach to developing the annual service business plans, in order to strengthen the approach. Similarly, this will allow the risk framework flexibility to ensure risk management works as effectively as possible.
15. Roll out of this framework will include communication to staff of the update and possible inclusion as part of induction for new staff and managers. This document will be available on the councils website.

Community impact

16. A robust performance framework is key to ensuring effective management of council services and progression of key council priorities.

Equality duty

17. 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.

18. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

19. There are no direct financial implications of approving this Framework and effective application should help to support effective investment of the council's resources.

Legal implications

20. There is no legal requirement placed on a local authority to publish a report on its performance or any requirement on the council to publish performance on any indicators or metrics. There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

Risk management

21. There are limited risks as a direct result of this recommendation but associated with the Performance Management Framework. The table below summarises these

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The Performance Management Framework isn't understood by everyone within the organisation.	<p>Developing the framework on a single page is done to support ease of understanding and engagement, with more detailed documents providing greater information for those who actively use risk registers and business plans.</p> <p>Consideration will also be given as to how this might fit into an induction framework.</p>
The elements of the framework; business planning, performance monitoring and risk, do not strike the right balance between simplicity and being over-burdensome, in turn limiting the effectiveness of the framework.	<p>The proposals have been developed following consultation with officers.</p> <p>Delegation to refresh Planning and Risk guidance documents each year will allow flexibility to address any concerns regarding mechanisms, whilst maintained the key elements identified within the overarching Performance Management Framework.</p>

22. Any risks identified will be recorded within the appropriate risk register; scored and escalated as per the Risk Management Plan

Consultees

23. Audit and Governance Committee, whose function it is to ensure risk management processes are embedded effectively within the council's constitution, received a draft of the Risk Management Plan in July and provided their feedback to further strengthen the process. Specifically, they made the following recommendations which have now been addressed in the final version of the Risk Management Plan attached at appendix 2
- Appendices be included to provide an explanation of the assumptions which have been made in the risk management plan. These appendices to include worked examples from each directorate and include SMART mitigating actions. The risk criteria are better defined within the risk management plan
 - If when working through the examples and undertaking a dry run of the framework, issues are identified, that there is consideration that they are added to the impact of the risk
 - If during the dry run of the new plan that if there are any relevant issues that they would be added into the document
 - An annual risk comparison is undertaken by the corporate support centre and reported to the committee.
 - The impact of the risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults is expressly included within the revised risk management plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Performance Management Framework
Appendix 2	Risk Management Plan
Appendix 3	Service Business Planning guidance

Background papers

None Identified

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Performance management is about improving outcomes for the people of Herefordshire by ensuring that the Council works as effectively as possible. This is done by planning our activities, monitoring progress, making reactive changes and tracking challenges to progress.

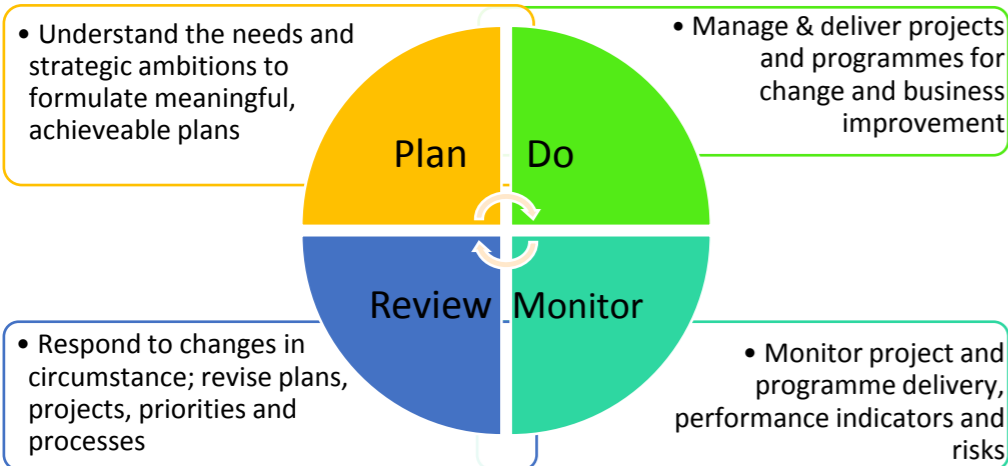
An effective performance management framework will;

- Improve services and outcomes for local people by tracking performance and targeting improvement
- Ensure our goals are prioritised and resources are allocated accordingly
- Ensure the council operates in a transparent way; clearly stating what we plan to do, and whether we achieve this
- Align our staff, making sure that individuals are aware of their targets and how these contribute to achieving the council's purpose
- Ensure risks are identified, managed and, where possible, mitigated
- Provide a strong evidence base for good decision making and the efficient use of resources

A performance management framework won't ensure good performance by itself however, and must be part of an organisation that;

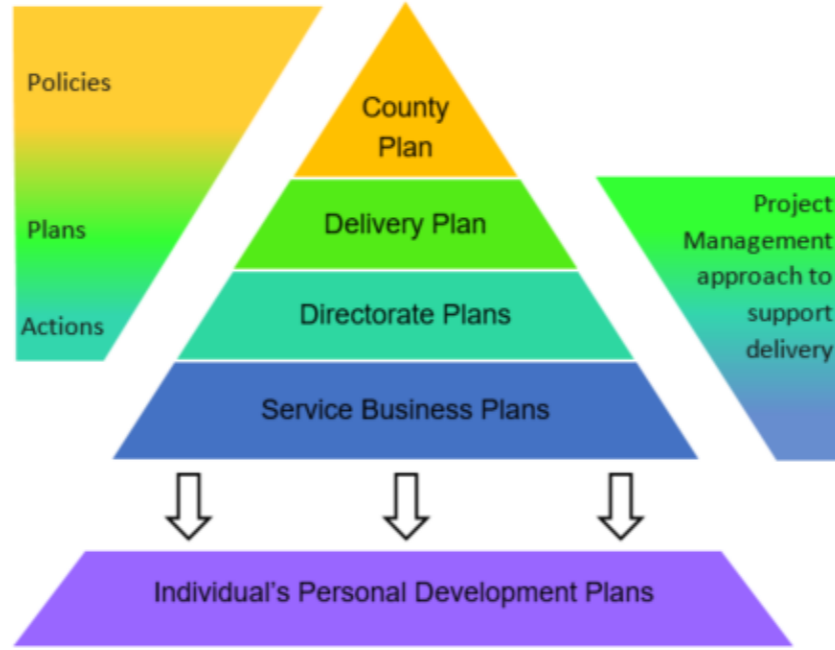
- values openness and transparency
- is open to challenge and support
- is driven by accountable leaders
- strives to make continued improvements in performance
- is supported by regular, robust intelligence

At the heart of all performance management is the Plan-Do-Monitor-Review cycle below; whether this is business planning, risk management or monitoring performance measures.



BUSINESS PLANNING must be undertaken at all levels of the council. The Corporate Plan, or County Plan, identifies the 4 year strategic ambitions for the council. These are translated in to deliverables every year in the Delivery Plan, Directorate and Service Business Plans. Plans should clearly link these actions to individual's activity as part of the Personal Development Plan (appraisal) process, ensuring individuals alignment to corporate ambitions – the "Golden Thread". Actions/activities should be clear and where possible utilise SMART methods (see below).

Further detail on the approaches to each of these documents is found in the Business Planning Guidance.



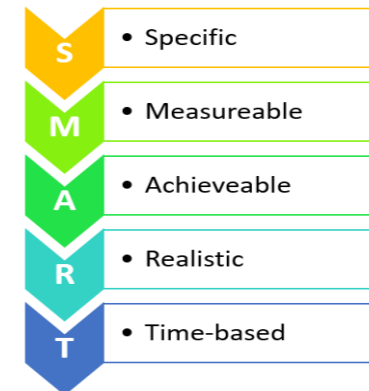
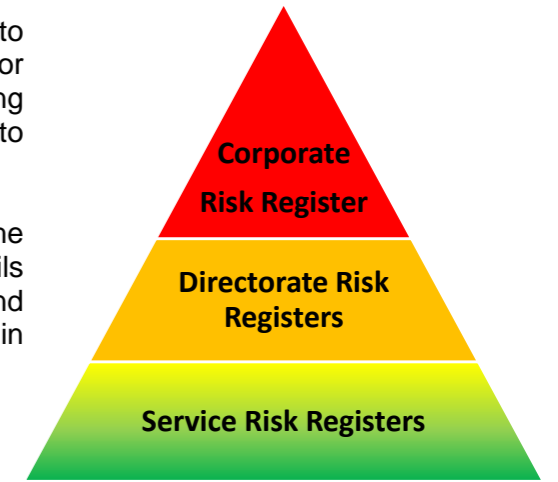
Regular **PERFORMANCE MONITORING** is required to provide assurance that services are delivered effectively and that projects and programmes are having the desired impacts. It's required by all levels of the council, from team meetings through to Management Board and Cabinet. Indicators should be chosen so that they demonstrate the delivery of a service or function, so will require measures of inputs, outputs, quality and process measures, whereas strategic objectives are likely to require measures of outcomes and population level indicators. Targets should be set for measures, using SMART methods. Action should be planned and taken to address performance not meeting targets.

RISK MANAGEMENT is about how the council identifies, monitors and manages the risks it encounters on a daily basis. When identified risks should be assessed, scored and recorded in a risk register. Risk owners should then detail the current controls in place and identify whether further work is required to mitigate the risk further – this effectively establishes our risk appetite.

The council operates 3 levels of risk registers; Corporate, Directorate and Service. The highest risks are found on the Corporate Risk Register, with lower level operational risks on Service Risk Registers. Alongside these, project risks are identified in Project and Programme Risk Registers. Risk scores are calculated by multiplying likelihood and impact to give a single risk score. Risks scores increase as they become either more certain, or have greater implications, and will escalate up risk registers, increasing the visibility and the controls available. Similarly, as risks reduce, they should be stepped down to the appropriate risk register, or even closed.

Risks should trigger activity to mitigate either the likelihood or impact with a view to reducing the exposure of the council to risk.

Further information on the processes; including details how to score, escalation and risk appetite, can be found in the Risk Management Plan.

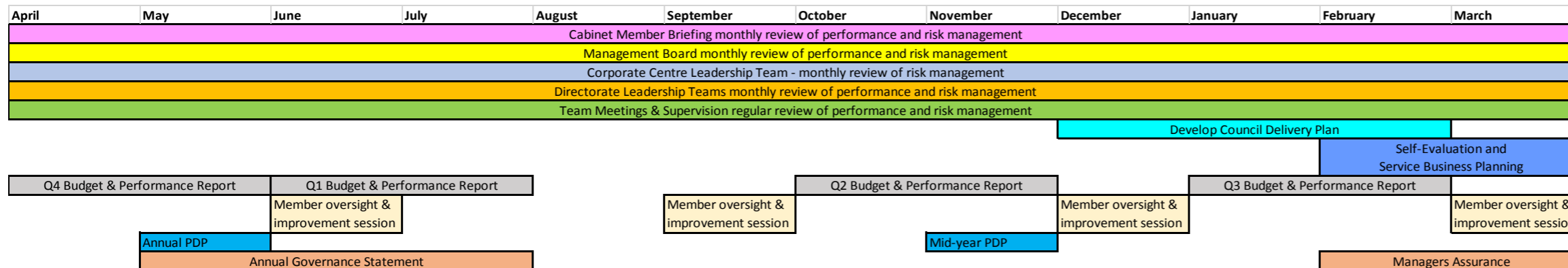


Performance must be visible throughout the council. The calendar below left gives an overview of the significant milestones throughout the year.

Directors, AD's, HoS, and managers must be aware of, drive improvement and challenge performance, risks and delivery in their service areas and ensure plans are in place to address poor performance.

Overall council performance against the Delivery Plan and corporate risks are reported publicly on a quarterly basis through cabinet.

Assurance is provided by scrutiny committees, who may call in areas of poorer performance as well as Audit & Governance Committee whose role is to monitor the development and operation of risk management in the council.



Introduction

Herefordshire Council, like all organisations, faces a wide range of risks. The aim of this framework is to communicate why Risk Management is important and to provide the detail on the approach that is taken.

Risk is an uncertain event, or set of events, that if occur will have an effect on performance and therefore the ability to achieve the council's objectives.

Risk Management identifies, evaluates, controls and monitors at regular intervals the council's risk. It is about managing resources wisely, evaluating courses of action to support decision-making and protect the council from harm.

Embedding risk management throughout the Council is not just about legal requirements. Effective risk management will lead to:

- experiencing fewer shocks and unwelcome surprises allowing greater focus on planned activity;
- more efficient use of our resources;
- improved business planning due to awareness of uncertain events and integrated planning of risk mitigation
- better, more informed decision-making

The risk management process forms part of the council's Performance Management Framework. Embedding and effectively managing risk supports increased performance and delivery.

Risk process

As officers become aware of risks that could affect the council achieving its objectives, they must report their concerns to their manager. Their manager is responsible for considering whether the risk is of sufficient impact that it needs to be recorded in the service risk register and managed through this process.

Step 1: Identifying the risk

Risks can emerge at any point, however they should be given particular attention as part of business planning. As part of business planning processes, services are required to self-assess their services; this should consider the risks of delivery and the circumstances which have either, or might impact delivery and performance. The mechanism used to undertake this may vary within the Service Business Plan template, but might include [SWOT analysis](#), or [PESTLE analysis](#). It is vitally important that the risk clearly identifies the impact it will have on achieving the council objectives, either at delivery and or county plan level.

Risks are often identified as a result of audit activity, at this stage mitigating activity is typically agreed. Risks are also identified as part of decision reports.

Risk should be a standing item on every head of service team meeting. Risks emerging from decision reports and audits should be discussed and an assessment undertaken as to whether they should be included in the risk register.

Step 2: Assessment of Risk

As risks are identified, every risk should be assessed to help determine how much attention is given to it. The council uses a 5x5 point scale to multiply the likelihood of the risk occurring and impact of the risk to the council which produces an inherent risk score. This is the risk score should no controls be applied – effectively the worst case scenario.

Risk Assessment: Likelihood

The table below shows the scores for the likelihood element of the risk.

Score	Likelihood	Description
1	Rare	It is unlikely that the event will occur
2	Possible	It is likely that this event will occur
3	Likely	There is a fair chance (50:50) that this event will occur
4	Almost certain	The event will almost surely occur
5	Certain	The event has occurred or will definitely occur

Risk assessment: Impact

The table below shows the risks scores for impact and a basic overview of the sort of implications that would realise these scores.

Score	Impact	Description
1	Negligible	Day to day operational problems that can be dealt with
2	Minor	Budgetary issues that can be resolved within Service in accordance with the finance procedure rules {link} Manageable disruption to services Noticeable internal impact, but the Service would remain on course to achieve priorities for the year Localised reputational damage
3	Significant	Significant loss, delay or interruption to services Disruption to one critical Council Service for more than 48hrs Non-delivery of corporate and service plan objectives during a quarter Significant stakeholder concern Attracting short term media attention and potential for litigation/ prosecution from legislative or regulatory bodies Long term regional damage to reputation Budgetary issues that can be resolved at Directorate level in accordance with financial procedure rules [link]

		Serious Injury to employees or those in the Council's care Significant complaints
4	Major	Widespread medium to long term impact on operational efficiency, performance and reputation. Major disruption to Council's critical services for more than 48hrs (e.g. major ICT failure) Breach of legal or contractual obligation attracting medium-term attention of legislative or regulatory bodies. Adverse coverage in National Press/Front page news locally Budgetary issues that can only be resolved by Section 151 Officer / Chief Executive / Members in accordance with the finance procedure rules {link} Serious Injury to employees or those in the Council's care
5	Critical	Potential to threaten the existence of a service/s Budgetary issues that cannot be resolved Death of employees or those in the Council's care Inability to function effectively, Council-wide Service delivery has to be taken over by Central Government

Risks tend to fall in to one of the following categories, using these might help managers in assessing the implications of risks that might impact on their service;

- Delivery and operational
- Compliance
- Financial
- Environment
- Reputation
- Health & Safety
- Risk to vulnerable people

Detailed in appendix 1 is a list of risk categories and scoring criteria against them.

The likelihood and impact scores are multiplied to give a risk score as shown in the grid below.

Likelihood	Consequence				
	1 Negligible	2 Minor	3 Significant	4 Major	5 Critical
5 Certain	5	10	15	20	25
4 Almost Certain	4	8	12	16	20
3 Likely	3	6	9	12	15
2 Possible	2	4	6	8	10
1 Rare	1	2	3	4	5

Step 3: Addressing risk - taking practical steps to manage and control it

In most instances, the council will already have some controls in place to help reduce the likelihood or impact of a risk. These should be documented in the controls section of the risk register. Given the existing controls in place, the risk must then be scored again to provide a residual risk score. This residual score is used to determine how the risk should be escalated and reviewed. The score will also give an indications of what needs to happen to address the risk.

The service/directorate would take one of the following approaches to identified risks;

- **Reduce:** Steps that are required to reduce either the likelihood or the impact, or both, to contain the risk to acceptable levels, e.g. mitigating action, contingency planning and more. This might also include transferring the risk; examples include additional insurance, or outsourcing services.
- **Accept:** An informed decision to accept the likelihood and impact of a particular risk without additional controls but subject to monitoring of the impact and likelihood to see if requires different management. This will ordinarily be the option where there is little in the council's control which will have an impact on the risk scores, or where the cost (financial or staff resource) would be prohibitive.

Planned additional action to address the risk must be referenced within the mitigating activity column of the risk register, with key dates identified. It might be that this is a reference to a detailed project/programme plans, or it might be that form activities recorded within a service business plan. Any key actions and dates described in the register must use SMART methodology; i.e. must describe an action which is

- Specific,
- Measureable,
- Achievable,
- Realistic and
- Time-based.

Risk Appetite

The council accepts that there will always be risks to delivering our services, however sometimes these reach a threshold and something must be done to mitigate the ongoing exposure to the risk. In determining whether the council needs to do something to manage the risk the residual score will give an indication as to what should happen.

As a rule of thumb;

- Red risks **MUST** have a set of mitigating activities to reduce either the likelihood of a risk or the impact of the risk
- Orange risks **SHOULD** have a set of mitigating actions, however in cases where the amount of officer time or financial cost would outweigh the level of risk exposed to, this might not be necessary
- Yellow risks **MIGHT** have a set of mitigating activities, again dependent on whether the cost of change or amount of resource required is disproportionate to the amount of risk exposure
- Green risks Unlikely to need further mitigating activities, unless there is a lack of basic policy/procedure to reduce exposure to this risk

Step 4: Monitor and Review

Once risks and existing controls have been identified, with additional action plans put in place to manage and mitigate them as required, it is essential to routinely monitor their status on the risk register.

The risk score colour determines the review period as set out in the table below. Of course, if there is a change in circumstances, **every** risk and mitigating action needs to be reviewed.

Risk colour	Review period
Red and Amber	Monthly
Yellow	Monthly
Green	Quarterly

It is expected that directorates will review their risk registers regularly to ensure that the content is accurate and risks are being managed appropriately. In reviewing the risk, it is important that services ensure that the residual risk score remains up to date, planned activities are refreshed to ensure completed actions are moved in to the controls column and any new future mitigating activities are included.

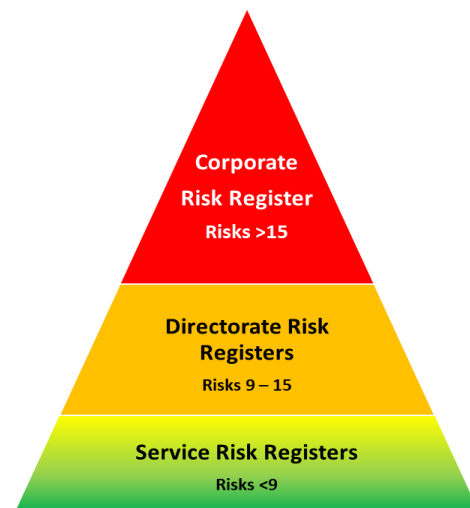
The Corporate Centre Team Meeting will also review and moderate Directorate Risk Registers, with a view to ensuring that scores have been applied consistently across the council and to verify or challenge directorates on escalation of risks to the Corporate Risk Register. Risk will be considered at this meeting each month.

Annually, the Corporate Centre will also undertake an annual review of the Corporate Risk Register, comparing with a range of other local authorities, as well as reviewing against the national risk register.

Step 5: Reporting Risks

The council operates 3 tiers of risk registers in relation to its business as usual activities; a corporate risk register, directorate risk register and service risk register. In addition, the council also maintains project and programme risk registers to record risks in relation to projects.

