

Corporate Support Centre
Paul Walker - Chief Executive

To: All members of the Council

our ref: Council - 6 December 2024
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28 November 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 6 December 2024** at the Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE at **10.00 am** at which the business set out in the attached agenda is proposed to be transacted.

Yours sincerely
Claire Porter



Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

Council

Date: **Friday 6 December 2024**

Time: **10.00 am**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services

Tel: 01432 383690

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services on 01432 383690 or e-mail matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Council

Membership

Chairman
Vice-Chair

Councillor Roger Phillips
Councillor Stef Simmons

Councillor Polly Andrews
Councillor Jenny Bartlett
Councillor Graham Biggs
Councillor Harry Bramer
Councillor Simeon Cole
Councillor Pauline Crockett
Councillor Dave Davies
Councillor Mark Dykes
Councillor Toni Fagan
Councillor Carole Gandy
Councillor Peter Hamblin
Councillor Helen Heathfield
Councillor David Hitchiner
Councillor Terry James
Councillor Jonathan Lester
Councillor Ed O'Driscoll
Councillor Rob Owens
Councillor Daniel Powell
Councillor Philip Price
Councillor Adam Spencer
Councillor Pete Stoddart
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst
Councillor Richard Thomas
Councillor Diana Toynbee
Councillor Allan Williams
Councillor Mark Woodall

Councillor Bruce Baker
Councillor Chris Bartrum
Councillor Dave Boulter
Councillor Jacqui Carwardine
Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Councillor Clare Davies
Councillor Barry Durkin
Councillor Matthew Engel
Councillor Elizabeth Foxton
Councillor Catherine Gennard
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Robert Highfield
Councillor Dan Hurcomb
Councillor Jim Kenyon
Councillor Nick Mason
Councillor Aubrey Oliver
Councillor Justine Peberdy
Councillor Ivan Powell
Councillor Ben Proctor
Councillor Louis Stark
Councillor John Stone
Councillor Charlotte Taylor
Councillor Kevin Tillett
Councillor Rebecca Tully
Councillor Rob Williams

Agenda

NOLAN PRINCIPLES	9 - 10
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2024.	11 - 32
4. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements.	33 - 38
How to submit questions	
<i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i>	
<i>5:00 p.m. on Monday 2 December 2024.</i>	
<i>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i>	
<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>	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive questions from members of the public.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the Council.	
7. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES To exercise those powers reserved to Council to review the representation and determine the allocation of seats on committees and relevant outside bodies to political groups.	39 - 44
8. ADDITION OF CAPITAL BUDGET TO DELIVER IT CAPITAL PROGRAMME To approve an amendment to the capital programme to utilise underspends to fund two new projects, at a total of £368,000 for delivery of IT projects within this financial year.	45 - 54
9. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES, POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS 2024 To approve a new scheme of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.	55 - 106
10. LEADER'S REPORT To receive a report from the leader on the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council on 11 October 2024.	107 - 130

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Recording of meetings

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

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

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

The council may make an official recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such 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.

Public transport links

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station. The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services>,

The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

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

2. Integrity

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

3. Objectivity

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

4. Accountability

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

5. Openness

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

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

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

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 11 October 2024 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Roger Phillips (chairperson)
Councillor Stef Simmons (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Polly Andrews, Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Dave Boulter, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Pauline Crockett, Dave Davies, Barry Durkin, Mark Dykes, Matthew Engel, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Helen Heathfield, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Terry James, Jonathan Lester, Nick Mason, Ed O'Driscoll, Aubrey Oliver, Rob Owens, Justine Peberdy, Dan Powell, Ivan Powell, Philip Price, Ben Proctor, Adam Spencer, Louis Stark, Pete Stoddart, John Stone, Elissa Swinglehurst, Richard Thomas, Kevin Tillett, Diana Toynbee and Rob Williams

Officers: Chief Executive, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment*, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing*, Director of Governance and Law, Director of Finance and Democratic Services Manager.

* denotes virtual attendance

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Biggs, Clare Davis, Gennard, Hurcombe, Kenyon and Allan Williams.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman, Councillor Roger Phillips, declared a non-pecuniary, personal interest in agenda items no. 8, as Vice Chairman of the National Joint Council (NJC) of England and Wales.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman's and Chief Executive's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 16)

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

25. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 17 - 22)

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

26. APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Council considered an appointment to the vacant position of Vice-Chairperson of the Employment Panel.

Councillor Stef Simmons proposed and Councillor Jonathan Lester seconded the appointment of Councillor Diana Toynbee as Vice-Chairperson of the Employment Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

The appointment was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority of Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Diana Toynbee is appointed to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Employment Panel for the remainder of the 2024-2025 municipal year.

27. THE REPORT OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Council considered a report by the Democratic Services Manager to consider and approve the Herefordshire councillors allowances scheme having regard to recommendations of the council's independent remuneration panel (IRP).

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor David Hitchiner.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED:

That Council having regard to the recommendations made by the independent remuneration panel:

- i. **Introduces a new allowance for all the council's independent persons and co-opted members;**
- ii. **Agrees allowances are provided annually as a lump sum payment – as follows:**
 - a) **A+G Independent Persons - £1,500 p/a (based on 10 meetings p/a)**
 - b) **Scrutiny Co-opted Members - £900 p/a (based on 6 meetings p/a)**
 - c) **Standard Independent Persons - £450 p/a (based on 3 meetings p/a)**
- iii. **Permits a technical update to the constitutional provisions (as [set out at 2.2.21](#)) that apply to councillors be also applied to independent persons and co-opted members;**
- iv. **Asks Council to commission the member development working group to review the induction training provided to all independent persons and co-opted members. The panel believes that practical training will ensure that the work of these independent persons will be enhanced by a sound understanding of the objectives and responsibilities of the groups they join. In accordance with members training and allowances practice, the independent persons allowance shall be linked to all induction training**

being completed prior to fully taking up their positions on committees. It is also expected that the independent persons shall attend most of the meetings and when they can't, an input through remote access or a written statement should be provided.