Risks move between registers in order to allow effective management and visibility of risk.



Escalation & De-escalation

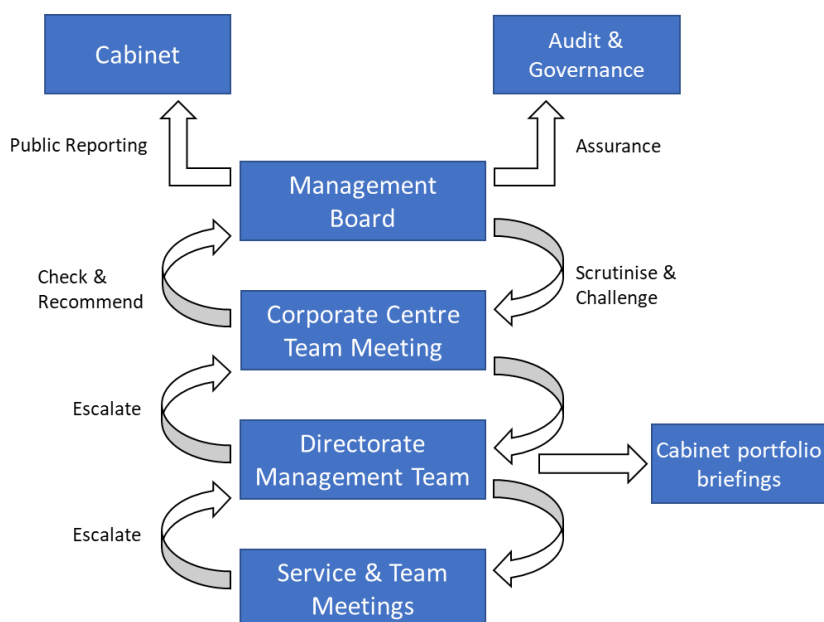
The council uses one set of scores to evaluate risks in service, directorate and corporate risk registers. It is therefore very important for all risks to be accurately assessed using the scoring criteria above. Taking this approach, rather than using different scoring templates to demonstrate various levels of materiality, helps to ensure that risk processes are as simple for staff as possible.

Service Risk Registers - > Directorate Risk Registers - > Service Risk Registers

Heads of Service should ensure that risks from their service level registers which score over 9 are escalated to the directorate risk register because there is a fair chance significant impact will occur.

Directors should ensure that risks from their service levels which score over 16 are escalated to the directorate risk register because there is a fair chance major impact will occur.

Risks can be de-escalated from the corporate and directorate risk register but will remain in the service risk register until such time as the Head of Service accepts the risk and the risk is moved to the accepted risk list for the service. De-escalation is consistent with the triggers above, scores dropping below 16 will step down from the corporate risk register to directorate risk registers, and will drop to service risk registers as they drop below 9.



In summary;

Risk Score	Colour	Register Level
> 16	Red	Corporate Risk Register
9 – 25	Amber	Directorate Risk Register

Project & Programme Risks

Project and programme risks have separate guidance, available from the programme team. Significant project and programme risks are escalated in to the Corporate Services directorate risk register.

Closing Risks

Whilst some risks will be ever-present, as work is done to mitigate risks some risks will reach a point where they no longer need to be reported. Heads of Service accept these risks by moving them into the list of accepted risks in the risk register. The closed list holds risks for 1 year.

The following summarises the attributes of each tier of risk register.

Corporate Risk Register	<p>This register flows out from the directorates risk registers and is owned by Management Board.</p> <p>These risks are reviewed by the Corporate Centre Management Team (CCMT) monthly and by Management Board as an overview each month, but in depth every quarter.</p> <p>Risks which are escalated here are with a risk score of 16 or greater.</p>
Directorate risk register	<p>This register flows out from the Service risk registers and is owned by the Directorate Management Teams (DMT's).</p> <p>These risk registers are challenged by CCMT on a quarterly basis to ensure consistent application of the risk plan and scoring criteria.</p> <p>Risks which are escalated here are those with a risk score of 9 or above.</p> <p>Any corporate risks owned by the directorate will also be kept in the directorate risk register, to ensure the visibility.</p>
Service risk register	<p>This register flows out from the Service area/Team (risk registers) and is regularly reviewed at Service Team Meetings (ST's).</p> <p>This is the master risk register and controls the escalation and closure of all risks in the service areas.</p> <p>All relevant service risks are kept in this document as the master copy for services, which are then referenced in either directorate or corporate risk registers.</p>

Programme and Project risk registers	Where it is considered appropriate, major partnerships, programmes and projects will produce and maintain their own risk registers. Risk to the programme/project should be recorded within Verto and managed through the corporate project framework. Risks will be assessed at programme level and will be escalated on to the Corporate Centre Risk Register, should it score 9 or more in the scoring criteria below. This is the responsibility of programme managers
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Roles and Responsibilities

Risk management is an intrinsic part of corporate governance. For this to be effective it is vital that everybody within the council understands the role they play in effective management of risk.

Tier	Responsibility and reporting framework
Audit and Governance Committee	Responsible for ensuring that the council's risk management process is carried out effectively. It is not a function of the committee to examine specific risks in detail, but satisfy itself that risk management in the council is operating effectively. Should the committee have a concern about the scoring or detail of the risk, it might refer back to officers attending the committee, or scrutiny.
Cabinet	Oversee risk management as part of the quarterly performance monitoring on the Budget & Performance Report. Cabinet might be required to drive active steps to manage certain risks, particularly risks to strategic objectives, through decision making. Individual Cabinet members should also regularly review risks within their portfolio as part of Cabinet Member Briefings
Management Board	Own the council's Corporate Risk Register. Monitor and review risks on the corporate risk register ensuring adequate response. As part of this review, Management Board should challenge one another in their delivery of activity which effectively mitigates identified risks.
Internal Audit	Responsible for considering the risk registers when proposing the annual plan.
Corporate Centre Management Team	Assess risks for inclusion on corporate risk register when escalated from Directorates. Consider risks which appear high on directorate risk registers which have not been escalated to the corporate risk register. This will typically be done by challenging the application of scoring on directorate risk registers to ensure comparability

	<p>across the council.</p> <p>Consider any risks identified in internal and or external audit reports and challenge directorates on their inclusion.</p> <p>Undertake an annual review of national risks, considering local implications of emerging national risks.</p>
Solicitor to the council	<p>Responsible for promoting the consistent use of risk management, developing the risk management plan and facilitation of the council's corporate risk register.</p> <p>Will review the Risk Management Plan annually in order to ensure effective management.</p>
Directors	<p>Accountable for effective risk management within their directorate, escalating risks to the corporate register as appropriate. This requires directors to ensure that staff are continually identifying emerging risks, monitoring and reviewing their risks in line with guidance. In addition, it is necessary that directors ensure that risks which are an unacceptable levels are managed to reduce the risk/impact to the council, and that these risks are an integral part of business planning processes.</p> <p>Responsible for providing cabinet members of the oversight of significant risks within their portfolios.</p>
Heads of Service	<p>Accountable for effective risk management within their service, escalating risks to the directorate register as appropriate. This requires them to ensure that staff are continually identifying emerging risks and monitoring and reviewing their risks in line with guidance. In addition, it is necessary that they ensure that risks that have been managed can be accepted and transferred to the accepted risks section of the register.</p>
Risk Owners	<p>Risks owners are responsible for recording risks, updating risks, managing actions and ensuring that risk registers are up to date.</p>
Performance Leads	<p>Will support directorates to update risk registers and act as an intermediary with the Corporate Centre. However, directorate & service risk registers remain the responsibility of operational staff not performance leads.</p> <p>Performance Leads will provide challenge to directorates on their risk recording and support directors to embed risk within their directorates.</p>
All Staff	<p>Responsibility to be risk aware; to assess and manage risk effectively in their job and report potential hazards or risks to their managers, work to mitigate risks and to work within the appropriate risk management guidelines.</p>

Appendix 1 – Risk Categories and Impact Scoring

	1	2	3	4	5
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Significant
Delivery and operational	Day to day operational problems	Manageable disruption to the service	Disruption to one critical Council Service for more than 48hrs	Major disruption to Council's critical services for more than 48hrs (e.g. major ICT failure)	Potential to threaten the existence of a service/s
Compliance	Concern raised Complaint received	Warning received	Breach Improvement Notice	Enforcement Action Breach of legal or contractual obligation attracting medium-term attention of legislative or regulatory bodies	Prosecution Service delivery has to be taken over by Central Government
Financial as per the finance procedure rules	Up to £100,000 – within a directorate	Up to £100,000 – across directorates	Between £100,001 & £250,000 – within a directorate Between £100,001 & £250,000 – across directorates	Between £250,001 & £500,000 – within a directorate Over £250,001 – across directorates	Over £500,001 – within a directorate
Environment (incl. consideration of - Biodiversity - Carbon emissions - Waste & pollution - Air Quality)	Minimal impact on waste/pollution levels/carbon emissions requiring no/minimal intervention	Minor impact on waste/pollution levels/carbon emissions requiring minor intervention	Moderate impact on waste/pollution levels/carbon emissions requiring intervention	Increase in pollutant/carbon emissions/waste from service delivery requiring additional offsetting and mitigation measures	Significant increase in pollutant/waste/carbon emission levels which compromise the Council's ability to deliver carbon neutrality and biodiversity net gain. Significant loss to

					protected sites, species and loss of life.
Reputation	Short term local media attention	Sustained local media attention	Front page news locally	Adverse coverage in National Press	Potential public interest report, third party intervention
Health & Safety	Minimal injury requiring no/minimal intervention	Minor injury or illness, requiring minor intervention	Moderate injury requiring professional intervention. RIDDOR/ agency reportable incident.	Major injury leading to long-term incapacity/ disability	Incident leading to death, multiple permanent injuries or irreversible health effects Death of employees
Risk to vulnerable people	Minimal impact on individuals in the authorities care	Minor impact on individuals in the authorities care requiring minor intervention	An event which impacts on a small number of individuals in the authorities care	Serious impact to individuals in the authorities care Mis-management of care with long term effects Breach of human rights	Death to individuals in the authorities care

Appendix 2 – Worked example

Identifying the risk:

Following a drop in performance in Delayed Transfers of Care, it was recognised that Herefordshire's performance was being reported as one of the worst nationally. At the time, new and ambitious targets had been set by NHS with the potential threat of financial penalties for local authorities not meeting targets, as well as the potential impact on a Better Care Fund "grant" received by Herefordshire Council and health partners.

Scoring the risk:

Due to the performance being recognised as one of the worst nationally and the fact that the reported numbers were poor, the likelihood of the risk was scored as 5 - the problems were already happening.

The potential impacts on Herefordshire Council were also significant; there was financial risk due to the possible fines that would be levied on the council, as well as the possible implications for the Better Care Fund income. There were also impacts on the reputation of the council, as well as an impact on people in hospitals, as they needed support from community services, but the council's response wasn't timely enough. The impact score was therefore identified as 5.

Therefore the inherent risk was recorded as 25.

Initially, the controls already in place were having little impact on the performance, therefore the residual risk remained as 25.

Addressing the risk

Due to the severity of the risk, significant programmes of work were identified as necessary to control the risk – this was included within the risk register.

Monitor and review

The risk was regularly reviewed at Adults & Communities Directorate Leadership Team. There was a continual focus on making sure that hospital cases were managed effectively, to minimise the number of delayed transfers of care, as well as new processes being implemented. As part of this focus, risk scores were reviewed to ensure that they remained an accurate picture, as well as actions being updated with additional controls recorded as they were implemented.

As there was a sustained improvement in performance over a 6 month period, the risk score was reviewed by the risk owner to a lower score; as the likelihood

$$\text{likelihood} = 3 * \text{impact} = 4 \quad = \quad 12$$

Further improvements over a continued period of time, saw the risk score reviewed again, and the risk closed down due to the now negligible risk.

Reporting the risk

Initially, due to the residual risk score of 25, this risk was escalated on to the corporate risk register (whilst continuing to be seen on service risk registers and directorate risk register to ensure visibility).

As a result of being on the corporate risk register, the risk was seen by Cabinet, as well as Audit & Governance Committee. In addition, the risk was regularly visible as part of Cabinet Member Briefing, and Management Board.

As the risk was reduced, this risk could step down to the directorate risk register. At this point it continued to be regularly viewed as part of Directorate Leadership Teams and also as part of Cabinet Member Briefings.

Further reductions to the risk, means that this risk has now been closed and will sit as part of the closed list on the service risk register.

Business Planning Framework

What gets measured gets done

Contents

Introduction	3
Planning Process	5
Template	6
Service Business Plan Guidance	6
Self-Assessment	6
Resources	7
Delivery Plan	7
Performance Indicators	7
Performance Indicator Definitions.....	8
Service Risk.....	8
Audit Recommendations	8
Other Commitments	8
Assurance	9
Performance Monitoring	9
RAG Guidance	9
Performance Reporting.....	10

Introduction

In a performance oriented organisation:

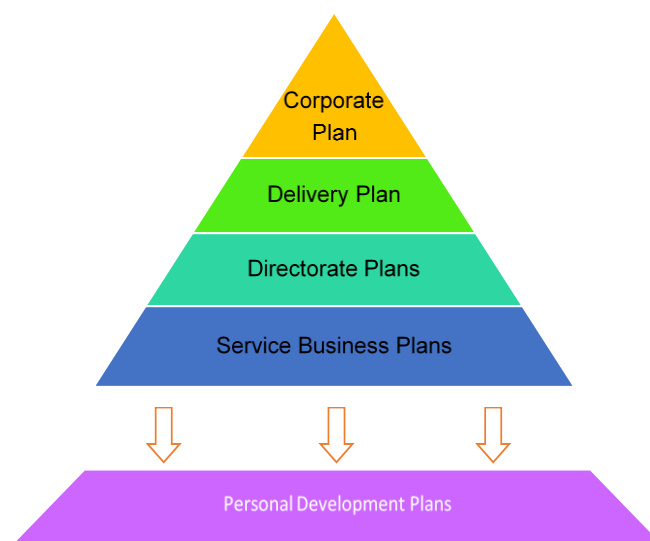
- Each member of staff is aware of their performance and targets and their performance against targets is regularly discussed in supervision with their managers;
- Lead members and senior managers lead with a clear vision, focus on strategic issues, service quality, customer feedback and citizens needs and manage through values;
- Decisions are based on robust data and intelligence;
- Approved plans, strategies, service reviews and policy objectives are measurable and impact focused;
- New ideas and best practice elsewhere are constantly sought and tried when necessary;
- There is openness to internal and external challenge and a willingness to take and stick to tough decisions and tackle difficult problems;
- Managers keep the council's vision and objectives in mind when determining actions and communicate this context to their staff;
- People see a direct connection between what they do and how it benefits the community through a clear performance management framework;
- Managers drive performance improvement and engage their employees;
- Performance management and performance improvement are treated as core business within the Council rather than an add-on;
- Performance monitoring facilitates performance management and performance management drives performance improvement;
- There is a lot of cross-functional working and interdepartmental communication focused on achieving agreed objectives;
- Everyone has a sense of responsibility for the performance of the authority and accountability for results is clear.

Robust business planning is the foundation of effective performance management and supports delivery of the above outcomes. The purpose of planning is to translate the high-level vision and objectives and the needs of the population into achievable activity for services and individuals.

The planning process needs to be undertaken at all levels of the organisation, producing a hierarchy of plans that link together, aligning towards the council's overall vision and ambitions. This alignment of the highest level Corporate Plan to an individual's Personal Development Plan is often referred to as the "Golden Thread".

Herefordshire's planning hierarchy is shown to the right, with a summary of what each of the layers should include is given below.

The **Corporate Plan** ([link](#)) sets out the medium term ambitions of the Council. The four year plan will set out the high level programmes of work which are required to deliver progress against these ambitions. This plan will also set out the success measures used to monitor the delivery of outcomes over the duration of the plan. The plan



should utilise the needs analysis of the Herefordshire population, which is found on Understanding Herefordshire. It should also look to engage with the local population as well as a range of local groups and organisations, in order to ensure alignment

The corporate plan is led by members and requires sign off at Cabinet, before adoption by Council.

Aligned to the Corporate Plan, is the **Medium Term Financial Strategy** (MTFS) which is a rolling four-year plan that contains the council's strategic approach to the management of its finances. It includes indicative budgets for the medium term; taking into account demographic changes, future service pressures and associated risks, and the indicative national climate. Similarly, the MTFS is required to be signed off by both Cabinet and Council.

All subsequent plans in the structure must be consistent with ambitions and the core values in the corporate plan.

The **Delivery Plan** is an annual plan that identifies the activities which deliver progress against the ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan. The plan will also identify how we will monitor performance in year in order to understand what difference is being made. The delivery plan will be developed by Management Board, and is agreed by Cabinet.

Directorate Plans are overarching plans highlighting the key transformational work being undertaken within directorates and Assistant Director areas. These will typically be a reflection of the key programmes identified in the Corporate and Delivery Plans and establish clear ownership for delivery, as well as amalgamating key service improvement work from service business plans. Further detail on the completion of these plans is found in this document.

Service Business Plans are annual plans that identify the planned improvements to be delivered within each of the council's services; these might be significant transformational programmes, or activity focussed on running and improving the day to day running of the service area. These plans will support directors, assistant directors and their managers to plan and monitor service delivery and performance across the whole service unit. They include actions associated with key transformational work as well as business improvement and business as usual.

Annually, refreshed guidance on Service Business Planning will be produced, to ensure that the process evolves and maximises the value of planning.

Personal Development Plans are annual plans prepared by each individual and their line manager. These plans identify objectives and actions for individual members of staff, and ensures alignment of the individual to service objectives and ultimately the strategic outcomes identified within the Corporate Plan.

Planning Process

Effective service business planning helps to ensure that individual services effectively plan and allow themselves the best opportunity of delivering services, service improvements and transformation. It also helps to ensure visibility of the range of requirements of services, by collating in to a single document.

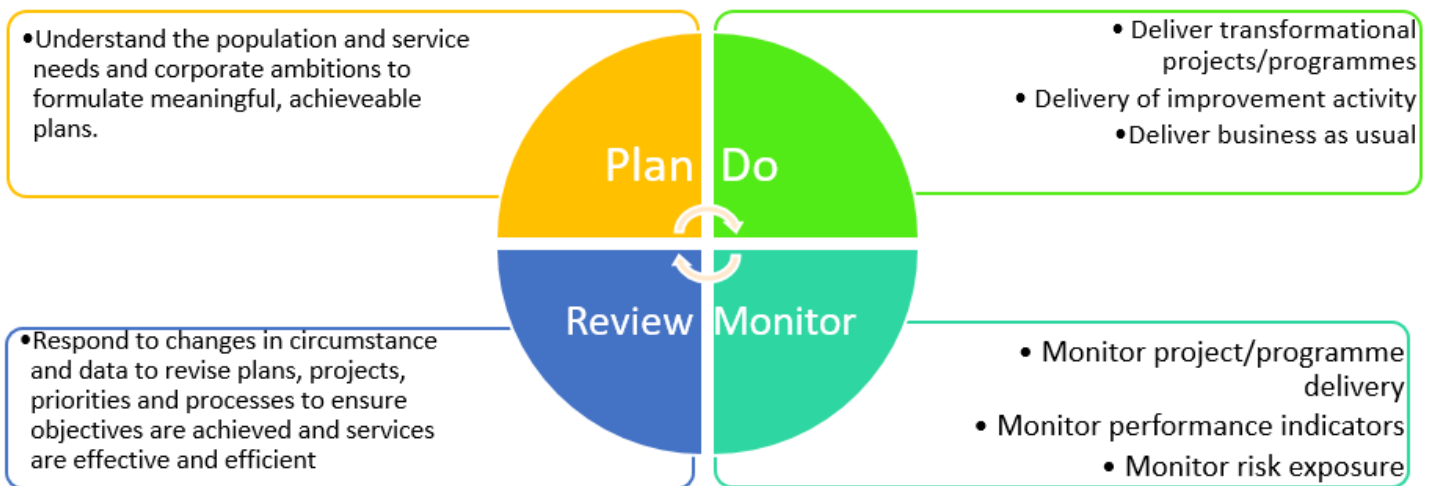
The process flow below identifies the timing of the council’s planning; timetabled in this way to allow the highest level ambitions of the council within the Corporate Plan, to translate down throughout plans, as well as allowing service business planning to identify any other key service improvement work.

Corporate Plan development & sign off																			
Delivery Plan development & sign off																			
Service Business Plan development & sign off																			
				Directorate/AD Plan Development & Sign Off															
Personal Development Plans																			
Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4
January				February				March				April				May			

Each year, alongside the completion of the Delivery plan, services will be required to undertake business planning. The approach has been designed so that services have an opportunity to reflect on the current position of the service through a short self-assessment, and use this to plan how the service will be delivered for the year. The process requires that opportunities are also considered; this could be doing the same things differently, or even doing different things with a view to improving services, or generating income.