- v. Does not introduce a new allowance for the vice-chairpersons of council committees, at the current time. The Panel remain open to reconsidering this matter again, subject to Council agreeing to recommendation 6 below being completed;
- vi. Review the post of vice-chairperson and a role description be added to the council's constitution;
- vii. Does not introduce a new allowance for the chairpersons of task and finish groups;
- viii. Does not introduce a new higher rate allowance for the Chairperson of the Scrutiny Management Board;
- ix. Continues to link the National Joint Council pay award with the basic allowance scheme, for the next four years; and
- x. Subject to agreeing with recommendation 1, the allowances for Independent Persons and Co-opted members be also indexed linked to the National Joint Council annual pay award for the next four years.

Councillor Ivan Powell left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

28. CONSTITUTION - UPDATES

Council considered a report by the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer to consider amendments to the constitution in relation to: functions of Audit and Governance Committee including recruitment and appointment of Independent Persons to Audit and Governance Committee; functions of Planning and Regulatory Committee; clarification of the Planning Code and functions rules; amendment to Fostering Panel membership to reflect practice; amendment to employment rules; amendment to the corporate scheme of delegation; amendment to enable consequential changes to be made to the Constitution; clarification to call-in; and role description for position of chair and vice chairperson.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor David Hitchiner.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That Council approves changes in the Constitution:

- a) in Appendix 1 to enable a change to the process for resolution of objections to the framework proposals, in the Budget and Policy Framework;
- b) in Appendix 2 to enable changes to Audit and Governance Committee functions including recruitment of the Council's independent persons;

- c) in Appendix 3 to make changes to clarify the rules in The Planning code and functions of the Planning and Regulatory Committee;
- d) in Appendix 4 to make changes to fostering panel membership to accurately reflect practice;
- e) in Appendix 5 to make changes to the corporate scheme of delegation to include provision for the statutory 'Qualified Person' under the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- f) in Appendix 6 to enable changes to the employment rules, relating to the delegation to the head of paid service to make appropriate interim arrangements when required;
- g) in Appendix 7 to enable consequential changes to be made to the Constitution;
- h) in Appendix 8 to clarify the rules relating to officer decisions and call in; and
- i) in Appendix 9 to include a role description for the chair and vice chair of a committee.

29. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS

Council considered a report to appoint (i) an independent person for the purposes of its arrangements for member Code of Conduct complaints and (ii) an independent expert to Audit & Governance Committee.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Frank Cornthwaite.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and were carried unanimously.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) Mary Severin is appointed as an independent person for the purposes of the Code of Conduct arrangements; and
- b) Kerry Diamond is appointed as independent expert to the Audit & Governance Committee.

30. LEADER'S REPORT

Council received and noted a report from the Leader of the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council on 26 July 2024.

Council questioned the Leader and the following actions were raised:

- In response to a question regarding the Children's Improvement Plan, to ensure that the website is updated with Phase 2 of the Plan;

- In response to a question regarding the recommissioning of the integrated community equipment service, to provide clarity regarding if the Hillside Centre will be supplied with equipment within the new contract. If the Hillside Centre will not be provided with equipment to clarify the current status of funding set aside for this purpose;
- In response to a question, to consider a method to record the feedback received and issues raised around council services at parish summits;
- In response to a question to provide an update on potential locations of EV charging points following the request for expressions of interest from local communities;
- In response to a question regarding the usability of EV charging points in Kington to ensure officers are fully testing initiatives before roll-out; and
- In response to a question regarding devolution, to engage proactively with the ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that Herefordshire Council does not lose out on central government funding for capital projects (e.g. key infrastructure projects) and any responsibilities that might be devolved down

31. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Motion – Flooding and Drainage

Councillor O'Driscoll proposed and introduced the motion.

Councillor James seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion. There was support across the chamber for the recommendations contained in the motion. During the course of the debate the following actions were raised:

- To consider the terms of the motion as a topic for scrutiny;
- In response to a question, to investigate and ensure that the council is discharging drainage board responsibilities with regard to the River Wye;
- In response to a question, to ensure that modelling of fluvial and pluvial flooding is co-ordinated across those responsible public bodies; and
- In response to a query, to investigate a blocked drain/gully function on the highways defect reporting tool.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: -

Recent heavy rainfall has highlighted significant drainage issues around the County. It has become evident the current maintenance schedule for drains, gullies and culverts needs major improvement and this motion calls upon the Executive Council to:

1) Ensure all drains, gullies and culverts that fall under the responsibility of Herefordshire Council are accurately mapped

2) Undertake an urgent programme of rectifying and repairing drains, gullies and culverts where they have been damaged by the recent unprecedented period of rainfall

3) Develop a full Countywide maintenance schedule that anticipates the likelihood of heavier rainfall in the future

4) Publish the maintenance schedule so that ward members, city, town and parish councils and local people can have confidence in the plans

5) Ensure that areas most at risk of flooding are prioritised for maintenance

The meeting ended at 12.13 pm

Chairperson

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Martin, Hereford	<p>I would like to understand why the council do not hold public meetings to debate the major decisions for Herefordshire?</p> <p>We have venues that can hold good numbers of the public who can in person scrutinise decisions the council make and voice their opinions on what they want to happen.</p> <p>Everything seems to be done behind closed doors and via controlled methods just like this where questions have to be emailed.</p> <p>This is not how it should be and I (as a taxpayer) demand change to this.</p>	Chairman of the Council
<p>Response: Thank you for your question. By law the council's formal meetings must be held in public, although there are some instances where the public and press can be excluded for discussions on confidential items (known as 'Part 2'). Council meetings, held in public, are open to the public to attend and, as you have pointed out, provided with the opportunity to ask questions. However, the scope of public questions is limited to and must relate to the function of the committee or a matter on the relevant agenda. Council meetings are primarily and principally meetings designed to transact council business.</p> <p>Once public questions have been concluded, there is no further provision for public involvement other than to witness the meetings as they happen. This is because there are limitations, set out in law, as to what business council committees can transact. The legislation regarding how local government operates allows only the elected representatives to take part in decisions and debate on items under consideration at formal council meetings. The relevant legislation, which also extend to the Parish tier of local government, can be found via the following link: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/schedule/2/part/1</p> <p>There are distinctions, in law, that differentiate formal council meetings being 'held in public' to that of public meetings. Public meetings are ways for people to come together to express their opinions, hear a public speaker or proposed plan, engage in shared learning about a topic, or work together to develop solutions. Public meetings do not have to follow any specific script or agenda, unlike formal council meetings. In the case of public meetings, whilst councillors and council officers may be participants, the council has no jurisdiction or decision-making powers at such meetings.</p>			
PQ 2	Mr Hill, Hereford	Further to the imminent changes widely expected to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at the end of this year, including likely reimposition of mandatory housing targets, will the Cabinet Member be able to provide Herefordshire Councils full response to the recent NPPF	Cabinet member environment

		consultation and Herefordshire Councils current five year housing land supply position for 2024 including implications for plan-making and decision-making?	
<p>Response: A response to the <i>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Reform Consultation</i> has been submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on behalf of Herefordshire Council via their online form. Please find in the following link a compilation of all the questions and answers, collated into one document, that form the Council's response; NPPF Reform Consultation response.</p> <p>The NPPF consultation set out proposed mandatory housing targets which takes a new approach based on a revised formula and data. This means the housing target for Herefordshire has increased from 773 dwellings per annum to 1,375 dwellings per annum. This would mean 27,500 dwellings over a 20-year plan period. The recent Draft Local Plan (March 2024) consultation set out a target for 16,100 homes over the plan period, so this is a significant proposed increase.</p> <p>A significantly changed housing target for Herefordshire, of the magnitude proposed, means that it is highly likely that the Council would need to go back to the start of plan-making and consult on a new strategy. However, the implications will only be understood once MHCLG has considered all consultation responses received, and the NPPF has been formalised thereafter. This is anticipated to be in January 2025 at the earliest.</p> <p>Work to determine the 5-Year Housing Land Supply is in progress and is due to be concluded shortly with a report expected to be published in the next 3-weeks.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question: Does the cabinet member consider that Herefordshire Council will need to repeat the Regulation 18 of the emerging Local Plan 2021-2041, and if so, does the cabinet member consider that the current envisioned spatial approach as set out in the emerging local plan need to be reconsidered back to both the current Policy RA2 identified settlements of the Core Strategy, given the likely change in meeting housing need or to relocate considerable concentration to around particularly Hereford if the current administration are intent on a 'growth corridor' around Hereford?</p>			
<p>Response from Cabinet Member Environment: The implications for the local plan and the plan-making process will only be fully understood once the NPPF has been formalised early next year. The stage in the plan-making process will be dependent upon the mandatory housing target set in the NPPF and the implications that this would have for the plan strategy. It would be premature to comment at this stage.</p>			
PQ3	Ms Martin, Hereford	The traffic model produced for the Southern Link Road by JMP Consultants in 2014 is now well beyond the five year threshold regarded as robust for Base Year validation and forecasting purposes and updated trip data and forecasting commissioned by AECOM is not yet available. With no up to date trip data, no updated modelling or forecasts, no up to date benefit/cost ratio, no business case and a clear lack of understanding among Members of the fundamental principles of transport planning science in relation to the effects of peri-urban road building on congested local networks, on what basis was the decision made to justify Herefordshire Council's £300m road building strategy as offering best value for money for the residents of Herefordshire?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure

		If AECOM's anticipated report is now available, where can it be accessed?	
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Response:

In its decision of 28 March 2024, Cabinet agreed to recommence progress of the Hereford Western Bypass to the west and south of Hereford. As part of this work the council will develop a revised business case for the western bypass to reflect contemporary legislation and needs.

The business case will consider a variety of options, including comparison with a do nothing and eastern crossing, to ensure that the proposal offers value for money before proceeding to the next stage and will reflect updated traffic modelling and consideration of the needs arising from a review of the masterplan for Hereford, local housing and employment requirements and Local Transport Plan such that any proposals progressed to the next stage for the western route reflect the holistic needs of the City and broader strategic transport demands.

It should be noted that the Aecom Commission for an updated model was for a tool that would enable all new infrastructure and development proposals to model their impacts upon rather than a report. A report on the traffic impact of the western bypass will be produced utilising this model as part of the development of the business case.

Supplementary question:

If AECOM's report, utilising an updated traffic model, forecasts marginal and unstable peak hour time savings on the A49 through the city, with a slight increase in overall journey times on the A49 compared to Base Year in the Do Something (build the roads) scenario, echoing JMP's conclusion that "...a nil detriment scenario is unlikely to be possible" *, will work on the Southern Link Road and Western Relief Road be halted or will the Council disregard the findings and press ahead regardless of clear evidence that the two schemes would not reduce congestion in the city?

* JMP Transport Strategy Phasing Study, Transport Strategy Review, 20/5/2014 - Section 3 Modelling Outputs @ 3.17

Response from Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure:

The strategic case for any new road scheme will necessarily need to consider a broad array of outcomes, as will be set out within the Council's Local Plan and forthcoming Local Transport Plan (LTP), and not on traffic growth against an historic base year. New infrastructure should be designed to meet the future needs of the area rather than just resolving existing issues. The recent draft Local Plan consultation set out a minimum of 5,600 new homes around Hereford with government proposals currently increasing the demand for new housing even further. The Local Plan also identifies 40-60ha of areas for new employment around the City.

All of this will place significant pressure on existing infrastructure meaning a do-nothing scenario is likely to show a significant detriment compared to a base year. It is considered that a new road around Hereford will free up space for more active travel measures within the city, enabling more sustainable modes for shorter trips and therefore any road proposals need to be considered holistically alongside other transport modes as will be set out within the council's LTP and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. A new strategic case will be developed, including modelling various scenarios, to ensure that the council invests into infrastructure that delivers the greatest benefits to Hereford and the broader strategic transport network.