In 2020/21, Service Business Plans provide services with a single place to record and monitor other commitments required of services areas, such as audit recommendations, key service risks, and clarity on how performance will be monitored. Service Business plans should be regularly monitored to ensure that targets and action plans are being delivered on time, with demonstrable progress towards achieving intended service outcomes.



In planning and delivering throughout the year, services and directorates should follow the Plan–Do–Monitor–Review process flow to guide their activity. This requires that changes throughout the year, and areas of under-performance, are addressed and that plans are updated to reflect additional activities required to improve performance, or manage risks.



As well as Service Business Plans, Directorates and Assistant Directors are expected to complete overview plans, using a plan on a page template, which summarise the key transformational and improvement activities within their service areas. It would be anticipated that these plans would incorporate areas within each officers responsible service areas, identified within the council's delivery plan.

Below is guidance on the Service Business Plan and Plan on a Page templates.

Template

 <p>Service Business Plan template 2020-21 v5.x</p>	 <p>Plan on a Page 2020 - AD & Director.docx</p>
<p>Service Business Plans</p>	<p>Plan on a Page</p>
<p>intended for: Heads of Service, Service Managers & Team Managers</p>	<p>intended for: Assistant Directors and Directors</p>

Service Business Plan Guidance

Self-Assessment

There are two tabs for self-assessment; one for services in Children & Families Safeguarding & Family Support, based on the existing OFSTED template, and one for other services.

This gives 6 different sections to reflect on the current position of the service across; Leadership & Governance, Performance & Outcomes, Commissioning & Quality, National Priorities & Partnerships, Resource & Workforce Management and Culture & Challenge. Each section has a series of prompts which is intended to provoke an honest evaluation of the current service.

Safeguarding & Family Support Self Evaluation is based on the familiar questions used in previous Self-Evaluations; what do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice in your local area, how do you know it, areas of strength and areas for development. The actions identified within the areas for development, should be consistent with those identified in the Delivery Plan tab.

Resources

This section provides an overview of the service's finance and workforce resources.

The finance section should include an overview of the revenue budget and what it is spent on, 2019/20 outturn, and an idea of capital plans. There is also a space for any specific savings to be identified, which should then be updated each quarter with a RAG status.

This information should be supported by Performance Leads and Finance.

The workforce section should provide a team structure, as well as requiring managers to consider some key questions about staffing. There is also a comparison of the services' sickness rate compared to the council average – this should serve as a prompt for managers to consider their team's sickness and whether any action needs to be taken.

This information should be supported by Performance Leads

Delivery Plan

This is the section which focusses on the activities to be delivered during the course of the year. Services are required to cross reference any transformational projects which are being monitored via Verito at the top of this section, this is to minimise duplication of reporting.

Services are required to identify the impacts that they wish to have, and then clearly specify the activity required to meet these. This activity should be focussed on clear, tangible deliverables, such as a signed off strategy, and avoid minor activities such as holding meetings. Alongside deliverables, it is important to establish the lead officer, as well as the clear timetable.

It is important that any project/programmes within a services remit that are included within the council's annual Delivery Plan, are included within this section. Performance Leads will support to ensure that these are cross-referenced as appropriate.

Services should use this section to report regular updates to progress, quarterly as a minimum, using RAG recording (definitions below). Where progress is not being achieved as planned, or it is not having the desired results, it is important that services re-plan to address this.

Performance Indicators

This section should detail the performance indicators required to monitor the service. In selecting indicators for the service, consideration should be given to ensuring that there are a range of types of measures; inputs, outputs, outcomes, quality and resourcing (workforce and financial).

Indicators included within the council's Delivery Plan within a service's remit, should be included within this section. Performance Leads will support to ensure that this is the case.

Services are required to set targets for relevant measures. Targets should be SMART, and will require a justification; it might be that it is intended to maintain performance at the current levels, or that targeted work should see an improvement in performance, it might also be that performance is anticipated to drop a little, following a planned reduction in spend/investment.

Services may choose to use this template to regularly monitor their performance, so space has been provided for monthly updates for indicators. Monitoring using RAG should be used here to indicate performance against target, and a space is provided for commentary. Guidance on application of RAG status is below.

If there are pockets of performance which need addressing, plans to drive improved performance should be added to the service delivery tab during the year, clearly articulating what work is required to address performance gaps.

Performance Indicator Definitions

This tab allows the opportunity for services to define the indicators used within the service. This is particularly beneficial for audit purposes, giving a clear and established calculation method for important measures.

Service Risk

Services will typically hold their own Risk Registers, so this template only requires a risk heat-map be included to provide the overview of the relevant risks.

Audit Recommendations

The section holds any recommendations made either by the internal audit service, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), or by our external auditors (Grant Thornton). By recording all recommendations that are due to be completed within the Service Business Plan, this will allow recommendations to be simply tracked and will also ensure visibility of the work that is required. As new audit recommendations are made, these should be added to this section, maintaining an ongoing log of all audit activity.

This section will also serve as a tracker for audit recommendations. Audit & Governance Committee regularly review the progress made on audit recommendations, therefore it is important to regularly review the progress of delivery against target timescales, using a simple RAG update, which will enable timely updates to the committee. Please see RAG guidance below, for appropriate scoring.

This section should be completed with support from Performance Leads

Other Commitments

In addition to recommendations which come from audits, there are a range of other recommendations which are made through the course of the year. The intention is that they should be logged in this section, allowing them to be tracked in a single place. This will again, help to ensure visibility, and delivery.

Examples of where these might originate from include;

- Annual Governance Statement
- Scrutiny Task & Finish groups (or similar)

A link to cross reference to the actions tracker from Cabinet Feeder is provided at the top of the page.

This information will be supported by Performance Leads.

Assurance

Further to audits and other commitments, the assurance section provides a number of checks which need to happen regularly within service areas, to support good governance. This sections includes;

- Cross-reference to the Managers Assurance checklist
- Cross-reference to Business Continuity Plans
- Cross-reference to the Scheme of Delegation
- Policy register – serving as a remind of policies that are in the pipeline for updating
- Contract register – serving as a reminder of the contracts in place and the pipeline for refresh.

Performance Monitoring

Regularly monitoring performance is crucial, without tracking delivery of plans, performance indicators and risks, the council cannot be assured of effective performance.

It is anticipated that teams, services and directorates all regularly review performance, through a combination of team/service meetings and Directorate Leadership Teams. Management Board review performance and risk on a monthly basis, and support the production of the quarterly Budget & Performance Report, informing Cabinet and members and the public of performance against the delivery plan and financial performance.

In reviewing performance and delivery, it is important that all service areas provide an honest and consistent reflection of progress. To support this, guidance on RAG status for performance indicators and project/programme delivery.

Having accurately reflected on the progress and delivery, it is central to our framework that in areas delivering below expected levels, plans are re-developed in order to bring performance and delivery back on track.

RAG Guidance

The following sets the standards which should be applied when using RAG statuses in order to provide updates; for both performance measures and project/programme delivery.

Measures

GREEN – Measures which are meeting targets

AMBER – Measures are not meeting targets, but are within 10% of target (e.g. a measure with a target of 90% currently reported at 82%, should be recorded as amber).

RED – Measures which are missing targets by more than 10% should be recorded as red.

Delivery

GREEN – Projects/programmes/activities that are progressing as planned and outputs will be delivered to agreed specification within agreed timescales.

AMBER – Projects/programmes/activities that are experiencing obstacles that *may* prevent the delivery to agreed specification, timescales or costs but there is confidence that delivery can be brought back on target.

RED – Projects/programmes/activities that are experiencing obstacles that *are likely to* prevent the successful delivery to agreed specification, timescales or costs and significant involvement is necessary to bring that project back in line with original expectations or revised plan for delivery is needed

BLUE - Projects/programmes/activities that have been completed.

Performance Reporting

The councils main reporting will be production of a Budget & Performance report which provides a quarterly update on the financial performance of the council, against both revenue and capital finances, and provides detail on the progress against the annual delivery plan activity and indicators.

Annually, an overarching report on the year's progress against the delivery plan will be produced. This will cross reference the outcomes identified in the Corporate Plan.

Directors and Assistant Directors must regularly brief their portfolio leads on service performance, performance of delivery plan activity and risks.

Further events for members will be held, providing an overview of council performance, and to provide specific focus on particular service areas, and allowing officers to test approaches to developing these services and improving their performance.

It is a function of Audit and Governance Committee to ensure effectiveness of the framework in managing risk and the performance of internal audit against its annual plan. Supporting this, the committee will receive risk registers and audit recommendation progress regularly.

The council should aspire to make more information available in the public domain and make the performance of services, and those it commissions more transparent to Herefordshire residents.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 - 2023
Report by:	Cabinet member children and families

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve and endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Care Leavers covenant.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the draft corporate parenting strategy 2020 – 2023 (appendix A) is approved;**
- (b) Cabinet agrees to receive an annual report on Corporate Parenting to enable progress of the strategy to be monitored; and**
- (c) Cabinet agrees the Care Leavers covenant (appendix B) is approved.**

Alternative options

1. The Cabinet does not adopt a Corporate Parenting strategy. This would make it difficult to evidence the Council's commitment to corporate parenting or to define what difference it

was aiming to achieve and to evaluate what difference it had made in improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

2. The Cabinet does not agree the Care Leavers Covenant. This would make it difficult to evidence the Council's commitment to corporate parenting or to justify the status as a "trailblazer" local authority for the Care Leavers Covenant.

Key considerations

3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on councils to have regard to the following corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people;
 - to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
4. To be able to evidence the Council's commitment and action in relation to these responsibilities it is necessary to have a strategy. As corporate parents it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to enable children and young people in care to succeed as well as their peers. Corporate parenting is a responsibility of all elected members and officers within the Council as well as statutory partners. A strategy enables the Council and its partners to be clear about priorities, what needs to be done and by who if change is to be achieved. The strategy needs to be understood, owned and monitored by full Council. The Strategy is attached in Appendix A.
5. Almost all children in care will have experienced trauma as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Although many children in care and care leavers are able to achieve well overall outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in relation to educational achievement, emotional and mental health, offending and employment are worse than their peers.
6. The Care Leaver Covenant is a programme developed under the Department for Education's (DfE) Keep on Caring policy and it aims to improve outcomes for care leavers. It seeks to create practical, specific offers by organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to support care leavers aged 16-25 in living independently.
7. To address these challenges, the 'mission' of the Covenant is to promote five key outcomes, so that care leavers:
 - i. are better prepared to live independently;
 - ii. have improved access to employment, education and training;

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Gill Cox, Tel: 01432 383738, email: Gill.Cox@herefordshire.gov.uk

- iii. experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure;
 - iv. have improved access to health support;
 - v. achieve financial stability.
8. In order to lead by example it is important for the Council to make its own covenant commitments to care leavers. The Council is a “trailblazer” local authority working with the national organisation responsible for the care leavers covenant to lead the way in improving outcomes for care leavers. The Care Leaver covenant is attached in Appendix B.

Community impact

9. It is a council priority within the county plan to “strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together” in particular the priority to “ensure that children in care, and moving on from care, are well supported and make good life choices”.
10. The strategy will also complement the Children and Young People’s plan pledges of be safe from harm, be healthy, be amazing and feel part of the community.
11. Children and young people in care are members of our community and many will live within our community as adults. Therefore doing our best to support these children and young people to achieve happy, healthy and successful lives will benefit the community in the future.

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 requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

The corporate parenting strategy seeks to redress the impact of disadvantage due to being a looked after child and early life experiences of abuse and neglect. As corporate parents our responsibility is to understand the needs of all children and young people in care and care leavers and give them every opportunity to achieve their goals irrespective of their background, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. Evidence shows that children in care and care leavers are more at risk of under-achieving in education, physical and mental health difficulties that impact upon their life experience into and throughout adulthood.

14. By agreeing the care leavers covenant the council will be demonstrating that it is proactively advancing equality of opportunity to care leavers by guaranteeing them an interview if they meet the essential criteria for a post. This supports a positive commitment already made by the council in its recruitment processes and is in line with the “disability confident” ethos that the council already supports.

Resource implications

15. The strategy is cost neutral in that practice improvements can be achieved through existing resources.

Legal implications

16. The decision to introduce the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023 and the Care Leavers Covenant rests with the executive and is to be determined by the cabinet as it is an executive function.
 - The Local Authority has a legal duty to Looked after children and young people in respect of its corporate parenting principles and functions.
 - By having a strategy in place the Council can show its commitment to corporate parenting and highlight what support it can and will provide to looked after children and young people by working together with other agencies to provide a collaborative approach to best outcomes to be achieved.
 - Likewise the Care Leavers Covenant clearly shows the commitment in seeking to improve better outcomes for care leavers. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 main purpose is to help young people who have been looked after by a local authority move from care into living independently in as stable a fashion as possible. To do this it amends the Children Act (c.41) to place a duty on local authorities to assess and meet need. The responsible local authority is to be under a duty to assess and meet the care and support needs of *eligible* and *relevant* children and young people and to assist *former relevant children*, in particular in respect of their employment, education and training. The proposed covenant shows the services that we as a Local Authority shall provide to meet the duties detailed within the Act.

Risk management

17. There are no risks identified to adopting a clear strategy for Corporate Parenting
18. There are risks associated with having no clear strategy in place. There are expectations upon the Council and its partners to act as responsible and ambitious corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers. The absence of a strategy is likely to be noted as a concern by Ofsted and would bring increased scrutiny regarding the level of commitment and leadership by the Council in this area.

Consultees

19. The strategy has been developed by the Corporate Parenting panel which includes representatives from Wye Valley Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group, foster carers and Herefordshire’s Children in Care council, Your Voice Matters.

20. The Corporate Parenting panel recommended and endorsed a final version of the strategy on 18 May 2020.
21. The Corporate Parenting panel endorsed the Care Leavers covenant commitments on 18 May 2020
22. The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 - 2023 and the Care Leavers covenant was presented to the Children and Young People's scrutiny committee on the 27 July 2020 and they made the following observations:
 - *The wording of the bullet point in the care leavers covenant concerning commissioning and procurement required clarification.*
This has been reworded to provide greater clarity.
 - *A role for members of the council in respect of assisting looked after children could include the signposting of children in care and care leavers to local organisations offering work experience and apprenticeship opportunities;*
This to be considered by Councillors.
 - *Priority 5 of the corporate parenting strategy should include mention of market towns, the involvement of local communities and the youth games.*

Priority 5 applies across the County and consideration of children and young people taking part in the youth games can be considered as part of the feasibility assessment.

Appendices

Appendix A – Corporate parenting strategy 2020-2023

Appendix B – Care leavers covenant

Background papers

None

ACHIEVING THE BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN

Herefordshire's
Corporate Parenting Strategy
2020 - 2023

Foreword

Many care experienced children, young people, and care leavers face difficult situations and challenges in their lives that could lead to disadvantage both now, and later in life without the right care, stability and support. In Herefordshire we are strongly committed to our role as corporate parents and fully recognise the role we play in providing positive opportunities and enabling our young people to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Your Voice Matters, Herefordshire's Children in Care Council, have shared their views and experiences with us, enabling us to work together to identify the key changes needed locally. They have made valuable proposals for how we can better address their needs and expectations, including work on promoting 'language that cares'. Their voice truly matters if we are to support and enable them to achieve the education, training and work they aspire to.

Working in partnership with organisations across Herefordshire, alongside children and young people we aim to be the best parent we can be. We want children and young people with experience of care or leaving care to be safe, healthy, to aim high, and to be a key part of our local community, the same as we would wish for our own children.

At the time of writing we are facing an unprecedented global public health crisis, which has impacted on all of our lives in many different ways. I am extremely impressed by the creative ways in which our children and young people have shared their experiences, concerns and thoughts on the coronavirus pandemic and the limitations it has placed on us as communities and as individuals, and made valuable proposals including better ways of keeping in touch, and an investigation into encouraging positive mental health.

This strategy not only sets out our key objectives as corporate parents, working alongside our partners and young people themselves, but also recognises the additional actions we need to take to ensure our children and young people can build bright futures in light of the additional economic, social and environmental challenges we currently face.

I am delighted to be leading member support to deliver this strategy, and in making sure that children and young people are at the centre of its delivery.

Cllr Norman
Lead Member for Children and Young People
Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Introduction

'Corporate Parenting' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies to give care experienced children, young people and adults (care leavers) the best start in life. A child in the care of the council should expect the whole council to be the best parent it can be. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.

Every good parent wants the best for their child - to see their child flourish, to enjoy good health, to be safe and happy, to do well at school, to enjoy good relationships with their peers, to make the most of leisure opportunities, hobbies and interests, and to grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent lives and to make their way as happy, healthy, successful and financially secure adults.

Herefordshire's Children & Young People's Plan 2019 – 2024 makes four pledges to all children and young people which are:

1. Keeping children and young people safe – BE SAFE FROM HARM
2. Improving children and young people's health and wellbeing – BE HEALTHY
3. Helping ALL children and young people succeed – BE AMAZING
4. Ensuring that children and young people are influential in our communities – FEEL PART OF THE COMMUNITY

The role of corporate parent extends beyond children's social care. It is the responsibility of each elected Councillor, every member of staff and wider partner agencies to enable children in the council's care to lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Being a good corporate parent means we should:

- accept responsibility for children in the council's care
- make their needs a priority
- seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

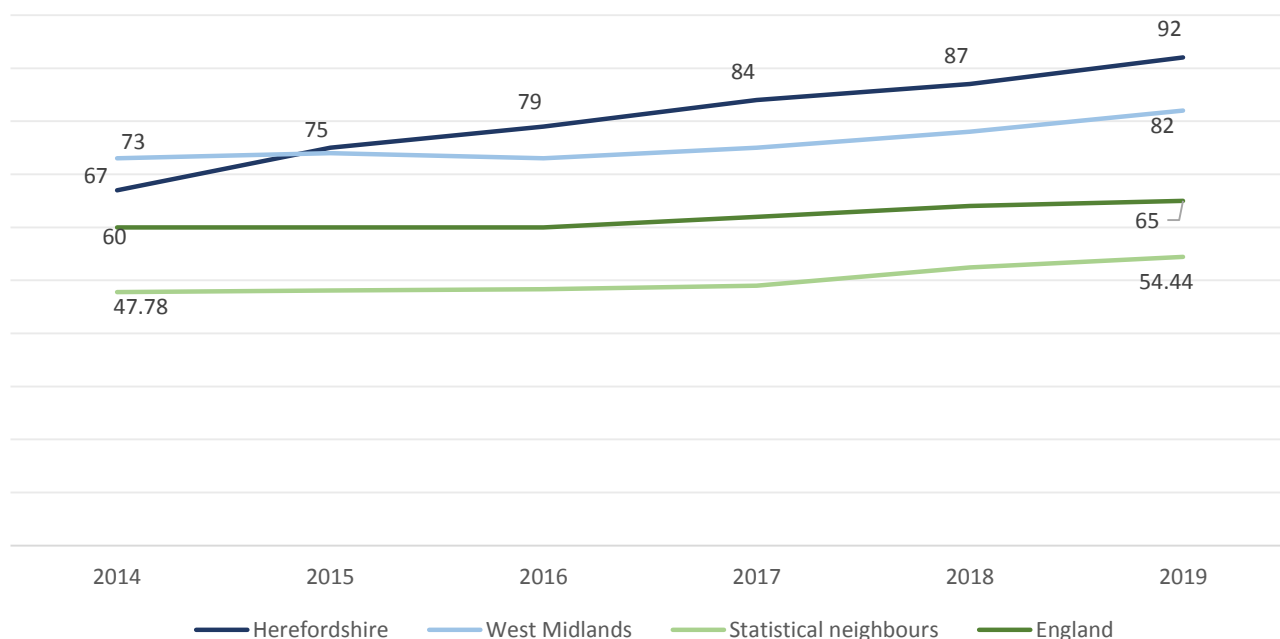
This strategy sets out our commitment to work together to improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people, and care experienced adults for whom we all have a special responsibility.

We have worked alongside 'Your Voice Matters', Herefordshire's Children in Care Council, to identify key priorities and to develop actions that will lead to positive change for our children and young people.

The National and Local Picture

The number of care experienced children and young people in Herefordshire has risen year on year since 2014, from 242 to 352 in 2020. However when considering the rates (per 10,000 population) of care experienced children and young people, Herefordshire is consistently higher than our statistical neighbours, other West Midlands authorities and indeed nationally.