PQ 4	Mr Milln, Hereford	<p>In 2016 the proposed Southern Link Road was budgeted at £27m out of a £35m project to include £8m complementary improvements to public and active travel known as the South Wye Transport Package.</p> <p>At Council on 26th July, Mrs Morawiecka, mindful of the c.£8m overspend on the City Link Road, asked how the inevitable overspend on the SLR would be addressed. The response claims the road could still be delivered at between £31 and £35m, though clearly without the package elements. Given it was the sustainable transport elements which provided the value for money when it was a 'package', how does the Council propose to convince anyone it has a business case supported by a robust cost benefit ratio (BCR) for the poorly performing, cost-spiralling SLR as a stand-alone road?</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: The Council continues to see any new road as part of a broader package of transport schemes that work together holistically to improve the way that people are able to move in and around Hereford and enable economic growth within the City. In January 2023, the council was successful in its bid for £19.9m of funding from the Levelling Up Fund to help deliver a broad package of transport and active travel measures within the City which will see many elements of the South Wye Transport Package delivered in parallel with the progression of the Southern Link Road.</p> <p>Costs for the delivery of the road have understandably risen in line with inflation since the initial proposal in 2016, in line with all national infrastructure works, however the benefits associated with a road will also have risen by a proportional amount and therefore increased costs are not anticipated to have a meaningful impact on the BCR.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>In attempting to use the £19.9m LUF grant won by the last administration for public and active travel in the City to justify the current administration's motor road ambitions through the countryside around it Herefordshire Council pursues an implausible chimera. The projects are separate in funding and objectives and contradictory in effect. Transport planners have long understood that motor road building increases traffic, while investment in sustainable alternatives relieves it, and of course the Council has failed to include pedestrian, cycle or bus infrastructure alongside its proposed Southern Link Road.</p> <p>That being so would work on the cost-spiralling, stand-alone SLR and WRR schemes be halted or would the Council carry on regardless, in the event a recalculated BCR confirms them to be poor value for money?</p>			
<p>Response from Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure:</p> <p>Proposals for the Southern Link Road were always considered synonymously with the South Wye Transport package, for which the LUF award has enabled many elements of the package to be brought forwards.</p> <p>New infrastructure should be designed to meet the future needs of the area rather than just resolving existing issues. The recent draft Local Plan consultation set out a minimum of 5,600 new homes around Hereford with government proposals currently increasing the demand for new housing even further. The Local Plan also identifies 40-60ha of areas for new employment around the City, which will place significant pressure on existing</p>			

infrastructure. A revised strategic case considering how this growth will be best mitigated and growth best enabled by new infrastructure will be undertaken and appropriate decisions on future infrastructure investment will be made based on the outcomes of that work.

PQ 5	Mr McGeown, Weobley	<p>Cabinet Member Children and Young People Responded to PQ2, 17 Sept 2024, C&YPSC, regarding doubling and then tripling of Section 47 investigation enquires between 2020 and 2022 to an eye watering 1,393 then continuing 1,000+ annually:</p> <p>“During 23/24 the Herefordshire rate of S47 was 75 per 10,000 children. The regional average rate being at 67 and rates of the other Inadequate local authorities being 83 and 71, so Herefordshire rates are reflective of this pattern.”</p> <p>But: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait Shows that the rate of S47s is much higher in Herefordshire (255.40 per 10,000 children) than its Statistical Neighbours.</p> <p>A most concerning number and one that’s been 250+ per 10,000 children for the last few years.</p> <p>So why such a fundamental difference between numbers perceived by Cabinet Member C&YP and real world data?</p>	Cabinet member children and young people
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Response:

Dear Mr McGeown, thank you for your further question and challenge.

With my apologies the data provided to your original question was a quarterly rate not the annual rate. The data reported was taken from the West Midlands Children’s Services Regional Performance Update which presents information by quarter, the data provided was for quarter 1 2024/25. This report does not provide the annualised rate.

The explanations regarding the increased rate of section 47 enquiries in the original question remain valid.

The inclusion of the comparator information was also quarterly data and sought to show how rates of section 47 per 10,000 in Herefordshire compared to regional local authorities who are in a similar position.

For clarity in quarter 1 2023/24 the rate of section 47 enquiries per 10,000 in Herefordshire was 100, the West Midlands regional average was 67 and the comparator authority rates were 88 and 106 respectively.

The rate in quarter 1 2024/25 in Herefordshire was 72. The West Midlands regional average was again 67 and the comparator authority rates were 71 and 83 respectively. As stated previously “ Herefordshire rates are reflective of this pattern” (given within the narrative of the original answer to PQ2 at CYPSC on 17 September 2024).

Supplementary question:

Your answer doesn't reveal the full picture, only a selected quarter.

I understand that "255.40 per 10,000 children" over four quarters is what's known as "key performance indicator" and helps determine what is satisfactory performance level.

So S.47 enquires:

2022 = 1,393,

2023 = 1,105,

2024 to date 18Aug = 561 ($\div 8 \times 12 = 841?$)

(https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/childrens_services_section_47_en?nocache=incoming-2730798).

and

30,100 children in Herefordshire (<https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/population/>).

Therefore divide by three and roughly:

2022 = 450+ per 10,000 children.

2023 = 350+ per 10,000 children.

2024 = 250+ per 10,000 children.

During the same period, neighbouring Worcestershire and your best practice partner, Leeds city council didn't have these KPI numbers, Nothing Like It, Nowhere Near.

So does the Cabinet Member C&YP find these numbers satisfactory?

Response from Cabinet Member Children and Young People:

We do not accept these numbers as "satisfactory". We have acknowledged they are high and the reasons that have affected that during the timeframes referenced. Other authorities each have their own journey and we have highlighted issues that have impacted here in Herefordshire. We are working, with partners, to understand why they remain high and this will enable us to address issues as we work to have a rate of S47 we would expect which are more in line with statistical neighbours.

PQ 6	Mrs McGeown, Weobley	At 30 July 2024, C&YPSC meeting The Corporate Director Children and Young People explained the 'Think Family' approach: "Think Family was a term applied to an existing practice, which involved widening focus from, for example, just a parent and their child, to bringing in the wider extended relatives and considering the impact they had on an individual's life. It involved using knowledge of an individual's wider family/network..."	Cabinet member children and young people
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		Now many loving Herefordshire families of good standing resent interference in their right to family life (Article 8,...there shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right...) and are horrified at this widening to extended relatives and the potential blighting of their lives. What checks and balances will be in place to prevent Herefordshire Council overreach and unwanted imposition of this on wider family networks?	
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Response:

Thank you for your question.

The "Think Family" approach is two way. It is one intended to ensure we support parent's and carers through their own networks to meet the needs they may have and/or to provide care for and meet the needs their child/children may have.

It also seeks to understand the needs of individuals in those networks that might be impacting on the parents or carers ability to parent, and as such identifying what support might be offered directly to that individual and/or the parent.

Only where we are involved in a statutory child protection or care proceedings process and acting on our duty to identify who and how best to meet a child's/children's needs would we engage wider family without the consent of a parent.

Specifically, but not exclusively, this will relate to where a child may be at risk of being received into care and where we need to ensure we have identified and considered alternative family members. Even then we would seek the views of the parent as to whether they feel this wider family engagement is appropriate or not and whether they feel it is in their child's best interest or not, and these views would be taken into account'.

You can also find further information on the Herefordshire Children Safeguarding Partnership website via the following link:

[Think Family - Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards and Partnerships](#)

PQ 7	Ms Price, Hereford	Following months of unresolved complaints to Hereford Council about the effect of LED lighting outside my home I need to re-attend the issue Environmental light pollution contributes to a range of adverse health outcomes including heart disease and premature death. Yet light remains a neglected pollutant, poorly understood and regulated. It can impact negatively on human health through disrupting sleep and circadian rhythms, which also leads to negative social and economic impacts DEFRA has the lead for regulating light pollution, but many of the levers to act on these pollutants lie in other departments eg the Department for Transport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Responsibility for acting on light pollution lies with local authorities, which come under DLUHC. When will Herefordshire Council step up and at least acknowledge complaints?	Cabinet member environment
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Response:

Thank you for your question, however, the Council's complaints team have reviewed our records and we do not appear to have received any formal complaints on this matter in the last 5 years from you. Please can you clarify if there is a specific question you would like Council to respond to?

PQ 8	Mr Morawiecka, Hereford	In the Leader's report Appendix 2 One of the Milestones for the year is "Complete "heads of terms" on land acquisition for phase 1 (Southern section of the western bypass)". Herefordshire Council went significantly over budget on land purchases for the City Link Road scheme. How much land and how many agreements with landowners will the Council need to secure to make the target and how much budget for the Southern Link Rd has been allocated for achieving it?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response:</p> <p>In order to construct the southern bypass the council would need to acquire 22.09Ha of land in agreements with 6 landowners.</p> <p>Earlier in the year Cabinet approved an estimated budget for land purchase. The council has subsequently procured a land agent who has been able to confirm that the budget is more than sufficient and enabled the council to revise the budget to a more realistic contemporary figure. It would be inappropriate to reveal the current available budget ahead of commercially sensitive negotiations.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>The active travel measures that were part of the South Wye Transport (SWTP) project generated many benefits for the original transport package, such as improving physical activity and helping offset the increased air and noise pollution from the road. Now that the Southern Link Road is a standalone road scheme, with no business case and no funding in place to cover the estimated £35million cost, how will Herefordshire Council purchase the land necessary if landowners are not interested in selling and fund these land acquisitions, estimated at £4 million at 2010 land prices in the original outline business case for the SWTP?</p>			
<p>Response from Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure:</p> <p>The Southern Link Road has always been considered as part of a package alongside active travel measures. The Council was successful in its bid for Levelling Up Funds that has allowed the council to progress many elements of the former South Wye Transport Package that was associated with the proposed new road.</p> <p>Earlier in the year the council committed a budget to enable progress to be made on the southern link road which included a budget for acquiring land. The Council has also procured a land agent who has confirmed that the budget is sufficient to meet current land valuations and has made initial contact with property holders or their land agents.</p>			

PQ 9	Ms Reid, Hereford	<p>The Chief Executive's report to the full Council meeting on 11 October 2024 includes:</p> <p>"The new plan [Children's Services Improvement Plan Phase 2] ... is supported by audit, performance indicators and more opportunities for children and families to tell us about their experiences, so we can clearly see where our actions are making a difference."</p> <p>The terms of reference for Parents for Change includes:</p> <p>"To gather the views and experiences of parents in specific areas of focus"</p> <p>"They [attendees] must not have an open complaint or ongoing issues relating to Children's Services."</p> <p>By excluding parents with an open complaint or ongoing issues, is Herefordshire Children's Services really receiving comprehensive feedback which is necessary to improve?</p>	Cabinet member Children and young people
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Parents for Change Group members were originally gained from people who had made a complaint to the Local Authority in the last two years and they co-produced the Terms Of Reference. The core aims and objectives were defined by the parents to foster an active partnership between parents and Children's Services. There was an expectation and commitment from all that no individual children or circumstances will be discussed and they must not have an open or ongoing complaint with the Service.</p> <p>The exclusions of parents with an open complaint has the intention to stop such meetings being consumed by individual cases rather than the wider aims of the group. There were also concerns that it could impact or duplicate the complaint process in this open forum. Once the issues are resolved parents who have made a complaint can join.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>The response stated:</p> <p>"The exclusions of parents with an open complaint [or ongoing issues] has the intention to stop such meetings being consumed by individual cases [and] impact or duplicate the complaint process."</p> <p>However, as the terms of reference includes:</p> <p>"there must be a clear commitment at each session that no individual children or circumstances will be discussed"</p> <p>this would <u>not</u> be the case.</p>			

“Mission Statement: The Families’ Alliance for Change [FAC] brings together parents and stakeholders to engage in honest, open and transparent dialogue which seeks to support improvements within Children’s Services both locally and nationally.”

Will Children’s Services engage with FAC either by regular meetings (eg monthly) with its members and/or having a FAC representative(s) attending Parents for Change group meetings?

Incidentally, I suggest the CYP Scrutiny Committee recruits a Families co-optee and a Families (SEND) co-optee.