Care experienced children (per 10,000 population) - trends



Many children in our care have faced real challenges in their lives and deserve care, support and stability to make sure they have every chance of achieving in life rather than facing ongoing disadvantage.

Research suggests that care experienced children can have poorer outcomes in terms of education, physical and mental health¹, are more likely to go missing, putting them at greater risk of abuse or exploitation², and care leavers are less likely to be in education employment or training.

¹ Rahilly and Hendry, 2014

² All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, 2012.

The gap between Herefordshire's looked after children and 'all' Herefordshire Children

Year	Key Stage 1 percentage point gap achieving the expected standard Reading, Writing and Maths	Key Stage 2 percentage point gap achieving the expected standard Reading, Writing and Maths	Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 gap in scores	Key Stage 4 Progress 8 gap in scores
2017	50.6	23.5	21.3	0.98
2018	49.1	45.6	28.3	1.38
2019	6.1	19.3	20.6	0.55

Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (%)

Local Authority, Region and England	2017	2018	2019	2020
Herefordshire	70.00	76.00	80.00	94%
West Midlands	82.00	84.00	85.00	unknown
Statistical Neighbours	86.44	85.89	86.13	unknown
England	84.00	84.00	85.00	unknown

Care leavers who were in education, training or employment (%)

Local Authority, Region and England	2017	2018	2019	2020
Herefordshire	29.00	38.00	44.00	42.60
West Midlands	46.00	50.00	51.00	unknown
Statistical Neighbours	52.56	52.56	53.44	unknown
England	50.00	51.00	52.00	unknown

In Herefordshire we have made year on year improvements in securing suitable accommodation for care leavers. Whilst the proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training has increased Herefordshire is below regional, national and statistical neighbours and we are committed to further improving our performance during the lifetime of this strategy.

Achievements and challenges

Alongside Your Voice Matters (YVM), the Corporate Parenting Panel have undertaken a review of progress against priorities set for 2016 – 2019:

Commitment to corporate parenting:

Over the last three years a number of actions have been undertaken to raise awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities with Council members and staff, and various opportunities for supporting care experienced children have been identified. Difficulties have been experienced however in converting some of these opportunities into action, and there is a need for partner agencies to fulfil their duties at a more strategic level. It has also been hard to measure impact.

Preventing need for care:

Although there is a strong partnership commitment to the council's early help offer, and successes in achieving sustainable change for vulnerable families, Herefordshire has experienced a continual rise in the number of looked after children. This is a trend experienced nationally.

Providing a safe and stable home:

Children in care in Herefordshire have a good level of placement stability in comparison with other authorities. Enhanced adoption support arrangements put in place during 2019 has increased the potential for securing successful adoption arrangements. There are improvements in the way we can assess and support children at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation and there is a new contextual safeguarding team in place which has enabled a more detailed understanding of prevalence and risk for care experienced children and adults. However securing enough foster placements against a backdrop of rising demand, and improving stability of placements are ongoing challenges.

Education:

Quality of personal education plans have increased, care leavers have greater access to IT in order to support study, and in terms of attainment, there is a narrowing gap between looked after children and all Herefordshire children at key stages. Areas of challenge include school exclusions, securing of consistent placements (reducing the need for school moves) a need to further improve personal education plans, and to further raise attainment and aspirations of care experienced young people.

Health:

Timeliness of health assessments have improved and a review of paperwork intends to strengthen the voice of the child, there has been an expansion of Children in care nurse capacity, and a new pilot is hoped to improve access to CAMHS. Further work is needed to recognise broader health and wellbeing needs, to develop better communication channels, develop trust (i.e. reassurance relating to disclosures), and to provide better health history information to care leavers.

Sport, Leisure and Culture:

Whilst there are various mechanisms to support care leavers to access appropriate opportunities (e.g. discounted leisure passes), resource pressures have impeded progress in this area, and more focus is needed on developing relationships with key local organisations to support access and increase opportunities.

Voice of care experienced children and adults:

Your Voice Matters (YVM) has a raised profile, and has actively encouraged new members to attend. There is an awareness of the Corporate parenting role, and tools such as 'Mind of My Own' are in place to gather views and experiences. YVM have links with other children in care councils and attend a number of local forums to ensure their views are represented. Challenges have included a consistent approach to YVM involvement in Panels and Cllr involvement in YVM meetings, the effective sharing of information produced by YVM, and ensuring that contributions have made a demonstrable difference.

Leaving care:

There is an increasing use of supported accommodation, including the development of accommodation for care leavers with complex needs, numbers not in education, employment or training has reduced, increased accessibility of the 16+ team, a council tax exemption has been introduced and there is improved partnership working with the DWP, housing solutions, probation and YOS. However the quality of some supported accommodation and ability to support care leavers locally needs to be improved, the numbers of NEET need to be reduced further, and a programme focussing on independent living skills has not been progressed.

Progress over the last three years, alongside a review of key statistics for Herefordshire and further input from YVM have shaped our seven new priorities and key actions for 2020 – 2024:

What do care experienced children and young people want?

1. *We want our corporate parents, and other key leaders to understand and act on their responsibilities*
2. *We want to have a safe and stable home*
3. *We want to reach our potential in education*
4. *We want to be physically and emotionally healthy*
5. *We want to enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities*
6. *We want our voice to matter*
7. *When leaving care we want to live happy, healthy and financially secure lives*

Delivering the strategy

Each of the seven priorities has an allocated lead, who will work alongside a YVM representative to take forward the relevant actions. The lead is responsible for reporting progress to the Corporate Parenting panel chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Families. The Panel includes representatives from:

- Your Voice Matters,
- Political group representatives,
- Herefordshire Council (incl. the Director for Children and Families).
- Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Wye Valley Trust
- Foster Carer representatives

In addition, progress will be reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.

What do care experienced children and young people want?	How will we make this happen?	How will we know it has been successful?
<p>1. We want our corporate parents, and other key leaders to understand and act on their responsibilities</p> <p>Lead – Lead Member for Children and Young People</p>	<p>All councillors to receive corporate parenting training and to commit to individual actions to support care experienced children and young people</p> <p>Corporate parents, council staff and partners will champion the child’s voice and celebrate their achievements</p>	<p>Revised Councillor pledges, and annual evidence of progress. Delivery of the Care Leavers Covenant</p> <p>YVM report that they are listened to. Councillors, council staff and partners engage with and seek views of care experienced and care leavers in their decision making. Evidence via board reporting. Evidenced actions to celebrate achievements</p>
<p>2. We want to have a safe and stable home</p> <p>Lead – Head of Looked After Children</p>	<p>We will recruit enough foster carers so children in care can live locally – close to their family, friends and school.</p> <p>We will provide training and support to build resilience of foster carers so that they are better able to meet the needs of children and young people in care</p> <p>Children and young people in care are safe</p>	<p>Increased bed nights for in house fostering and independent fostering agencies. Reduction in the number of children placed out of County. Improved placement stability</p> <p>Evaluation of training and surveys of foster carers</p> <p>Children who go missing Numbers at risk of exploitation</p>

What do care experienced children and young people want?	How will we make this happen?	How will we know it has been successful?
3.a. We want to reach our potential in education	Scrutinise progress and attainment, challenging schools to ensure target grades are achieved.	Increased proportion achieving target grades
	Providing training to schools to better understand care experience children and reduce exclusions	Reduced exclusion rates
	Increase the range of opportunities for vulnerable learners post 16	Reduced number of care experienced who are NEET
	Develop an 'Aspirations programme'	Increase in numbers attending university
3.b. We want our education and training to 'recover' after the disruption of Covid 19	Work closely with schools, colleges and training providers to support you to return to education and training and catch up on missed learning.	Children and young people will be attending education and training and will be achieving their expected outcomes at the end of their phase of learning
Lead – Virtual school head teacher	Work with employers and employment support services to help young people to find work.	Young people who have lost work through Covid 19 will find employment
4. We want to be physically and emotionally healthy	Provide all children and young people with the individual social, emotional, physical and practical support they need to ensure they are prepared with skills that support good health for life.	All health reviews will have a recorded SDQ and an outline action plan to support improved lifelong health.
	Children and young people will be supported by carers and professionals to take responsibility for their health and understand how to access a variety of physical, emotional and mental health services.	Children and young people will confidently access a variety of health services when a health need arises.
Joint Leads – Specialist Nurse, Children in Care		

What do care experienced children and young people want?	How will we make this happen?	How will we know it has been successful?
Principal Clinical Psychologist in CAMHS	Improve children and young people's access to health professionals, services and health information that will support emotional, psychological and physical health direct and indirectly.	Develop a mental health pathway for Children in Care and their carers to access CAMHS assessment and psychological support. Increase points of health contact with professionals and evidenced based health information and advice using a variety of media platforms.
	All Care Leavers need to understand their health history so they can understand their health needs and maintain good health throughout their life.	Secure funding for the Care Leavers Health App and ensure all Care Experienced Young People can access their health information when they need it.
5. We want to enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities Lead - Director of Resources	Develop links between other service areas of the authority such as Public Health, to join up resources across the council to help support this priority	Increase in opportunities as reported to the Corporate parenting Panel.
	Look to persuade council strategic partners such as HALO leisure, Courtyard Theatre, Hereford FC, Higher and Further education providers to provide direct and indirect support	Reported increase in support from strategic partners.
	Develop a communication strategy to ensure that young people and carers are aware of opportunities that are available within the city, market towns and all communities.	Communication strategy produced and implemented.
	Explore holding annual sporting event, for young people.	Feasibility assessed by March 2021.
6. We want our voice to matter	Support YVM to develop and undertake their priorities, and represent the voice of all CYP.	YVM deliver against priorities and hold the CPP to account.

What do care experienced children and young people want?	How will we make this happen?	How will we know it has been successful?
Lead – Lead Member for Children and Young People (supported by foster carer representative and Participation and Mentoring Officer)	Staff, councillors, communities and businesses involve children and young people in rebuilding our community, economy and environment after lockdown. We will support positive and constructive involvement with other topical issues including climate change and Black Lives Matter.	Children and young people report that they are listened to, supported and involved.
	Consultation and participation of children and young people is embedded within Herefordshire Local Authority as best practice.	Children and young people are attending and participating in their LAC review meeting
	Support and educate our workforce to develop confidence and competence when working with ALL children and young people	Evidenced involvement in training plans and training delivery, further development of peer support service.
	Support our workforce to improve their understanding of children and young people’s wishes and feelings.	Evidence that the wishes and feelings of young people are considered, visible and championed in everything we do including commissioning, procurement and policy making.
7. When leaving care we want to live happy, healthy and financially secure lives Leads – Head of Looked After Children and Director Of Resources	We will prepare young people to live independently	Young people succeed in managing their tenancy
	More young people are engaged in education, training or employment	Reduction in NEET at age 19, 20 and 21
	Young people have a choice of accommodation that meets their needs	Increase in suitable accommodation at age 19,20 and 21

We, Herefordshire Council, will demonstrate our commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant through the following action:

- Exempt all care leavers from paying council tax until they are 25
- Offer every child in care or care leaver in the County a minimum of one week's work experience in the Council or with a service contracted by the Council
- Guarantee all care leavers who apply for a job within the council an interview if they meet the essential criteria
- Guarantee advance notice of the availability of all Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships within Herefordshire Council to care leavers for a period of 14 days prior to general advertisement
- Ensure that opportunities for added social value for care leavers in terms of employment opportunities and/or support is considered in all procurement and commissioning carried out by the Council
- Encourage partner agencies, commissioned services and local businesses in Herefordshire to make their own care leavers covenant.

Signed on behalf of: Herefordshire Council

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Fostering and Adoption Service Annual Reports 2019/20
Report by:	Cabinet member children and families

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To review the Adoption and Fostering services performance report and approve related documents.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the performance of the adoption service as outlined at appendix A to this report be reviewed, any risks to achievement of objectives noted and relevant mitigating actions approved; and
- (b) the performance of the fostering service as outlined at appendix B to this report be reviewed, any risks to achievement of objectives noted and relevant mitigating actions approved.

Alternative options

1. Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014 and Fostering 2011 Cabinet should receive updates on the management, outcomes and financial state of

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Gill Cox, Tel: 01432 383738, email: Gill.Cox@herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Council's adoption and fostering services; it is open to Cabinet to identify additional or alternative actions to improve performance, but in doing so regard must be had to the resource implications of additional actions

Key considerations

2. The annual reports set out the activity and performance for the Adoption Service and Fostering Service during 2019-20.
3. The Adoption Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting adopters; matching children with adopters who can meet their needs and supporting those affected by adoption either as a child, adopter or birth family of an adopted child.
4. Herefordshire joined the Adoption Central England (ACE) on 1 July 2019 and became part of the regional service in accordance with government expectations.
5. Key achievements for the Adoption service include:
 - Smooth transition to joining ACE
 - Development and effectiveness of the Early Permanency hub in reducing drift and delay for children with a care plan of adoption
 - Increase in foster to adopt placements.
6. Improvement plans for 2020/21 focus upon:
 - Pre-birth planning and increase in children placed in foster to adopt placements
 - To improve timeliness of children placed for adoption
 - Adopted children and their family are provided with a life story book and later life letter within 2 weeks of their Celebration hearing
7. The Fostering Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting local authority foster carers to provide a home for children and young people who are looked after. Children become looked after because their parents have been assessed as unable to meet the needs of their children, in most cases due to abuse or neglect.
8. Key achievements for the service include:
 - Increasing the number of children placed with in-house foster carers
 - Increasing the number of children leaving care for permanency via Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
 - Improving the training offer to foster carers
 - Adapting the service to meet needs and support foster carers during Covid-19
9. Key priorities for improvement during 2020/21 are:

- Increase the number of general Herefordshire Intensive Placement and Support Service (HIPSS) and Sleepover scheme foster carers and the number of supported lodgings providers
- Increase the number of children who are long-term matched with their foster carers
- Increase the number of children leaving care for permanency via SGO

Community impact

10. Within the County Plan it is a council priority to “strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together”. The fostering and adoption services support the council in achieving its ambitions in key strategies in the corporate plan, health and wellbeing strategy and children and young people’s plan.
11. Adoption provides a permanency option for looked after children and so, where it is in the child’s best interests, enables children to become part of a family outside of the looked after system. Ensuring every looked after child achieves permanency is a key part of the Corporate Parenting strategy with adoption a key element of this.
12. Fostering provides a safe and secure home for looked after children enabling them to recover from trauma and supporting them to reach their potential. Providing sufficient local carers able to meet these needs is a key priority within the Corporate Parenting strategy.

Equality duty

13. 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.
14. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The adoption and fostering services welcome applications from all sectors of the community and is ambitious in seeking placements for children whatever their level of need. The fostering and adoption services need to increase the diversity of approved foster carers and adopters. Neither service have sufficient carers from Black and Minority Ethnic groups to match with children and young people in care. There is a particular gap in relation to foster carers from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller background. The service is focussing upon increasing the number of children and young people placed with kinship foster carers so that children and young people are able to live with those from the same background as themselves.

15. All foster carers completed mandatory diversity training to ensure that they have an understanding of the importance of understanding the impact of discrimination and what they can do to ensure the needs of children and young people are understood and met. It is important that all children and young people are supported to develop a positive sense of identity.

Resource implications

16. For 2019/20 the adoption service budget was £837k. At outturn the service had an underspend of £30k due to a combination of staffing vacancies and reduction in spend on adoption allowances.
17. The adoption service generated income of £27k from selling placements to other local authorities and spent a total of £90.75k on purchasing adoptive placements resulting in a net cost to the authority of £63.75k. This expenditure and income relates to decisions prior to joining ACE. The need to purchase adoptive placements is much reduced as the service now has access to prospective adopters across the ACE region and any purchases required outside of ACE are met by a budget held within ACE.
18. The fostering service had a budget of £5,124k with an outturn position of being overspent by £109k. This relates to the need to provide more in-house placements than was budgeted for. This does mean that it would have cost more in external placements if we had not used in-house placements as we are required to provide placements for each of our looked after children. The increased spend on placements was off-set to some extent by underspends on staffing due to vacancies during the year.
19. The external fostering budget which is used to fund independent fostering agency, residential placements and the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) had a budget of £6,690k with an overspend of £751k. This budget is under pressure due to the very high numbers of looked after children in the service resulting in there being insufficient placements available in house. The service continues to work hard at recruiting carers and in reducing the number of children who are placed in residential care.

Legal implications

20. The National Minimum Standards are issued by the Secretary of State under the Care Standards Act 2000 and detail the conduct and standards required for Adoption and Fostering Services and as such are taken into account during inspections by Ofsted.
21. Standards state that the executive side of the local authority:
 - receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency
 - monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
 - satisfies itself that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration; and
 - the executive formally approves the statement of purpose and reviews them at least annually.

Risk management

22. Without an effective adoption service, looked after children would spend longer in the care of the local authority. This would be detrimental to their wellbeing and life chances. If the support needs of adoptive families are not met, children may return to the care system. An effective adoption and looked after children's service is important to ensure that we are able to offer a robust and timely approach to securing permanence for children unable to be brought up safely within their own families and to ensure access to services that will best support their individual needs.
23. Without an effective fostering service children who need to be looked after by the local authority may be placed away from their own community. This can cause disruption to their education and relationships with their families and friends.
24. If recruitment targets are not met, there is a risk of increased dependence on independent agencies and residential units located further away from a child's networks incurring higher costs and budget pressures.

Consultees

25. The reports were presented to the children and young people's scrutiny committee on the 27 July 2020 and the committee confirmed their support for the reports to be submitted to cabinet for their approval.

Appendices

Appendix A – Adoption Service annual report 2019-20

Appendix B – Fostering Service annual report 2019-20

Background papers

None identified

Adoption Service Annual Report 2019-20

OFSTED Registration: SC057941

1. Executive summary

The adoption service is considered to be a well performing area of Children's social care. This report sets out performance and achievements during 2019/20 and priorities for 2020/21.

The service joined the regional adoption service, Adoption Central England (ACE), as planned on the 1st July 2019. Full year data from ACE is not yet available and so performance information as at the end of quarter 3 is included to enable comparisons across the ACE region.

2. Introduction

Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014 (NMS), Cabinet should receive updates on the management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption service; it is open to Cabinet to identify additional or alternative actions to improve performance but in doing so regard must be had to the resource implications of additional actions.

The NMS are issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and are issued for use by Ofsted who take them into account in their inspections.

Standard 25.6 states that:

The executive side of the local authority:-

- receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every six months;
- monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
- satisfies itself that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

All local authorities were required to be part of a regional adoption agency, or to have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA, by 2020. Following Cabinet approval Herefordshire joined ACE on the 1st July 2019. ACE is a partnership between Warwickshire, Coventry, Solihull, Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

The service operates on a "Hub and Spoke" model of service delivery. The service is hosted by Warwickshire County Council which operates as one "Hub" with a second "Hub" across the south of the region. There are offices ("Spokes") in Coventry, Solihull, Warwick, Worcester and Hereford.

ACE provides the following services:

- Recruitment, preparation and assessment of adoptive parents.
- Family finding and specific recruitment.
- Matching support and post order support to adoptive families for 12 months.
- Non agency adoption - the provision of information and court reports.
- Assessment of need for adoption support including requests to the Adoption Support Fund.
- Direct support to adoptive families including therapeutic interventions.
- Training for adopters and support groups.
- Independent Birth Parent Support Services -Family "Connexions"

- Training for social workers.
- Duty and advice service.
- Co-ordination of Adoption Panels across the region.

This arrangement allows for a greater strategic approach to adopter recruitment widening the potential pool of adopters for children. Adoption support services have been enhanced including the provision of therapeutic interventions that are delivered and coordinated more consistently and effectively across the region.

The local authority engagement with ACE is underpinned by a Hosting and Partnership Agreement and through the governance arrangements and partnership working there is the opportunity to ensure that the best possible outcomes are secured for children in a timely way and that adoptive families receive high quality support when they need this.

Herefordshire chose to establish an Early Permanence Hub on the 1st July 2019 using resource that had previously been used within our adoption team. This Hub is based within our Child Protection and Court team and provides support to Social Workers and a link with ACE to ensure children's plans for adoption progress without delay.

3. Children

After four months of being looked after, all children should have a plan for permanence ratified at their second LAC review. When the plan is for adoption, a child's permanence report (CPR) outlining the family history, the child's needs and why adoption is the intended plan, is prepared by the child's social worker and presented to the agency decision maker (ADM). If the ADM decides adoption is the appropriate plan, this will become the care plan put to the court.