Response from Cabinet Member Children and Young People

The value of the Parent and Carer voice was understood and families had been engaged in the establishment of the Parents for Change group. Other groups would not be engaged.

Appendix – [NPPF Reform – Herefordshire Council consultation response](#).

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr Dan Hurcomb, Bircher	<p>A number of areas in my Ward are prone to flooding. One, Orleton, has through the hard work of volunteers, undertaken proactive clearance work on the local brook to keep the water flowing and reduce potential for flooding. They have also developed a solution for flooding from the highway which I am pleased to say the Council's Highways Team have helpfully assisted. The work of these volunteers shows that there is no substitute for good proactive maintenance work and collaboration. Whilst the £445k the Council has allocated to local drainage work this year is welcomed, can the Leader confirm that under his leadership this Council will, where budgets allow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to invest additional money in drainage works; • Prioritise works in areas prone to flooding; and • Switch the emphasis from reactive clearing of assets to a schedule of proactive maintenance? 	Leader
<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for your question Cllr Hurcomb.</p> <p>In response to your first point, the Council recognises the importance of highway drainage and for 2024/25 a further £1 million has been allocated to this area as part of the Highway Infrastructure Investment programme, alongside the £445k Drainage Grant that you reference and that the Council has recently invited Parish and Town Councils to apply for so as to undertake small improvement schemes. I understand that the Highway Infrastructure Investment programme continues for a further two years and I will be supportive of the use of this money to continue improving drainage assets around the county.</p> <p>In response to your second point, whilst it is obviously important to maintain and improve existing assets where possible to ensure that they perform as well as they can, there is recognition that there will be rainfall events that lead to the capacity of drainage systems simply being exceeded, leading to flooding. In response to this, there is a role that the Council plays in helping to better protect properties that are at risk from flooding across Herefordshire, working with partners such as the Environment Agency to bid for funding from DEFRA to help introduce new flood defences or natural flood management techniques, or to install property flood resilience measures. The Council is committed to working with such partners to secure any available funding for schemes that will benefit residents and businesses in Herefordshire.</p> <p>As to your third point around gully cleansing, the Council already operates a cyclical inspection and cleansing programme of its highway drainage assets on the county's A and B road network and on a reactive basis on other roads. It is likely that the UK will see more frequent, intense weather</p>			

events in future years, which is something that the Council recognises and that forms part of its recently published Climate Change Adaptation Plan. As part of the preparation for the new Public Realm Contract, Officers are reviewing the arrangements that are required in the future, including gully emptying and drainage to ensure the service is fit for the future. As part of this work, I will ask Officers to explore the practical and financial implications of your suggestion.

Finally, I understand that details of known highway drainage assets are routinely captured and mapped on the Council's highway asset management system. Such assets include highway gullies (the pots on the side of the road), including the pipework associated with them that then leads to water company owned and maintained sewers. Examples of other assets that are captured and mapped include headwalls, trash screens and culverts.

As you have stated, the Council has recently invited Parish and Town Councils to apply for funding through a £445k Drainage Grant to review the existing drainage map of their area and use their local knowledge to log any assets which need adding to our system. Officers have been making arrangements for how this will happen and Parish and Town Councils who have applied for funding will be provided with this information when they are contacted with the outcome of their application.

MQ 2	Cllr Oliver, Saxon Gate	In respect of a planning permission granted to Herefordshire Council in 2010/11. The Council included a provision to carry out road improvements to Holme Lacy Road. Despite Amey drawing up outline proposals this provision has not been carried out. Will the Leader of the Council state that the current administration will bring forward proposals to rectify this omission.	Leader/Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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Response:

I can confirm that the Council has completed detailed design and intends to seek construction tenders for the improvement measures on the Holme Lacy Road. It has taken some time to do this given the need to tie these improvements into the wider local transport plan for the area but construction of the further active travel improvements funded from the Levelling Up Fund is planned to start in 2025/26 with an approximate 12 months construction period. We will communicate with residents as we get closer to the start of construction around the details of how the works will be delivered.

Supplementary question:

Can assurance be provided that the Holme Lacy traffic calming scheme will commence by 2026?

Response from the Leader:

The Cabinet Member transport and infrastructure will meet with Cllr Oliver to discuss.

MQ3	Cllr Engel, Golden Valley South	I can find no reference in the Leaders' Report to a discussion that has been taking place in private. This is the notion to merge Herefordshire with a larger county in order to be granted more money – with the accompanying threat that otherwise Herefordshire might “be left behind”. This would not necessarily mean a reunion with our old masters in Worcestershire, but one that would be likely to become known – officially or not – as Shropfordshire or maybe Slopfordshire. I	Leader
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		<p>realise this is in the very early stages. But bad ideas thrive in secret and we have seen this bad idea before.</p> <p>Before a county with a history that predates the Domesday Book disappears again can we have a written assurance that any such decision would be taken by the full unwhipped council after meaningful consultation with the population of Herefordshire.</p>	
<p>Response: Thank you for your question, Cllr Engel.</p> <p>Firstly, I want to address the suggestion that conversations are taking place privately. Categorically and for the public record this is not the case. There are clearly conversations happening across the upper tier of local authorities across England in response to the Government's new devolution policy initiative, which as Leader of this Council you would rightly expect me to be listening to. Every local authority, without a deal in place, is in the same position as Herefordshire Council; awaiting further details from Government before we proceed any further.</p> <p>Crucially, we await further details of the devolution framework but what we do know about devolution is that it is not about the merging of local authorities as you describe in your question.</p> <p>The Council will be tracking developments of the Devolution Bill as it passes through parliament and considering what opportunities devolution could mean for Herefordshire. As soon as further details are received, we will arrange for further all-member briefings to consider the options open to the Council.</p> <p>The chief executive's response, to the deputy prime minister, also confirmed that progress to further stages of Devolution will be subject to Full Council or Cabinet approval as appropriate.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>There was concern that the devolution process posed a risk that Herefordshire would become part of a larger regional organisation. It was asked whether Council would be given a free vote on the final proposal.</p>			
<p>Response from Leader of the Council:</p> <p>The full details of the devolution were not yet known. An expression of interest had been sent to central government which had been informed by discussions between the Group Leaders. The application to central government would focus on the Herefordshire area and negotiations with central government would be undertaken. The final proposal would be debated by full Council.</p>			
MQ 4	Cllr Harvey, Ledbury North	<p>Please would the Cabinet Member confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether or not he has now received a reply from Government confirming that government funding will be provided to undertake all the works necessary to complete the Southern Link Road (SLR) 	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether or not government and both MPs have confirmed their support for the works he has in train to progress the SLR and the Western Relief Road; • What his latest spend figures are for the money taken from council reserves that he is using to progress his plans, and their date; and • To what extent has he personally been, and continues to be, involved in the purchase of land blocks on and adjacent to his proposed route for the roads? 	
Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has received a response from DfT however, at this stage, they are unable to provide further clarification on the mechanism for drawing down upon the Local Transport Fund that was awarded to Herefordshire Council by the previous government. It is hoped that further information will be received before the end of the financial year. • Government have previously confirmed that it would be for local politicians to determine how to spend the money allocated within the Local Transport Fund and therefore have not indicated support one way or the other for the Southern Link Road. The Council has not yet sought explicit approval from the MPs for the scheme but will be doing so upon completion of a revised business case for a western by-pass. The MP for North Herefordshire has previously stated that they are not supportive of the scheme. • The council has currently spent £88,000 to progress the scheme since it was restarted. • I have had informal conversations with property owners. However and for the public record negotiations are quite properly only taking place between officers of the council or their land agent and property owners along the route of the Southern Link Road. 			
Supplementary question: Will the cabinet confirm that the Department for Transport require that the business case for the Southern Link Road demonstrates value for money as a standalone project?			
Response from cabinet member transport and infrastructure: The cabinet member would meet with Cllr Harvey to discuss.			
MQ 5	Cllr Hitchiner, Stoney Street	<p>The greedy and desperate tactics of previous Conservative administrations to housing growth have seen areas of the county hammered by predatory and unplanned development, while the county was unable to deliver on its unnecessarily high growth promises.</p> <p>Now the new Labour Government's clumsy one-size-fits-all approach to calculating housing targets has Herefordshire facing the grim prospect of an utterly undeliverable increase of more than 10,000 in the houses it is expected to magic up by 2041 to over 26,000.</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member responding 'How high?' to this instruction to 'Jump', or is she squaring up to defend our communities?</p>	Cabinet member environment

		Please would the Cabinet Member inform this council and the public of her intentions as regards these damaging proposals?"	
<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for your question. The 'predatory and unplanned development' to which you refer is most likely in reference to developments that have come forward as result of a planning appeals and sites that have come forward due to the Council being unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The Council has demonstrated a 5-year housing land supply for the last 3-years. This council remains in favour of plan led development as non-plan led development inevitably jeopardises the delivery of infrastructure and completely undermines the plan led system. As a result, in response to the NPPF consultation, the Council has made clear that where mandatory 'aspirational' targets are enforced, the 5-year housing land supply requirement should no longer apply.</p> <p>The mandatory housing targets as set on in the government's NPPF Consultation takes a new approach to setting housing targets based on a revised formula and data. This means the housing target set for Herefordshire has increased from 773 dwellings per annum to 1,375 dwellings per annum. This would mean 27,500 dwellings over a 20-year plan period. The recent Draft Local Plan (March 2024) consultation set out a target for 16,100 homes over the plan period, so this is a significant proposed increase.</p> <p>The Council's NPPF consultation response makes clear that this mandatory housing target is set too high for Herefordshire and does not reflect past build rates nor market demand. The response makes clear that the target set is 'highly aspirational' on the part of the government and raises concerns around the delivery of infrastructure to support such levels of growth, in addition to concerns in relation to environmental capacity and the ability to allocate further land for future growth.</p> <p>Furthermore, the response makes clear that should high mandatory targets be imposed, then the 5-year housing land supply requirement should be abolished as this should not be used against Council's for non-delivery when the targets have been set far in excess of anything that has been achieved previously. This is important and enforces the Council's view that we should not support changes to national planning guidance that would ultimately undermine plan-led decision making.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p> <p>The proposed housing targets were unattainable, there was a lack of capacity in the building trade, inadequate local services and insufficient land supply. Can the cabinet member provide assurance.</p>			
<p>Response from Cabinet Member Environment:</p> <p>The targets under the new methodology were not credible and were opposed. A response from Government to the council's consultation response was awaited. Without investment in infrastructure the targets were not achievable.</p>			

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting **6 December 2024**

Last month Remembrance services were held throughout the County and I am grateful to those Councillors who laid wreaths on behalf of the Council in the Market Towns. I attended services at the Garden of Remembrance at the Cathedral, St Peters Square and in Shobdon. The large turnouts testify to our communities’ appreciation of previous sacrifices and the importance of the peace we have all benefited from.



I arranged two visits for members to HARC our County Records Office, to see the excellent facilities we built there and the extensive collection of records of Herefordshire from the last 900 years. We have a statutory duty to look after these records and provide the opportunity for other documents to be safely housed for future generations.

I spoke recently at the Carers Rights Day event at the Kindle Centre which highlighted the important work of unpaid family carers in our county. We discussed the challenges of caring and the opportunities for support. I will forward you all their Disability Network News so

you are aware of some of the support organisations that are available in Herefordshire.

Since the last Council meeting I have attended the launch of the Wye Valley Trust Education centre, the 80th anniversary celebrations of Herefordshire Young Farmers, HWGTA apprentice awards, the reopening of Ross Market Hall and the County Fire presentation awards. I have also visited the Herefordshire Community Foundation, the new Veterans Centre in Widemarsh Street, and participated in Citizens Ceremonies.

Cllr Roger Phillips

Chief Executive's report to Full Council - December 2024

As we head towards the end of 2024, I'm struck by the solid progress we've made in consolidating our strategic direction and improving our services over the past year.