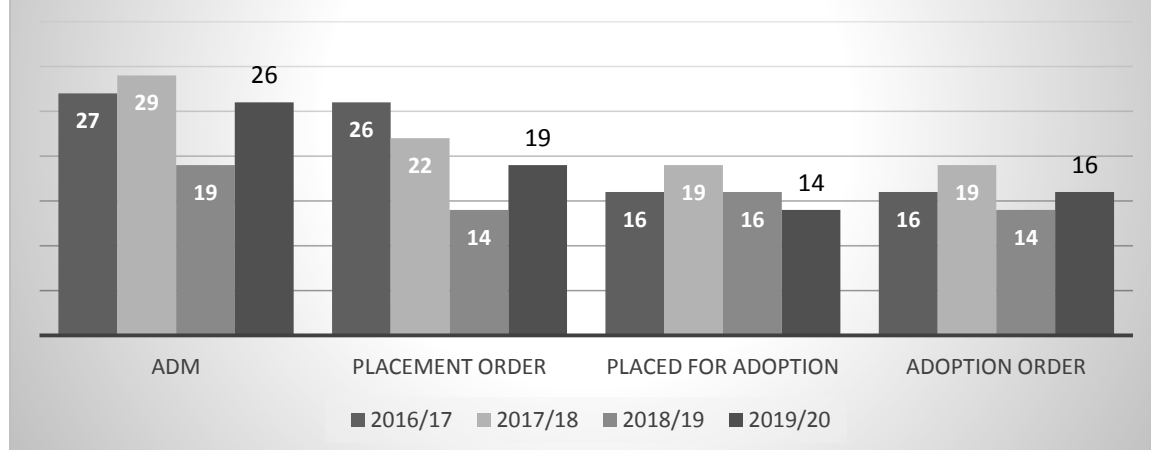
A child can only be placed for adoption if a court has granted a Placement Order or the parents have requested that their child is adopted and given their permission.

It is accepted that the younger a child is when placed for adoption, the better the outcome and local authorities are urged to consider placing children with approved adopters who are also approved foster carers so that the child does not have a change of carers, such a placement is commonly known as a "foster to adopt placement". If this is not possible, an appropriate match with prospective adopters should be identified as soon as possible, ideally by the time permission to place the child for adoption has been obtained.

In 2019/20 the ADM for Herefordshire adoption agency decided that adoption should be the plan for 26 children; plans for 6 of these children subsequently changed. This was an increase from 19 in 2018/19 but more in line with previous years.

19 Placement Orders were granted which is an increase from 14 in 2019/20 but again only a little lower than previous years.

ADM decisions, Placement Orders granted, children placed for adoption and Adoption Orders granted 2016-20



14 children were placed with adoptive families, which included 1 sibling group and two children being matched with their foster carers. 16 adoption orders were granted during the year.

As of 31st March 2020 there were 16 children where a Placement Order had been granted but they were not yet matched. The children who had been waiting the longest are a sibling group of 4 who had their Placement Order granted in September 2018. Their foster carers are currently being assessed as prospective adopters for the children.

No adoption disruptions have occurred this year.

4. Early permanence hub

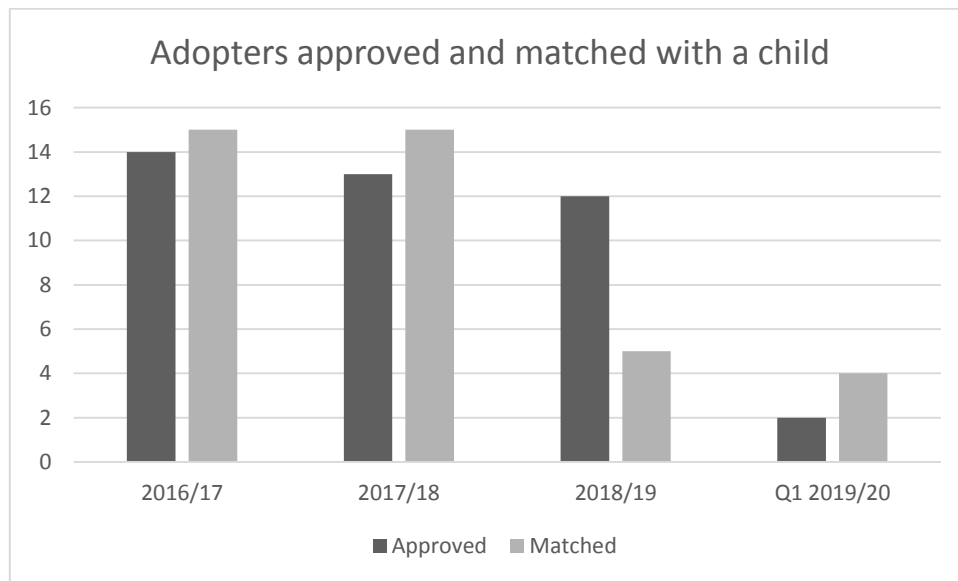
The Early Permanence hub is based within the Child Protection and Court teams and consists of a Senior Social Worker, a Family Support Worker and a Child and Adolescent therapist. All of these posts were part of our Adoption Service prior to joining ACE. It was identified during the planning for implementation that a number of important functions undertaken by our previous adoption service were not within the service specification for ACE. This included the Child and Adolescent therapist preparing children for adoption, quality assurance of adoption reports, tracking of children with a plan for adoption, matching of children who are not “hard to place” and support and quality assurance of adoption support plans.

The Early Permanence hub has proved invaluable in supporting the work of adoption – ensuring that assessments and reports are of good quality, family finding is completed in a timely way and children are well prepared for their move to adoptive families.

5. Recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters

The assessment process for adopters is in two stages with the expectation that the first stage is completed within two months and the second stage within four months, though prospective adopters can take up to 6 months between the two stages if they choose.

In quarter 1 of 2019/20 two families were approved as adopters. 8 families had been approved through Stage 1 and 5 families were approved but not yet formally matched with a child.



ACE have a target of approving 125 adopters during the year. At the end of quarter 3 there were 70 prospective adopters approved and so the target was unlikely to be met. Only 17% of adopters completed stage 2 of the assessment within the target of 4 months and 41% within 5 months. This is an area for improvement within ACE.

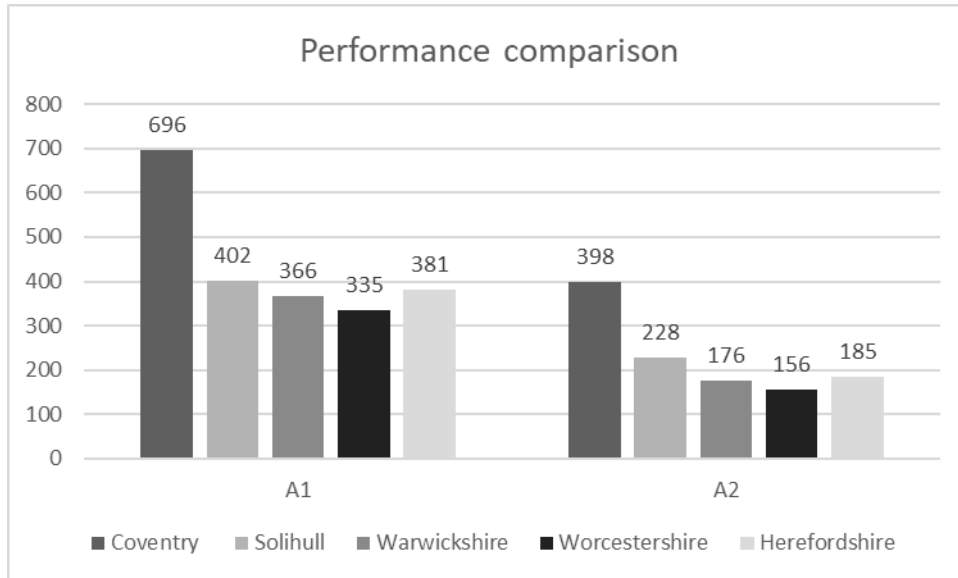
However, the number of inter-agency placements made by ACE during the year is low with just 5 at the end of December 2019 which demonstrates that ACE are able to match most children from the pool of ACE approved adopters. During 2018-19 Herefordshire alone purchased 6 inter-agency placements so as anticipated joining ACE has resulted in a greater choice of adopters for Herefordshire children.

6. Performance and quality assurance

Regional and national data for 2019/20 is not available for comparison at the time of writing. However the graphs below shows performance for April to December 2019 within the ACE region in relation to key national performance indicators. Herefordshire is achieving better than the national indicators.

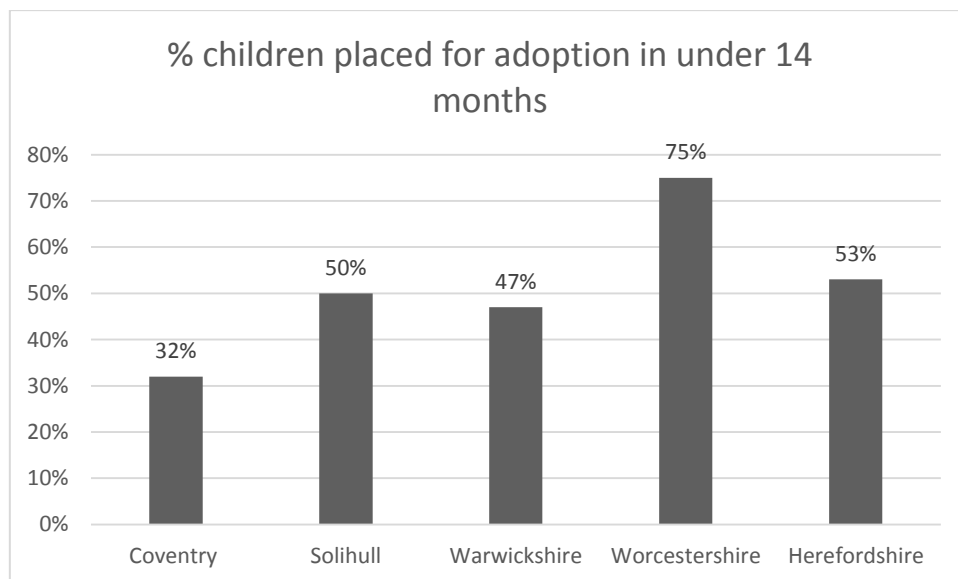
A1 – Number of days between the date child became looked after and date they are placed for adoption. Target is below 468 days.

A2 – Number of days between the Placement Order being granted and the match being approved. Target is below 244 days.



Herefordshire is a long way above the national target for the third performance indicator.

A3 – Percentage of children who are placed for adoption in under 14 months from the date they become looked after. Target is 100%.



Herefordshire has continued to have a large number of adopted children who have had to wait for life story books and later life letters. On the 31st March 2020, 37 children were waiting for these important pieces of work. Work to reduce the backlog has been slow during this year due to increased numbers of looked after children and the consequent demand for supervised contact which has to be prioritised by the looked after children’s support team. Additional resource has been agreed for the team and the recent Covid-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity for staff to work almost full-time on life story work as direct contact for children is not taking place. It is anticipated that the backlog will be cleared by 30th June 2020 and thereafter will be monitored closely to ensure that this difficulty does not re-occur.

7. Progress on key priorities for 2019-20

- Transition of the current adoption team into the regional adoption agency – this was achieved smoothly to timescale.
- Development of the early permanence hub to support and promote timeliness between court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family – Early Permanency hub is fully staffed and is effective in supporting care planning for children with a care plan of adoption and reducing delay.
- Improve early permanence planning to increase numbers of children placed in fostering to adopt placements - 4 children were placed in foster to adopt placements which increased from two during 2018/19.
- Improved timeliness of life story books and later life letters and quality of child permanence reports – there remains a significant backlog of life story books and later life letters although this has reduced a little during the year. Plans are in place to eliminate the backlog by end of June 2020. The support provided by the early permanence hub is effective in supporting Social Workers to produce child permanence reports of a good standard. Further work is required to enable Social Workers to produce reports of the standard required with less support from the early permanency hub.

8. Key priorities for improvement during 2019-20

- Pre-birth planning and increase in children placed in foster to adopt placements
- To improve timeliness of children placed for adoption
- Adopted children and their family are provided with a life story book and later life letter within 2 weeks of their Celebration hearing

Gill Cox

Head of service for looked after children

Fostering Service Annual Report 2019-20

OFSTED Registration: SCO56304

1. Executive summary

Priorities for the Fostering Service were set out in the 2018/19 annual report were to:

- Increase the number of carers approved; HIPSS, General and Supported Lodging providers – there has been a reduction in the number of approved general and HIPSS carers and the number of supported lodgings providers has stayed the same.
- Increase the number of available beds with current cohort of carers – the number of beds has increased amongst foster carers and supported lodgings providers.
- Improve retention through improving benefits package available to foster carers – the review of fostering allowances is currently being completed and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet in the autumn.
- Eleven children left care having achieved permanency in special guardianship arrangements – the same number as in 2018/19 and at the end of the year a further 13 applications had been completed.
- Increase placement stability – this has improved from 10% in 2018/19 to 8% in 2019/20 of children with 3 or more moves in the last 12 months and from 71% in 2018/19 to 74% in 2019/20 who have remained in the same placement for over 2 ½ years
- Increase in support for SGO – support group is now meeting regularly and successful applications for funding of therapeutic support made.
- Development of training programme – therapeutic parenting and online resources – additional £11k invested in foster carer training and on-line courses are now available
- Mosaic workflow upgrade completion – completed.
- Update foster carers charter – not yet completed.

Progress in important areas has been made but the Service has not met the target in the sufficiency strategy of reducing reliance on independent fostering agencies with the split between agencies and in-house placements worsening from 64%/36% in 2018/19 to 62%/38% in 2019/20. This is due to the number of children in care having increased during the year.

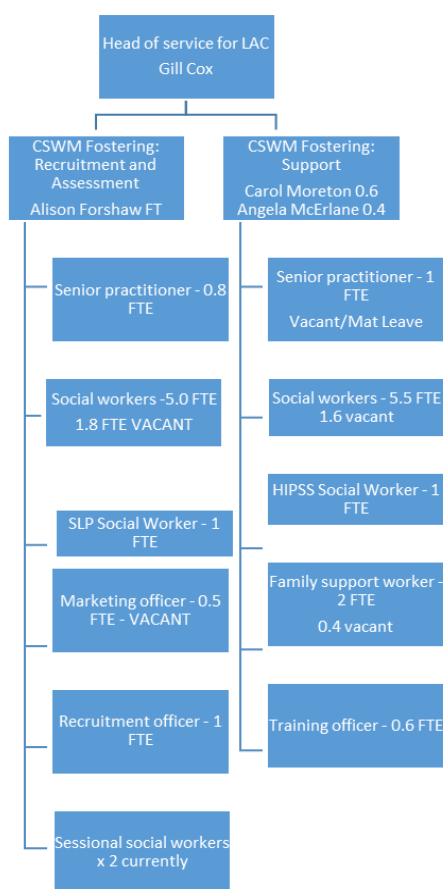
2. Introduction

This report complies with Standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards which sets out the condition that the Fostering Service Manager will monitor and report to board members and management members about the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service every three months.

3. Establishment

In February 2019 the Fostering Service was structured into an Assessment team and a Support and Supervision team. This was to enable greater focus and reduce the impact of competing priorities. During 2019/20 the team has embedded these changes.

The team structure is set out below.



This year the Fostering team has had a much higher than usual pattern of staff turnover and absence. Three staff members have left the team for career development opportunities which is really positive – including joining Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) and promotion to other teams within Children’s Social Care. The team has also been affected by some periods of long-term absence of a Social Worker and Marketing officer.

Consequently some foster carers have had several changes of Social Worker during the year. This is a concern for retention of foster carers particularly when this is echoed with changes in children’s social workers.

During the year the Fostering Assessment team took on responsibility for all viability assessments of connected persons and a 0.5 FTE post was transferred from the Child Protection and Court team for this purpose. This has relieved pressure from the Child Protection and Court teams where recruitment is much more challenging than in the Fostering teams.

At the end of March 2020 the team had Social Work vacancies of 1.8 full-time equivalent in the Assessment team and 1.6 in the Support and Supervision team. One Senior Practitioner was on maternity leave and in addition there were vacancies of 0.4 family support worker post and 0.5 marketing officer post. Vacancies within the Assessment team are at least partially compensated for by the use of sessional assessing Social Workers.

4. Recruitment and Assessments of foster carers

The applications received are set out in the table below. Applications for general carers are slightly lower than for last year and are also lower for the specialist services including HIPSS and Sleepover

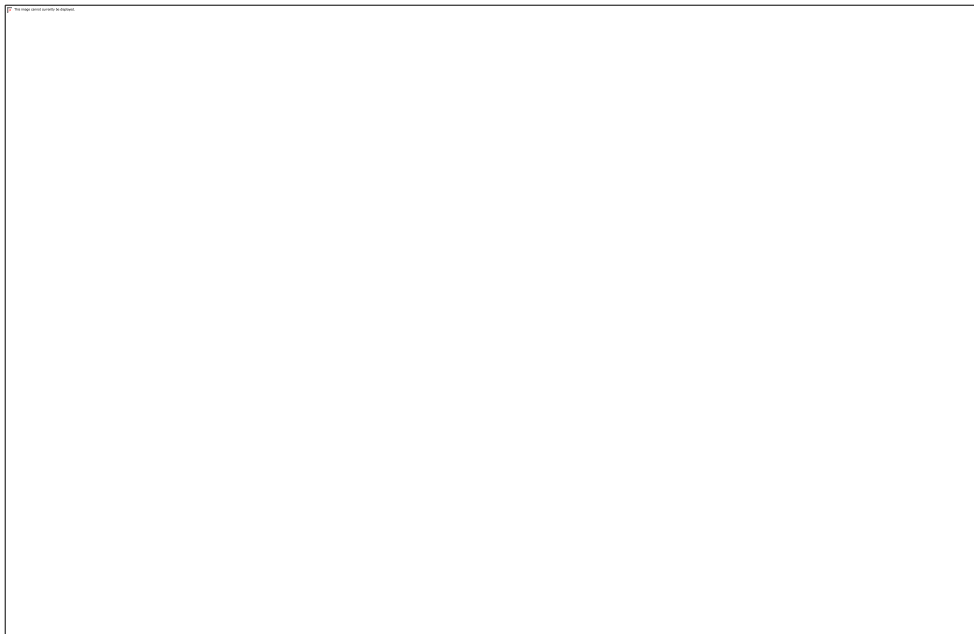
scheme. This is despite the number of fostering enquiries having increased from 191 in 2018/19 to 279 in 2019/20. Applications increased marginally from 21 in 2018/19 to 22 in 2019/20. So although it is positive that more enquiries are being received further work is required to successfully translate these into applications and approvals. Comparative data for 2019/20 is not yet available.

Carer type	New applications 2018/19	New applications 2019/20
General	14	13
HIPSS	2	0
Kinship	18	16
Sleepover scheme	3	0
TOTAL	37 approved	29 approved

Recruitment activity has been focussed on developing our social media reach as well as maintaining our face to face events. Analysis shows that most of our enquiries start in response to social media activity or via our website. Development of social media strategy has been particularly important following Covid restrictions on public face to face events.

Our Recruitment Officer successfully set up a Herefordshire Fostering Service Facebook page which went live in January 2020. The aim is to focus on further developing our digital marketing profile and training has been identified to develop the skills of our Recruitment Officer. Of the 279 enquiries during 2019/20 138 came from social media channels.

An example of a recent post is shown below.



Due to the long-term absence of the teams marketing officer during the year business support recruited on a temporary basis to support the marketing and recruitment activity. The post became vacant at the end of March. This post is being reviewed and will be recruited to during 2020/21.

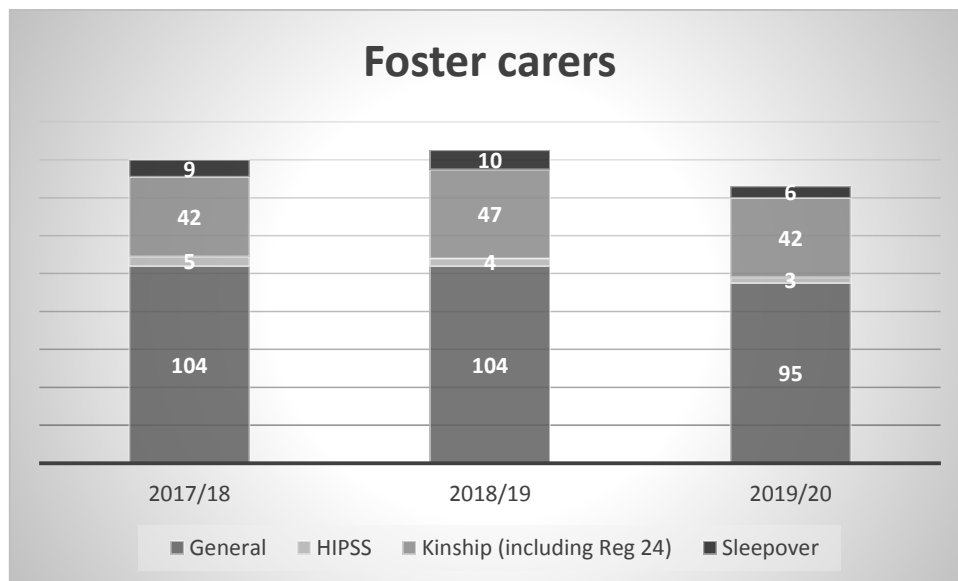
Research from Fostering Network shows that most new carers have values that include “a strong desire for fairness, a keen sense of what is right or wrong and are concerned about society. They are self-assured, have a high level of self-efficacy and will be the first to respond to what they see as a moral call to action.” [Why Foster Carers Care, 2015](#). Our strategy is to make our Fostering Team

more accessible and friendly and to share real stories from young people and foster carers helps attract foster carers with these values.

The team is an active member of the Midlands Recruitment forum where ideas and good practice is shared. During the year the team have advertised in the Herefordshire Times and had a local radio advertising campaign but no direct enquiries resulted from these although they may have helped to raise awareness about fostering.

5. Foster Carers

The graph below shows the number of different types of approved foster carers. Details regarding the changes in numbers are in the sections below. Regulation 24 enables friends or family of a child to be temporarily approved as a foster carer whilst a full assessment is completed.



General Foster carers

General foster carers are approved to look after other people's children where they are unable to be safely cared for by their parents or a family member or friend. General foster carers provide emergency, short-term, long-term and respite care. Respite carers are available to offer planned breaks for foster carers and in some cases emergency breaks. General foster carers usually live within Herefordshire and enable children to remain living locally close to family, friends and enabling continuity of education and social activities.

There is an increasing trend in the number of newly approved foster carers being approved as respite carers initially arising from applicants wishes. This may be in recognition of the complexity of fostering and wishing to try fostering to see what the impact is on family life before committing to full-time placements.

Ofsted data for 2018-19 reports that nationally there has been a 2% growth in recruitment which has reversed previous trends of declining figures. There has been a national increase in Independent Fostering Agencies approving foster carers as short-term, long-term and respite carers instead of the approach taken more often by local authorities, including Herefordshire, of specifying a narrow approval for carers of often only respite, short-term or long-term. Our Fostering service will adopt a

more flexible approach similar to IFA's in 2020/21. Nationally the data set indicates that foster carers are being approved for fewer children.

The impact of Covid-19 is significant in that a lot of foster carers are older and have underlying health conditions that make placements more difficult. Health concerns are affecting approximately 15 fostering households which equates to 16% of general foster carers. As we ease out of lockdown there is significant work needed to reassure and reactivate some, especially respite carers.

Retention

There have been 13 resignations of general foster carers during the year compared with 30 during 2018/19. Reasons for resignations are:

- Three transferred to IFA's. Reasons provided related to better financial support and support to birth children.
- Eight resigned due to a changes of circumstances which included a range of issues relating to health, moving home, changing employment and impact on carer's own family.
- One carer was de-registered due to concerns about the quality of their practice.
- One carer resigned following a Special Guardianship order being granted.

The fostering service competes with the independent sector. Information from neighbouring authorities shows that fees and allowances within the local authority have gradually become less competitive and so a review is currently being completed which will recommend changes and increases to fees and allowances. It is anticipated that new proposals will be made to Cabinet in the autumn.

Additional investment of £11,000 for training of foster carers was agreed during the year. This has enabled the purchase of an on-line package of training and development of the training programme to offer more advanced and bespoke courses to develop the skills of our foster carers. This responds to the feedback from our foster carers who wanted more flexible training options (including on-line) and a more diverse training offer.

Inevitably changes of staff and vacancies have impacted on the continuity and quality of the support provided by the team. Concerns about the impact of staff changes have featured regularly in feedback from foster carers who have left the service and in annual reviews. The team have reviewed the support provided to newly approved foster carers and all are now allocated a family support worker in addition to a Social Worker to ensure that they are well supported at the start of their fostering career.

HIPSS carers

Herefordshire Intensive Support Service (HIPSS) is a commissioned service from Action for Children to provide therapeutic support to specialist carers offering young people opportunity to 'step down' from residential care into family based care and wider consultation and wrap around support to placements at risk of disruption and escalating care costs. HIPSS carers are paid an enhanced fee in recognition of the skill, training and commitment required to focus on the needs of our most challenging young people. A social work project co-ordinator provides the link between the HIPSS service and the Fostering Team.

The scheme has a target of having 8-10 designated carers. In the last year the number of approved HIPSS carers has reduced from 4 to 3. The original model for HIPSS was that children and young people moving from residential to HIPSS placements would move on again after a 12-18 month period. To the credit of our HIPSS carers they have not wanted children and young people to have a further move and have committed to providing long-term permanency to young people through long-term matching and providing staying put placements. Consequently the number of approved carers will reduce again during 2020/21 unless new carers are recruited and approved.

It is also acknowledged that all HIPSS carers have experienced varying levels of 'burn out' having been with the scheme since its inception.

Unfortunately no new HIPSS carers have been recruited during the year. Efforts continue to encourage experienced existing foster carers to consider becoming HIPSS carers and to target those in the community who have existing skills and experience of working with young people who have experienced abuse and trauma.

Within the review of allowances a proposal to offer an enhanced fee for HIPSS placements will be considered for foster carers who may not wish to become dedicated HIPSS carers but may consider offering a placement for a specific young person who could step down from residential care.

HIPSS also provides "wrap-around" support to foster carers which mirrors the model of support that they provide to HIPSS carers. This intensive support is targeted towards children and young people who would be at risk of being placed into residential care if their placement broke down. Wrap-around support is made available to in-house and IFA foster carers. This aspect of the service has been very successful with 18 placements supported in this way and of these 3 young people are now in residential care. Feedback from foster carers and social workers is extremely positive about the impact of this support in sustaining placements.

"HIPSS are a fantastic service not only for foster carers but also for young people, they are always there, for the good and the bad. They get you to really think about things from a different perspective and always listen without judgement." (Foster carer)

"Words cannot describe them, they are the loveliest people alive. They are so amazing and caring, rally loving, unreal". (Young person about his HIPSS carers)

HIPSS provides regular foster carer clinics which have now been extended to support Special Guardianship Order carers. During the year 41 consultations have been provided to carers and the team around the child.

HIPSS have provided training to foster carers as follows:

- PACE and Healing through play x 2
- Mindfulness x 4
- Foundations for attachment training (4 day course) x 2
- Foundations for attachment refresher for foster carers and staff

Since Covid-19 pandemic HIPSS have been providing a weekly virtual café for all staff on topics including attachment theory, harmful sexual behaviour, therapeutic parenting and motivational interviewing.

Kinship carers

A Connected Person is defined as "A relative, friend or other person connected with a child. The latter is someone who would not fit the term 'relative or friend', but who has a pre-existing relationship with the child. It could be someone who knows the child in a more professional capacity such as (for example) a child-minder, a teacher or a youth worker."

Relative is defined as "a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent."

In Herefordshire and other local authorities a connected person is often referred to as a Kinship Carer.

As directed by Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 if a decision has been made that a child needs to become looked after and needs to be placed immediately with alternative carers the child can be placed with a 'connected person' and a temporary approval of the connected person can be made following initial safeguarding checks. The temporary approval can last for up to 16 weeks (with an extension of up to 8 weeks to be used in exceptional circumstances). During this 16 week period a full assessment of the carers is made as for any other foster carer. Pressure from court timetables impacts and much shorter periods are assigned to completing these assessments usually 8 – 10 weeks.

During the year, 16 kinship households were approved and on 31st March 2020 there were 3 kinship households temporarily approved under Regulation 24. The number of approved kinship foster carers increased from 44 to 56 during 2019/20 which represents a 27% increase.

During the year 13 kinship households resigned:

- 8 when an SGO was granted
- 2 following successful reunification of children to their parents
- 2 placements ended when carers were unable to meet needs of the child
- 1 converted to a staying put placement when the young person turned 18

So all but 2 of these resignations were for positive reasons.

Prior to completing a full assessment a viability assessment is completed on prospective kinship carers. This enables the service to identify if there are clear reasons why a connected person would not be approved as a foster carer and ensures that the families fully understand and consent to the assessment and the requirements of any approved foster carer. During 2019/20 the team have completed 83 viability assessments and 32 full kinship assessments. Of the 32 the reasons for not approving related to risk identified within the assessment, withdrawal, child being reunified with their parents or placed with an alternative family member where assessments may have been completed on two or more different connected persons for the same child/ren.

Sleepover scheme carers

The Sleepover Scheme provides family-based overnight short break care to children with disabilities who ordinarily live at home with their parents. These children are not looked after. The Sleepover Scheme is based within the Children with Disabilities team to ensure good communication with the team supporting children who use the scheme. At the end of March there were 6 approved Sleepover Scheme foster carers providing breaks to 5 children under the Sleepover Scheme, 2 looked after children for regular respite and 2 full-time looked after siblings placed in an

emergency. During the year 5 carers resigned and 1 household withdrew having made the decision to offer a long-term full time Shared Lives placement instead. There have been no new Sleepover Scheme Carers approved over the past year. Two assessments were started but one subsequently transferred to the Fostering Team due to carers wishing to pursue full-time caring role, and the other is progressing under the Sleepover Scheme and will be taken to panel during the next financial year. Recruitment to the scheme is a priority for 2020/21.

Where possible carers are dual approved as sleepover and respite carers to meet the needs of children living with their parents and those who are looked after. Complementing the fostering team in identifying respite placements for children with disabilities who are looked-after has always been an important function of the Sleepover Scheme. It has been a challenge to develop and increase capacity within the Sleepover Scheme by increasing the number of placements offered by one caring household. Most Sleepover Scheme Carers want to offer one placement to one child wanting to maintain a balanced lifestyle which incorporates some care for the Sleepover scheme.

The Sleepover Scheme continues provide a Sleepover Scheme Carer’s Group facilitated by the Sleepover Scheme Project Co-ordinator and Family Support Worker. Attendance at the carer’s group is often low due to carers more often than not having other employment and agreeing a time to suit all can be challenging. Carers are encouraged to attend mandatory training and due to some of the medical conditions of our young people, training is provided by colleagues in health usually on a child specific basis. Occupational Therapy assessment services are purchased privately on a case-by-case basis due to a lack of capacity in local NHS provision making all take-up of referrals much delayed and way outside the timeframe for placement planning.

In July the Project Coordinator moved to a different role, initially on a temporary basis, leaving the position unfilled until the end of the year. The post was appointed to but it was several months before the candidate could start. Then, as the year was drawing to a close, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, leaving the UK Government with little option but restrict movement for all. Shielding letters affected some of the young people accessing the scheme and all overnight support was placed on hold. Notwithstanding this the Family Support Worker did a fantastic job in keeping the scheme alive, during times of uncertainty. The Project Coordinator post is now recruited to and so plans to grow the scheme again will be a priority during 2020/21.

	Year 1 (2016-17)	Year 2 (2017-18)	Year 3 (2018-19)	Year 4 (2019-20)
No. of Enquiries	86	17	10	13
No. of Carers Approved	6	6	2	0
Carer withdrawn/resigned (drop-off)	1	2	1	5

Number of Placed Children: 5 (Sleepover Scheme)

Year	2016/17				2017/18				2018/19				2019/20			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

No. of Children	1	4	3	3	6	5	6	8	8	9	9	8	8	7	6	5
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Regulatory requirements to complete an annual review of foster carers have not been maintained during the time that the Sleepover scheme co-ordinator post has been vacant and this is a priority during 2020/21. Relationships and management oversight by the Fostering service need to be strengthened to ensure that this situation is not repeated.

Throughout the challenges, feedback on the Sleepover scheme remains positive from children, families and foster carers.

Special guardianship

The local authority has had increased focus during 2019/20 on supporting children who could be cared for outside of the looked after system to achieve permanency via a Special Guardianship order (SGO) where this is assessed to be in their best interests. An SGO gives parental responsibility to the carers which is shared with the child's parents. It allows them to make all day to day decisions for the child. Where children are settled with carers who are well equipped to meet their needs this is an excellent option for children who are no longer required to have the intrusion of social work visits, health assessments, education meetings and LAC reviews.

During 2019/20 there were 11 looked after children who left care when an SGO was granted which is the same as 2018/19. Assessments of the carers are completed by the Fostering Assessment team.

In the last annual report we identified the emerging impact of a changing focus of permanence via Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) for children this has continued through the last period with 13 further children now cared for under SGO arrangements. At the end of March a further 17 assessments had been completed with applications to Court ready or made to Court. The team had also completed an assessment for a private SGO application. This work will continue as a priority during 2020/21 with plans for at least a further 17 applications planned during quarter 1.

The local authority now offers a generous financial support package that maintains the level of financial support for foster carers if they are granted an SGO following feedback from carers that this was the main reason for not wishing to make an application. This is increasingly encouraging general and IFA foster carers to apply for orders that were traditionally seen as a route for kinship carers. Consequently this does impact upon the number of approved foster carers but will correlate with children leaving care.

New SGO carers have a review every 3 months during the first year and thereafter an annual review. In addition to financial support the service co-ordinates a monthly SGO support group, includes SGO carers in all training available to foster carers and commissions a support service for SGO carers that offers specialist on-line and telephone advice including during evenings and weekends.

The service is in touch with 89 known SGO families and as the number of SGO carers increases capacity to support all of these families is restricted. Opportunities to develop a dedicated Social Work resource to support these family's needs to be explored.

The team have successfully secured over £20k financial support for specialist therapeutic interventions for Special Guardianship families this year from the Adoption Support Fund. During Covid-19 further funding was made available by government and so this has contributed to the cost

of the commissioned SGO support service and enabled 6 Special Guardianship families to attend specialist training provided by Barnados at a cost of £9k.

6. Staying Put carers

All young people in foster care are offered the opportunity to remain living with their foster carers when they reach the age of 18 if this is what they and their foster carers want. This is called “staying put” and again these placements are not foster placements but are an important part of supporting children in care to make a successful transition to independence.

Department for Education data reports that 58% of care leavers “stay put” with their carers at the age of 18 with 30% remaining at aged 19.

The service has 4 Staying Put carers who are no longer approved foster carers and 5 Staying Put carers who are also approved foster carers. In total there were 11 young people in Staying Put arrangements at the end of March.

Three young people have remained in Staying Put placements until the age of 21 when their placement has either converted to Adult Shared Lives scheme, they have moved onto supported accommodation or remained with the carers as a private arrangement.

During 2020/21 the financial support available to Staying Put carers will be reviewed to encourage the development of independent living skills of young people and reduce dependence upon carers.

7. Supported lodgings

Supported lodgings providers (SLP) are not foster carers but are approved to offer placements for young people aged 16 to 21 to develop their independence skills ready for living independently.

Supported lodgings providers have a shorter assessment than foster carers, but this includes independent references, DBS checks, health and safety checks and all are required to have their own safe care agreement. They are approved by the fostering Agency Decision Maker (ADM) outside of panel processes.

During the year a decision was made to annually review all Supported lodgings providers. The process for this is in line with that undertaken for foster carers – seeking of feedback from providers and workers for the young people placed as well as the young people themselves. Health and safety assessments are reviewed, safe caring plans updated and a review report completed.

Work has been undertaken to review and update the documents used relating to SLP agreements between providers and the Local Authority as well as the documents used when placements are made. This has involved consultation with other Local Authorities, the 16+ Team and SLP providers. The young people and provider agreement have been piloted with young people recently. Currently legal advice is being sought. This process has been challenging in trying to ensure the documents are legally compliant and accessible and understandable to young people. This work will be completed during 2020/21.

A Supported Lodgings provider handbook is been compiled and will be rolled out by September 2020.

In response to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, we have explored the option of a temporary extension to one SLP provider to afford us an additional resource which can be accessed for homeless young people / care leavers in an emergency. Another provider (previously an approved foster carer) has

been willing to renew her fostering approval to offer foster placements for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis if this is needed.

Fortunately, the SLP placements have generally been stable throughout this period with only 3 unplanned breakdowns occurring. However sadly we have lost 2 valued SLP placements in annex accommodation as the provider wished to provide Shared Lives placements instead. The payment for Shared Lives is £450 per week, which is equivalent to the highest level of need in SLP.

The OFSTED checklist is now completed for all new referrals to ensure that young people have no identified care needs requiring a regulated placement before transitioning to SLP placements.

For 2020/21 the focus will be on expanding the SLP provision in Hereford. One assessment for a new SLP placement is currently underway. Recruitment events have been held which current providers have been involved in. They have also written their own 'story' which has been used in online adverts, leaflets and the Sunshine radio voice adverts. Social media presence during Covid-19 has been increased and has included a film that care leavers have put together. In addition Truth Be Told a film collaboration with other Local Authorities includes an older teens story, very relevant to the role of SLP's and supporting care leavers. The film has been shared again recently during Fostering Fortnight.

Capacity compared to last year:-

Data	31.3.19	31.3.20
Number of households approved to offer Supported Lodgings	18	17
Number of full time SLP beds approved	30	31
Number of respite SLP beds	4	2
Number of YP in SLP placements	21	22

Vacancies are due to:

- 2 vacancies due to family bereavement / shielding due to COVID
- 2 beds are being used currently for Shared Lives placements
- 4 being used for foster placements
- 3 with no suitable match

Capacity within the service has increased by 2 beds this year. The target within the sufficiency strategy is to provide 40 SLP beds by 2020 and this target has not been achieved.

The SLP support group continues to develop well and are actively engaged in service development e.g. contributing to the development of a Supported Lodgings Providers Practice Handbook. 16+ team members have an open invitation to join this group and do so as and when possible.

8. Fostering panel

Written by Panel chair

Panel membership has remained largely stable during the last 12 months, with the welcome additions of Kirsty Gardiner as the lead for children in care health team and Mel Williams who has returned after a short period of retirement, into the role of independent panel member, bringing her educational experience with her. Panel membership has been boosted by social work representatives to include Bonnie Preece, Nita Saran and Katie Pullin, ensuring that panel remains

quorate at all times. The Panel brings a range of skills and experiences, and has been able to hone and consolidate these skills. Foster panel remains open to future council members whom may wish to take the role of champion for looked after children.

The panel is independent of the Local Authority and as such its remit is to make recommendations on whether applicants are suitable to foster, and if current foster carers should be re-approved. It also has a quality assurance and monitoring role in terms of the work of the fostering service. The majority of cases heard by the panel are either new applications, including from 'connected persons' and first reviews of foster carers, but panel also considers reviews post allegation, brief reports (where a concern has arisen partway through an assessment) and a variety of other matters. Of the 29 new assessments heard 16 were for kinship assessments, so 55% of all new assessments brought to panel were kinship assessments.

During the year the panel has considered some highly complex and contentious situations, two of which resulted in a request by the applicants/foster carers for an independent review by the Independent Review Mechanism. The Local Authority recommendation was upheld in both cases.

It is also noted that with the revised support offer for SGO's, this has proved more popular, and more foster carers have felt confident to take this step, this has resulted in 22.5% of the resignations from the role of Foster Carer being due to moving to special guardianship status, and is a good news story for stability for the child.

Fostering Panel training was held in January, and focused on some of the emerging themes from the previous 12 months. This included:-

- Connected Person Assessments - legal advice from Victoria Gould, and the role of Foster Panel and the interdependencies with the Court.
- Challenging the values and judgement of Panel Members and professional challenge
- Clear rationale for decision making and linkages to the National Minimum standards.

Outcomes of the training included reflections of previous cases and rationale for decision making. Also Panel have introduced a tracker to capture actions required by workers where panel have requested specific tasks be completed.

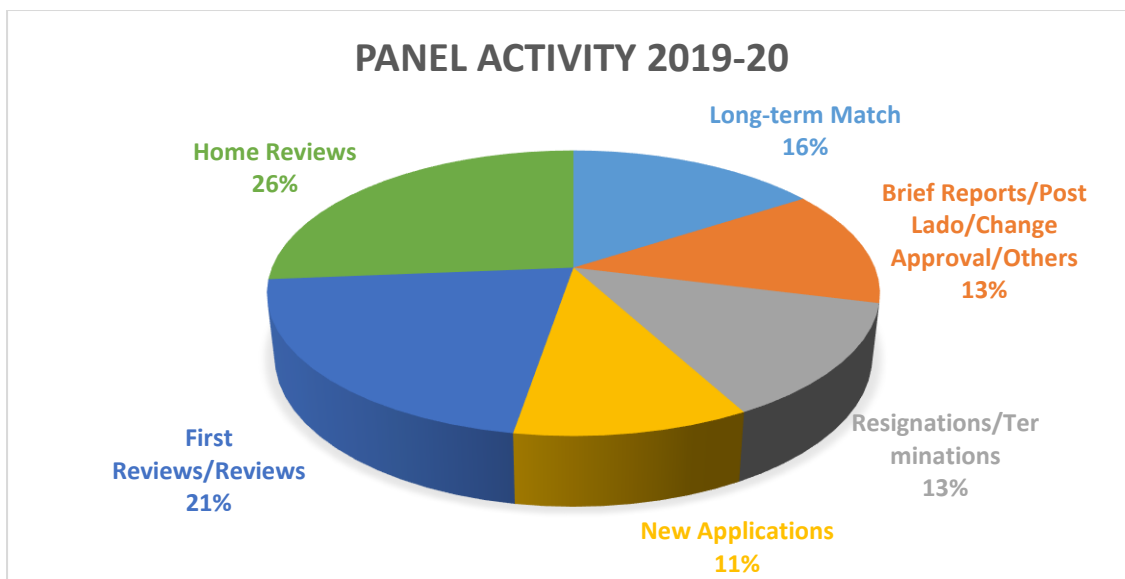
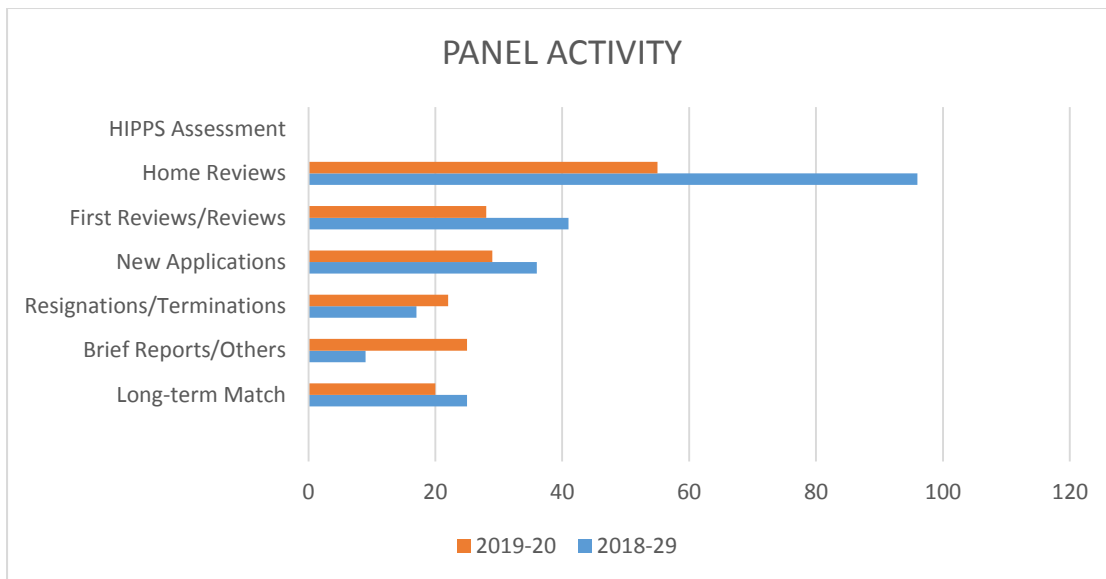
Foster Panel members are eager to make the experience welcoming for Foster Carers, and have had much positive feedback from Foster Carers. It is noted and has been mentioned in feedback the low presence of males (1) on the Foster Panel. Panel is also committed to strengthening its recommendations with clearer references to the National Minimum Standards.

Panel Minutes are now a step in Mosaic, so this part of the pathway is contained within the care management system, where previously it was a word document.

The Foster Panel held its first virtual Panel at the end of March as lockdown commenced, to ensure it could still carry out its role.

Panel Activity 2018/19	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Total
Long-term Match	6	5	5	4	20
Brief Reports/Post Lado/Change Approval/Others	5	4	8	7	25
Resignations/Terminations	5	6	1	15	27
New Applications	4	9	4	12	29

First Reviews/Reviews	8	12	2	6	28
Home Reviews	10	16	9	20	55
HIPPS Assessment	0	0	0	0	0



9. Training

The service delivers training to foster carers from a range of providers including the Fostering team, Council partners, some external training and new online training. Some training is delivered at weekends and evenings to reach carers who are working or struggle with child care commitments.

In response to last years identified need/competition from IFAs to expand our training resources to foster carers a further 11k was invested to set up and develop an online package of training and to increase the range of face to face training offered.

The online training offer has been very successful and resulted in a 65% increase in the number of carers who have maintained required mandatory training in Safeguarding, Diversity and First Aid. This has been timely in relation to Covid-19 and the face to face training restrictions that have resulted. First Aid training for new and renewing carers could not be provided on-line at the end of the year but an online paediatric course has now been sourced).

'...the training was really good, there was lots to think about and I felt really prepared for what fostering was going to be like and the things we've got to learn!'

(Feedback from prospective foster carer about Preparation to foster training)

10. Performance and quality assurance

Placement sufficiency

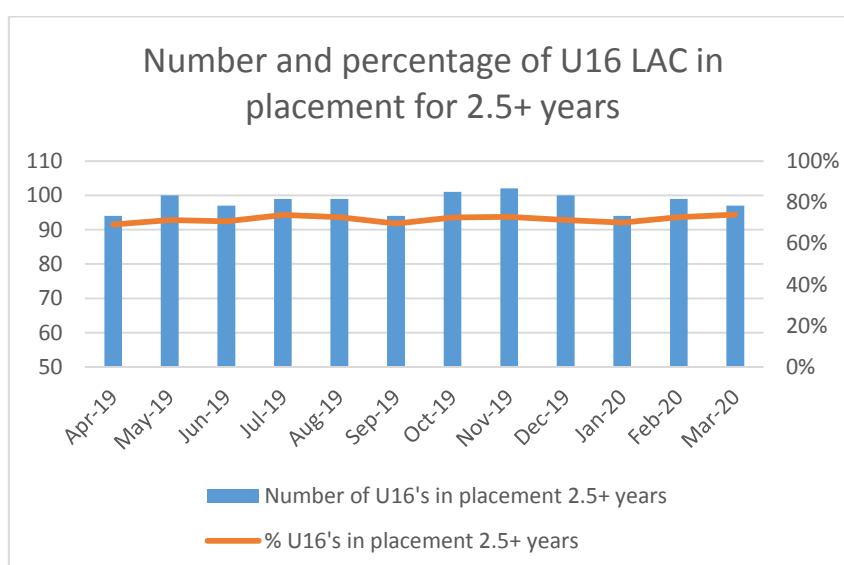
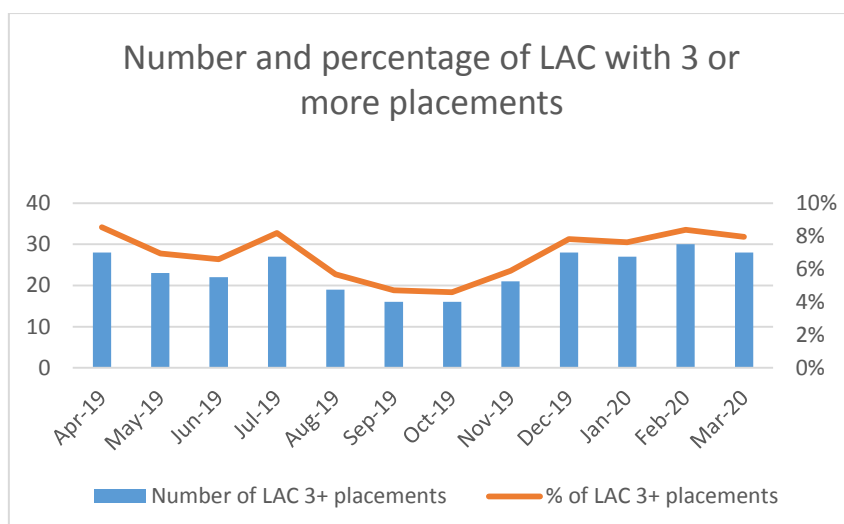
Department for Education (DfE) figures for 2018/19 report an increase in the looked after children population of 3% with an overall 6% increase since March 2015. Herefordshire continues to have a high number of looked after children and has seen numbers increase from 334 in March 2019 to 352 in March 2020. National data is not yet available however regional data shows that rates of looked after children have increased from an average of 82 per 10,000 to 83.1 per 10,000 whilst Herefordshire has increased from 92 to 97.5 per 10,000 in the same period. Nationally the split between local authority and IFA placements is 65%/35%.

Although the numbers of carers has reduced the placements available have slightly increased. On 31st March 2019 170 placements were available with 96 filled and 74 vacant (56% filled). This compares with 31st March 2020 when 182 placements were available, 114 filled and 68 vacant (63% filled). This year is comparable with Ofsted published data that nationally 63% of fostering places were filled. This may seem a very low figure but many approved places will be unavailable as carers are only available part-time for respite placements; are approved for more placements than they have bedrooms for sibling groups or are taking a break for a range of reasons.

Placement stability

Herefordshire's performance is good for placement stability. This is a key performance indicator nationally and performance is consistently better than the national average.

At the end of March 8% of children in care had 3 or more placements during the year comparing with a national average of 10% and 11% for statistical neighbours. 74% of children in care had been in their placement for at least 2 ½ years compared with a national average of 69% and 67% for statistical neighbours. Both of these measures are impacted by the high numbers of children in care and as increasing numbers of children in stable placements leave care via an SGO it is likely that performance will decrease. Therefore there is no room for complacency and further work to reduce placement moves is required.



Long-term matches

There were 20 long term matches approved during 2019/20. A review in March 2020 identified 44 children with a care plan of long-term fostering where there had been delay in progressing the long-term match. This is a priority for improvement within early 2020/21.

Practice concerns

There were 16 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) contacts received regarding general foster carers during 2019/20 compared with 21 in 2018/19. Of these 10 did not meet LADO threshold - 8 contacts were practice related and addressed by the service and for 2 contacts advice was given.

The other 6 (3 households) the LADO threshold was met, allegations were substantiated and reviews were presented to fostering panel. As a result of reviews one fostering household was re-approved with a change in their matching, one household is completing a plan of work and will be further reviewed in 6 months' time and one case is outstanding.

There were 8 LADO (4 households) contacts received regarding kinship foster carers during 2019/20 compared with 4 last year. Of these in 3 cases the threshold was not met, in 3 cases the allegations were unsubstantiated and in 2 cases (1 household) the allegation was substantiated and subsequently reviewed by fostering panel.

Complaints and compliments

The service has received two complaints from foster carers and two from special guardians during the year.

The foster carers complaints were regarding poor communication and another relating to finance and support for a respite placement. Both were resolved without requiring formal resolution and learning around checking carers understanding of policies explored with the team.

One complaint from a special guardianship related to a financial allowance and for a period of months prior to an award being made – this was upheld and payment was made. The second related to compensation relating to family information shared in court proceedings which was settled by the legal team.

The team have received some really positive compliments during the year. Examples include:

“I want to take this opportunity to thank yourself Louise Easton and the few other fostering social workers (Katie Straughan and Charlie Dean) we have had the privilege to help us along our journey you have all held all our hands when need and encouraged and guided us to become connected, kind, considerate, empathetic and in tune carers/parents. We thank you with the whole of our hearts and your all be a special piece of our life’s for EVER! So thank you all”

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude for those who have lighted the flame within us”. Special thanks to Georgina Thompson.” (Family support worker)

11. Foster carer representatives

The foster carer representatives have continued to meet on a monthly basis with the Fostering service managers to improve communication and resolve any issues at an early stage. A fostering representative is a member of the Corporate Parenting panel and so is able to communicate issues between the groups.

This foster carer representative organised a summer party, Halloween and Christmas party and established a new carers support group in the community prior to lockdown. There is an active WhatsApp group to keep carers in touch and supporting each other. The foster carers newsletter is sent out bi-monthly although has increased to monthly in response to Covid-19.

12. Progress on key priorities during 2019-20

Priorities from last year’s annual report were:

- Increase in number of carers approved; HIPSS, General and Supported Lodging providers – there has been a reduction in the number of approved general and HIPSS carers and the number of supported lodgings providers has stayed the same.
- Increase in number of available beds with current cohort of carers – the number of beds has increased amongst foster carers and supported lodgings providers.
- Improve retention through improving benefits package available to foster carers – the review of fostering allowances is currently being completed and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet in the autumn.

- Increase in children achieving permanency in special guardianship arrangements – eleven children left care having achieved permanency in special guardianship arrangements – the same number as in 2018/19 and at the end of the year a further 13 applications had been completed.
- Increase placement stability – this has improved from 10% in 2018/19 to 8% in 2019/20 of children with 3 or more moves in the last 12 months and from 71% in 2018/19 to 74% in 2019/20 who have remained in the same placement for over 2 ½ years
- Increase in support for SGO – support group is now meeting regularly and successful applications for funding of therapeutic support made.
- Development of training programme – therapeutic parenting and online resources – additional £11k invested in foster carer training and on-line courses are now available
- Mosaic workflow upgrade completion – completed.
- Update foster carers charter – not yet completed.

13. Key priorities for development during 2020-21

- Recruitment and retention of foster carers:
 - Reviewing scheme of fees and allowances for all foster carers
 - Recruiting to all vacant posts and reducing turnover of staff
 - Continue to develop recruitment strategy increasing number of approvals reducing reliance on independent fostering agencies and residential placements
 - Review process for completing statutory DBS and medical checks
 - Adapt support and training to meet needs of carers in a “Covid secure” way
- Improve stability for children and young people:
 - Continue work to support children and young people to leave care via an SGO where it is in their best interests
 - Ensure all children are long-term matched without delay
 - Explore options to further develop support for SGO carers
- Prepare children and young people for independence:
 - Implement new savings policy and deduct savings for children and young people “at source” so that all children and young people in care have savings when they leave care to support their move to independence
 - Work with 16+ team to implement independence checklist
- Performance improvement
 - Develop a “fostering scorecard” to enable more effective monitoring and improvement within the Fostering service.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 September 2020
Title of report:	Talk Community strategic overview
Report by:	Cabinet member health and adult wellbeing

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the Talk Community strategic approach and its implementation, including the development and delivery of a comprehensive Talk Community programme and strategy.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the Talk Community strategic approach and its implementation be approved and;**

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Amy Pitt, 07792 881896, email: Amy.Pitt@herefordshire.gov.uk

- (b) **authority be delegated to the director for adults and communities to take all operational decisions necessary to ensure adoption and implementation of the proposed Talk Community programme and plan, within available revenue and capital resources, subject to further governance when required.**

Alternative options

1. Do not adopt Talk Community as a demand reduction strategy for the council. This option is not recommended as Talk Community has been developed specifically to address 'system wide' challenges faced by the council and its partners and harness the great resources evident in local communities. No alternative comprehensive approach to these challenges and opportunities has yet been established in practice elsewhere. Without a strategic approach to communities, demand for council services will escalate well beyond resources and opportunities to promote wellbeing and tackle health inequalities will be missed. This would bring significant risk to the council's finance and reputation, whilst also not achieving the best outcomes for individual people.

Key considerations

2. Talk Community is the strategic delivery vehicle for the community ambition of the Herefordshire County Plan 2020-2024 to improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities.
3. It is the council's strategic approach to prevention, enabling people to get the assistance they need and managing demand for more specialist services. It conveys an aspiration and culture which prioritises prevention, innovates and intervenes at the earliest possible point to make independence and wellbeing inevitable. The key message and vision of Talk Community articulates an ambition and culture which innovates "to make independence and wellbeing inevitable". It has been developed by the council during the past year through engagement across all parts of the council and other agencies. The approach has support from partner agencies across the NHS, community safety and voluntary, community and faith sectors. Further engagement with communities and stakeholders will take place during 2020/2021 to consolidate the scope of Talk Community and its future development. Talk Community was also cited positively in the recent LGA Corporate Peer Review of the council as the preferred vehicle for delivering much of its priorities relating to communities.
4. Recent events such as the floods and Covid-19 nationally have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the council's and community partnerships. Talk Community offers an alternative approach: that the choices people make and the behaviours they adopt can be pivotal, or identify the change of course, needed to address the issue. It's not just another word for change, it involves a new vision, a different solution and a new business model. There are five strategic aims of Talk Community, shown below, all of which focus on facilitating the pivot described above and change the focus to one of prevention, health, wellbeing and independence at all stages of life for all ages and in a way that is specific and locally defined, building upon a core approach across the county;
 - Putting wellbeing, social value and strengths based approaches in all practice, policy and decision making.
 - Ensuring that prevention and early intervention are prioritised.

- Targeting resources based on need and place, maximising impact and value for money.
 - Challenging and developing our culture and practice, and
 - Working in partnership with a focus on system integration at all levels.
5. Herefordshire's strengths based approach to adult social care has demonstrated this by finding solutions for people in local, informal, community based support through community brokerage and other approaches. A comprehensive approach to prevention through communities will enable the appropriate management of demand for support and services across the council. This has reduced use of formal care among older people whilst sustaining high levels of customer satisfaction. An approach as broad as Talk Community can be expected to have an impact on the breadth of wider determinants of health; such as loneliness, social deprivation, frailty, domestic abuse or anti-social behaviour. Talk Community will also demonstrate an asset based approach to communities which relates directly and strategically to the strengths based models.
 6. The scope of Talk Community will align parts of the council and will offer an approach that is fundamental to the council's future delivery and prevention agenda. It compliments prevention activities taking place for different groups within communities, including children and young people where early help activity is already taking place. The scope enables all ages, cross-directorate opportunities with the key ethos and aims of Talk Community being threaded through all that we do and provides an overarching framework for joint working.
 7. Talk Community will be articulated through a strategy and implemented through a comprehensive programme. The strategy will be adopted by the Director for Adults and Communities in consultation with the cabinet members and all Directors across the council, the programme will be developed and implemented within available revenue budgets and subject to separate reports where capital spend is required.

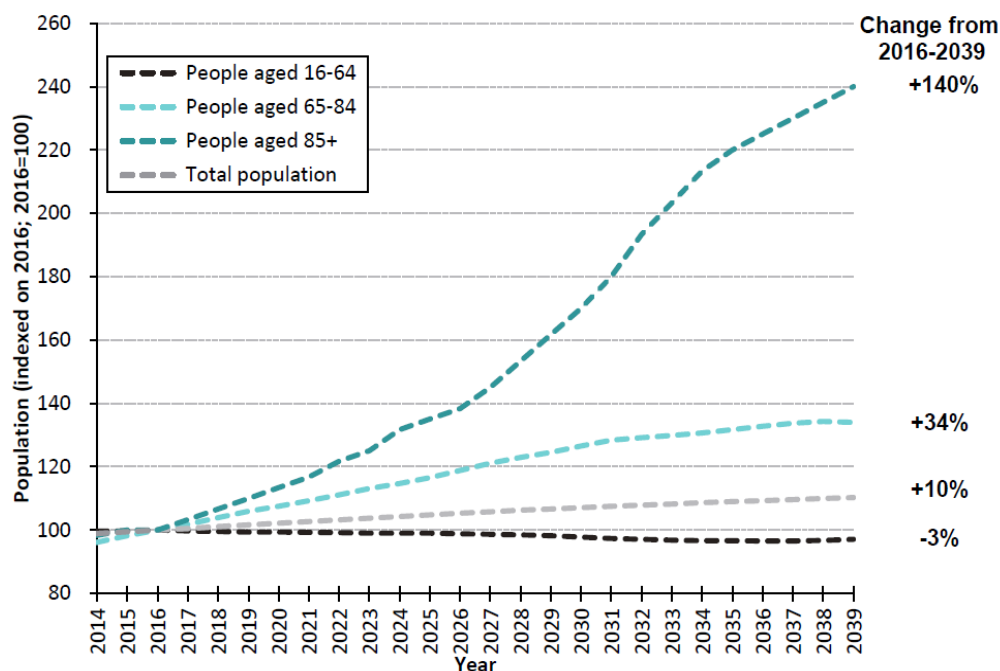
Scope and purpose

8. Talk Community is very broad in scope, encompassing:
 - People; as participants in communities, as volunteers and community leaders, including people who are vulnerable and may need some support. There is focus on people staying well and independent and feeling safe and included in their communities.
 - Place and space; making use of and sharing community places, creating the buildings and open spaces that local people want and will use, co-location of public and community services including the arts and leisure services, ensuring accessibility and connectivity and considering the impact of and upon new communities created through large scale housing developments.
 - Economy; recognising and developing the role of businesses in communities, promoting the county's buoyant social enterprise sector, developing the wellbeing of the workforce and healthy workplaces, whilst recognising the contribution to the local economy of the health and social care sector.
9. This breadth of Talk Community combined with a singular focus on the role of communities appears to be without precedent around the UK. A Talk Community strategy will set out the vision and strategic approach, along with plans in the eight areas of the programme, which will be reviewed annually.

10. Although innovative in its scope and overall concept, Talk Community will be making use of established practice from a number of fields including community development, early help and prevention for children and families. It will build upon and benefit from a diverse history of investment and development in communities by the council and its partners, often using external funding.

Need and demand

11. Talk Community is a transformation approach to managing demand. The great majority of demand for health and social care services is among older people and Herefordshire's over 50 population is above national levels, with rapid growth projected among over 65s locally. In the 18 years to 2038, Herefordshire's older population will account for over 30% of the whole county. On the current trajectory it is predicted that there will be rapid rises in numbers of over 85s and people with dementia, with significant pockets of high need in market towns and several rural areas. See diagram below:



12. These demographic changes threaten to overwhelm health, care and council provision locally, although the council is planning ways to encourage more young adults to remain in and come to Herefordshire. Demand for care and support is also expected to increase among young people and vulnerable families, unless new solutions are found to tackle health inequalities and localised deprivation.
13. Although the ageing population may overwhelm health and social care it does also offer opportunities with volunteering and community leaders which can bring experience and a wealth of skills which is fundamental to Talk Community.
14. With the expected increases in demand, the council and NHS cannot (and should not) hope to meet these demographic challenges through existing or future formal care services. The resources do not exist for a successful service response and that approach would do nothing to address the fundamental challenge of population need. The Talk

Community approach aligns well with the NHS long term plan in many of its priorities and emphases. Evidence from public health research, community development and social action shows that the solutions lie in self-care/help, behaviour change and communities.

Operational Function for Talk Community

15. Whilst Talk Community is a proactive, preventative approach it also has a strategic operational function that has provided support to communities during the flooding in February and with the Covid-19 pandemic since March. Talk Community mobilised a county-wide centrally coordinated tactical operational response for vulnerable people and the shielded cohort which has supported our communities immensely. The Talk Community approach co-ordinated services across the council resulted in a significant amount of positive feedback from our communities and the support that has been provided is illustrated in the table below:

Flooding - February	COVID 19 – March to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Big Herefordshire Clear Up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters sent to 80,000 households
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400 volunteers from the council and other partners mobilised • Reaching over 40 communities in 3 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk Community helpdesk received over 4,000 calls • 2000+ people supported - 1300+ with food supplies and 900+ with medication collections • 1500 volunteers registered • 150 community groups actively engaged • 200+ community contacts made • 200 council staff redeployed into Talk Community • Including 70+ link workers redeployed as liaison officers with communities & providing advice and support

16. The talk community response to both the flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled the council to ensure that Talk Community is central to a system-wide response to Covid-19 and the outbreak plan. It has provided an opportunity for Talk Community to have a key role in any future outbreak management plan and other opportunities by working directly with communities and providing support across the council and the system.
17. The information gained from communities, groups, volunteers and community organisation through both the flooding and Covid-19 pandemic has provided a rich understanding to identify the areas of need, support and those areas with thriving and developed communities and gaps which will be utilised for future planning.

Talk Community programme

18. The Talk Community programme is an iterative process due to the changing nature of the recent local and national events and the impacts on the communities. To ensure it meets

the changing demands these events have brought about the Talk Community programme provided below which covers eight areas;

- Talk Community hubs
- Talk Community integrated hubs
- Developing a county of learning and upskilling communities
- Talk Community outreach kitchens
- Developing, supporting and enhancing the voluntary sector infrastructure
- Sustainable food county
- Talk Community Business
- Developing the Talk Community approach to support the economic recovery for all ages

19. There is an ambition to establish 20 Talk Community hubs by March 2021, appendix one shows a map of the communities that are in delivery and engagement stage of hub development. Hubs will be led primarily by volunteers in communities and consequently, each will be different and reflect local interests and needs. Hubs will provide local signposting, and information to promote wellbeing and support of vulnerable people. Many will also host and promote local volunteer led groups, activities and wider community participation, as well as enabling co-location of public and community services. In some cases, primary and community health services will offer clinics and other patient facing support to people, closer to where they live. Talk Community hubs will generally be building based although different types of models will be explored including a mobile hub or “the person is the hub”. Hub buildings could include village halls, pubs, community centres, arts centres and churches.
20. A number of community groups have come forward prior to and through covid-19 to lead potential community hubs throughout the county, including rural and urban locations. The council is offering a range of support to emerging Talk Community hubs to help them to launch and establish themselves on a continuing basis, including help from a dedicated project team. A grant scheme has been established to provide seed funding, supporting the development of Talk Community hubs and this has been approved through separate governance. This will offer grants of up to £2,500 to community groups who want to develop a Talk Community hub.
21. Talk Community hubs were in development prior to covid-19 and these discussion are being progressed again now and further engagement is taking place with local communities who have been active in helping their most vulnerable during the covid-19 pandemic to enable them to continue to support their local community through a Talk Community hub.
22. Talk Community includes a new programme promoting and supporting the role of business in communities. The council will recognise, support and enable the contribution to communities made by Herefordshire’s established businesses through investment, employment and workforce participation. The county’s buoyant and diverse social enterprise sector will be celebrated, supported and promoted. There will also be a significant focus on the wellbeing of the business workforce and healthy workplaces. Underpinning the Talk Community Business approach is a recognition of the scale and contribution to the economy represented by the health and care sector and by voluntary and community organisations.
23. Talk Community will also encompass the exploration and development of integrated hubs. These buildings have capital investment allocated to the Talk Community approach and represent a commitment to regeneration and integrating public facilities and local business

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within communities. Integrated hubs are different from and will complement Talk Community hubs by providing more substantial facilities, targeted to communities of particular need and/or potential. These hubs will combine new community facilities with tackling health inequalities and supporting local business and employment. Buildings will be developed or converted on sites already in the Herefordshire public or community estate. These may be in market towns or rural locations. Detailed work will take place across the council and with partners to develop the scope of the concept and its planning, along with identifying potential sites.

Joined up working and Community Development

24. Talk Community calls for a co-ordinated strategic approach across all directorates of the council and there are many examples of how this will help to deliver the greatest impact on service demand and for communities themselves. Council and community libraries offer great potential in supporting Talk Community and building on what they currently do with a focus for signposting, community based support and co-location of volunteer and public services. There are many examples nationally of libraries operating as hubs in various guises and these can be reviewed and sampled and distilled to enable Herefordshire's libraries to play a versatile and dynamic role at the heart of Talk Community.
25. Proposals for Talk Community Business are being developed in close alignment with existing and emerging economic development projects. Talk Community business and integrated hub developments all provide opportunities for joining up with the council's active travel, energy reduction and wider environmental developments.
26. The Talk Community approach also provides an opportunity for an all ages approach and to support the children and families agenda with community development and enhancing the offer to those most in need. The covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on families and children from an economic and health perspective therefore by considering the support from communities will widen the support available.
27. Talk Community success will be enhanced if it is adopted as a whole system approach through the council's key partnerships around health, community safety, education and learning and beyond. The council is engaging with Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS trust to help ensure the success of Talk Community in managing demand for formal care. This will be taken forward largely through Herefordshire's Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with their localised whole population approach.
28. The Police and other community safety partners are keen to become involved in Talk Community, seeing the potential to address key priorities such as domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. There are many opportunities to develop joint work with the new university, NMITE through Talk Community, as well as exploring lifelong long learning developments with wider partners. The council is also exploring a very wide and integrated approach to its relationships with Herefordshire's farming sector.

Accountability, outcomes and communications

29. Being able to recognise, share and demonstrate the impact and value of Talk Community will be critical to its success and credibility over time. This is important to help ensure that Talk Community actually works but also to recognise the achievement and innovation taking place in Herefordshire. Evaluation and evidence are also crucial in bringing inward

investment to new developments and local communities. This will draw on best practice across a variety of fields. As work on value and impact progresses, this will be integrated with performance management practice within Adults and Communities and other directorates.

30. Talk Community requires some new and particular approaches to communicating, in order to;
 - Engage effectively and openly with communities
 - Promoting specific new developments including Talk Community hubs to the public.
 - Establish an appropriate profile for Talk Community as a whole, regionally and nationally, across both professional and public networks.
31. The communication approach will start from refining and articulating the key messages within Talk Community and encompass social media, mainstream media, marketing materials and potentially audio-visual products. It will be necessary to confirm the resources required to implement Talk Community communications and the most effective way to co-ordinate these.

Community impact

32. Talk Community is closely aligned to the council's new county plan and is directly incorporated within the council's Community ambition, and the delivery plan. All elements of the Talk Community strategic approach will contribute directly to this ambition and many will also help drive delivery of the other two ambitions for economy and the environment. In relation to economy in particular, Talk Community business and integrated hubs are expected to have a significant positive impact.
33. The development of Talk Community has drawn heavily upon the local joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA), Understanding Herefordshire and in particular, the analysis of needs of older and disabled people in relation to the rapidly ageing local population. All of the rich data provided through the JSNA is informing, shaping and supporting the philosophy and approach of Talk Community.
34. Talk Community is also closely aligned to the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and indeed, its progress and performance will be reported regularly to the board. Talk Community is all age in focus and is expected to benefit children and young people significantly, through Talk Community hubs, integrated hubs and Talk Community county of learning. The impact for people living with long term conditions is expected to be very widespread, being a significant focus for some of the programme areas.

Environmental Impact

35. The proposed strategic approach seeks to deliver on the council's environmental policy commitments and aligns to the following success measures in the County Plan.
 - Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions
 - Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport
36. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability,

achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

37. The development of the strategic approach has sought to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance. The Talk Community team will work closely with the Sustainability & Climate Change colleagues to maximise reducing impacts on the environment and Talk Community can enable the partnership working with communities.

Equality duty

38. 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.

39. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

40. The Talk Community strategic approach will lead to a wide range of changes, projects and initiatives in some cases delivered by the council or its partners but most often by communities themselves. Where appropriate, an Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for individual initiatives and changes. It is not expected that Talk Community will lead to any negative or regressive impact for any groups of people sharing a protected characteristic. Great care will be taken in planning and implementation to ensure this is so.

41. It is anticipated that Talk Community will lead to general benefit and opportunity for groups of people sharing protected characteristics. These will arise from projects such as Talk Community hubs, the integrated hubs and talk community outreach kitchen and will include the involvement of primary and community health services and communities developing to become safer, more inclusive and cohesive. Changes are likely to benefit older people, young people, disabled people and a range of other groups of people. This will be a key consideration in reporting to Health and Wellbeing Board.

Resource implications

42. The Talk Community strategic approach is primarily focused on managing demand for services provided by the council and others. This reduced demand on resources will be seen over a number of years and further modelling and performance monitoring is required to enable any savings and cost avoidance to be projected and measured effectively. Talk Community builds on established strengths based practice within adult social care, which has demonstrated during 2018 to 2020 that savings can be delivered whilst sustaining or improving customer outcomes and satisfaction.

43. Many areas of the Talk Community approach and delivery programme have no direct financial implications for the council. However, the programme as a whole will involve significant staff time for teams and services throughout the adults and communities directorate and increasingly across the council more widely.
44. The implementation of Talk Community Hubs over the two to three years to 2022 incurs an investment of £500k which encompasses:
- A project implementation team of four project managers
 - A seed funding grant allocation programme of £125k
 - Marketing and promotion and associated costs for the hubs
45. The spending on Talk Community hubs was approved by full Council in February 2019 and the funding has been drawn from reserves. Any wider revenue costs of Talk Community programme areas will be met through available revenue budgets.
46. The development and building of integrated hubs is estimated to cost £2m in capital investment excluding revenue costs of feasibility, community engagement and project management.
47. £2m has been provisionally allocated from the council's capital programme to fund the integrated hubs initiative, along with £200k of revenue funding for feasibility, engagement and project management. However, the spending of capital funding on any specific proposed integrated hubs will be subject to separate governance on the basis of a further business case. The timescale for the spending of capital on integrated hubs is being reviewed and updates to the scheduling of the provisional allocation will be requested as appropriate.

Legal implications

48. There are no specific legal implications in respect of the recommendations in the report.

Risk management

49. The Talk Community strategic approach and programme is very broad and encompasses multiple programme areas and so few specific risks arise from the strategic approach itself. Risks will emerge and be managed as appropriate in each area of the programme. Some potential risks are identified below.

Risk	Mitigation
Talk Community is not successful in managing the demands for services in the county	Evidence through the strengths based model in place within adults and communities demonstrates this approach.
NHS partners will not engage fully so that demand reduction and prevention impact on health will be deferred or behind social care.	Continued engagement with NHS partners through the health and wellbeing board and projects such as talk community hubs and robust presentation of evidence of demand reduction with associated cost modelling.
Insufficient community groups come forward to set-up talk community hubs	Up to 20 groups have expressed an interest in becoming a talk community hub with many

	more possibilities identified for 2021. There is widespread interest and effective support available from the council
Hubs are not successful as focal points for community support and participation and so are ineffective at diverting demand away from formal care and supporting resilience.	Hubs will represent the enthusiasm, passion and local knowledge of volunteers and local community leaders to support their community, supported by training and other resources. Recent community engagement through the pandemic and floods has demonstrated the support for talk community and hubs.
Businesses will not engage with Talk Community to bring greater investment, support and connectivity for businesses in communities. Social enterprise will not contribute to community capacity and resilience.	Many businesses already invest and contribute to communities. Social enterprise is already buoyant in Herefordshire and active in supporting wellbeing and vulnerable people. The Talk Community business programme will plan engagement and 'selling' the concept.
Integrated hubs will not attract support from local communities or will be delivered beyond target timescales and budgets	Scoping and proposals for integrated hubs are at an early stage, will be subject to detailed business cases and will be followed by in depth engagement with communities and exhaustive review of site options and cost modelling. Projects will not proceed unless all the elements for success are in place. Integrated hub development will be subject to further governance.
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Talk Community provides the strategic community ambition for the delivery of county plan.</p> <p>Talk Community provides a new opportunity to manage demand for health and social care services, through promoting wellbeing and independence and community based support for people who need it. This will be of particular benefit in the context of continuing local demographic changes.</p> <p>Talk Community will help build the capacity and resilience of communities to enable wellbeing and manage demand.</p> <p>Talk Community provides wide ranging opportunities to build upon existing strategic and operational partnerships across the</p>	

system. It will also enable much wider participation of residents in their communities.

Consultees

50. Consultation with political groups has been undertaken and positive feedback was received.
51. Adults and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been consulted on a number of occasions in relation to Talk Community. There has been particular focus given by the committee to proposals for Talk Community hubs and integrated hubs, among other initiatives. The committee has welcomed and supported the proposals and has asked for more information to be provided in relation to integrated hubs and other programmes in due course. These requests have been incorporated into the report and to the development of Talk Community in practice.
52. There has been extensive consultation through formal meetings with senior leaders and others in the NHS including Herefordshire CCG, Wye Valley NHS Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (previously 2gether NHS Foundation Trust), Taurus GP federation and primary care locality networks (PCNs) and engagement with NHS and community safety partners plus one-public-estate and housing partners. NHS organisations have welcomed and are fully supportive of the Talk Community proposals, have agreed to support the wider “whole system” promotion of the strategic approach and to consider adopting specific aspects of Talk Community within their services and strategies.
53. There has also been engagement with West Mercia Police and other community safety partner organisations who have also been broadly supportive of the approach and particularly supportive of plans for Talk Community hubs.
54. Parish councils have been consulted and informed about Talk Community proposals and programmes through three Parish Council Summits in September 2019 and July 2020. These were attended by approximately 90 parish councillors and clerks and featured extensive discussion. Various specific ideas and thoughts have been provided by parish councils and these have been reflected in the wider development of the Talk Community strategic approach. The council has engaged with individual parish councils in supporting their proposals for Talk Community hubs which will result in a number of Talk Community hubs being established during 2020/21.
55. Two Talk Community conferences were held in January 2020 for staff of the adults and communities directorate, other council directorates and some partner agencies. These elicited very positive support for Talk Community and a wide range of specific ideas and suggestions which will be incorporated into the development and promotion of the Talk Community programme.
56. Volunteers and organisations in communities and the county wide community, faith and voluntary sectors have been engaged in a variety of ways in developing the Talk Community strategic approach. This has included attendance at sector events, direct engagement with local groups over potential Talk Community hubs and other proposals, as well as in other forums. It is proposed to hold Talk Community conferences or workshops in each of the five localities linked to PCNS during the spring of 2021. These

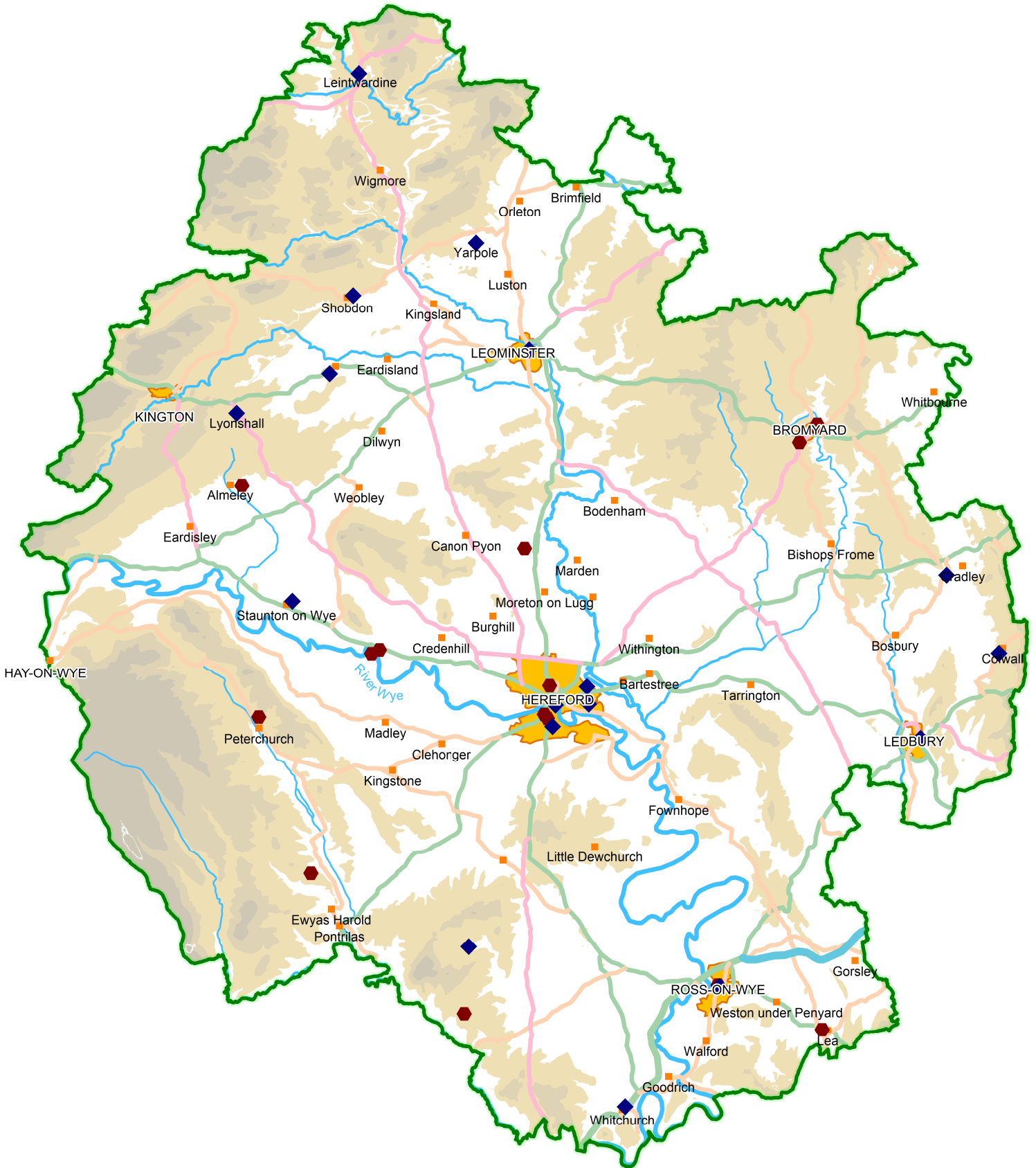
will include professionals, community groups, volunteers and people using support in the locality.

Appendices

Appendix one – Talk Community Hub map

Background papers

None



Talk Community Hub

- ◆ Engagement
- ⬡ Delivery



Talk Community Hubs