The Council Plan and its guiding principle, 'To deliver the best for Herefordshire in everything we do', has set a clear direction for our work and we've made considerable headway against the activities outlined in the corresponding delivery plan. This work is set to progress further over the coming year as we strive to meet our commitment to providing the best possible services for our residents and businesses.

The improvement of children's services has continued to be a key area of our focus. I'm pleased to confirm that Tina Russell will be extending her time with us as interim director of children's services until December 2025. We're already starting to see the impact of the actions outlined in the *Phase 2 Improvement Plan* following its implementation in October. There's confidence that it provides a clear direction for our improvement work and how we will measure progress. The plan is supported by a range of measures including audit and key performance indicators, alongside more opportunities for children and families to tell us about their experience of our services.

We now have more social workers and managers employed in our children's services on a permanent basis, providing greater stability and consistency. Our eye-catching 'Join us on our journey', recruitment campaign has received a positive response, and we've recently seen an increase in the number of skilled staff indicating they're interested in working here.

As I write, we're expecting the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of our services for children at risk of harm and exploitation outside the home, and there is due to be an inspection of our arrangements for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) during the first week of December. I'll provide an update when I can.

In November we announced we'd be investing an additional £4.23 million in our schools and facilities to create more places for children with SEND to meet growing demand across Herefordshire. The funding, from a Department for Education (DfE) High Needs Provision Capital Grant, will be used to fund the refurbishment of the Ryefield Centre in Ross-on-Wye to create a small special school for children with SEND, to expand Aylestone School, Leominster and Trinity primary schools to help children who need additional support, and to allow future plans for the county's Pupil Referral Unit. This is on top of £2.67 million for the expansion of the Language and Communication Centre (LCC) at Hampton Dene Primary School and improvements at Barrs Court School, both of which are already underway and will create additional specialist places.

The work to enhance Leominster town centre by restoring heritage features on shops and properties, and by improving the look and safety of roads and pavements, is now nearing completion. The recent cold snap delayed the final stages of work, however we are on track to be finished by mid-December. The improvements are thanks to the Leominster High Street Heritage Action Zone funding – a multi-million pound regeneration initiative supported by Historic England, delivered through Herefordshire Council and Leominster Town Council. The attractive new look and feel to the area around the High Street, Victoria Street, Iron Cross and Corn Street certainly enhances the town for retailers, residents and visitors, helping to boost trade.

Two brand new, state of the art, all-electric refuse collection vehicles have been delivered for use in Hereford as part of the new recycling and waste collection services contract between the council and FCC Environment. The two new vehicles are the first all-electric RCVs to join the fleet

in Herefordshire and will help reduce both air and noise pollution in the city. I'm pleased to report that the new recycling and waste collection services contract we introduced in September is performing well to date and we look forward to developing these services further over the coming year.

As the infrastructure work on the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) has now been completed the HEZ Board, private sector volunteers who have given their time and expertise, agreed that its original purpose is fulfilled and voted in the summer to close the company down. This was completed this month. Over the past 10 years the Hereford Enterprise Zone has delivered over 60 acres of land sold or developed, over 60,000 sqm of new workspace built, is home to over 100 businesses, significant new assets have been established such as Shell Store, Cyber Quarter and NMITE's specialist campus. Over two thirds of the land has been sold or developed with strong interest in the rest. Businesses have brought nearly 1,500 higher value jobs on occupation, and a further 1100 jobs in their specified growth plans. The HEZ will contribute a minimum of £29million retained business rates income to the council over its lifetime. This is a fantastic contribution and I thank the Board for all they achieved. We will take the lessons learnt and best practice from their work as we now focus on other employment land areas across the county.

We activated our Severe Weather Event Protocol in mid-November in response to sub-zero temperatures and snow. This triggers additional resource and proactive engagement with people who are particularly vulnerable in cold weather, including those who are sleeping rough to offer them shelter. We have seen tremendous work over the past year, both in early prevention and supportive intervention, which has led to a significant reduction in homelessness and long-term rough sleeping in the county.

The cold weather was then followed by some extremely wet weather, which led to our fifth flooding event of the year causing severe disruption for a number of households, businesses and roads users. Once again, the council's response teams were activated and worked closely with our partner Balfour Beatty Living Places and local communities to help minimise the impact. Two all-member summits on Flooding & Drainage were held on 24 October. Following these sessions we asked members to provide detailed feedback on the issues being experienced in their local communities and we are currently collating this information to help shape the action needed and our future plans.

The work to improve the condition of the county's roads is continuing, with a focus on resurfacing C and U roads during November and December. We are investing £8 million this financial year into resurfacing on the county's highway network. An additional £445,000 is being spent on improvements to the drainage network.

The renovation of Hereford's Shirehall took another step forward in October when design proposals were submitted that outline how the building will be transformed into a new library and learning centre, and versatile community space. One of Hereford's most historic buildings, the plans also include how the building's heritage features will be preserved. In the meantime, Hereford Library has made Hereford Town Hall its temporary home, offering users a convenient central location close to High Town.

The government's Devolution White Paper is expected to be published imminently. This will set out details of the reorganisation of local government, through the English Devolution Bill. Along with all other councils not currently part of a combined authority, Herefordshire Council was asked to submit an expression of interest in working with the government on a devolution deal. Our preference is devolution at a single county level. However, we are open to explore what it means for Herefordshire to work with our neighbours, subject to further information and details about the

devolution framework and future timescales. Progression to any further stages of devolution in Herefordshire will be subject to the appropriate approval by councillors.

Looking to 2025, we are expecting to see progress on a number of major developments. Work on the new transport hub in Hereford is due to start early in the New Year, work on the refurbishment of Shirehall will get underway and further steps are anticipated towards the exciting complete refurbishment of Hereford museum. The continued implementation of new IT systems within the council will support our staff and teams to work in a more integrated way, which in turn will make it easier for residents and businesses to access the services and information they need.

During the course of the next year our services and leadership will be reviewed by a number of outside agencies including two further Ofsted monitoring visits, a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of our adult social care services, as well as by the Local Government Association through their Corporate Peer Challenge programme. While inspection processes are never easy, these visits and inspections are a valuable way of ensuring we are delivering the best possible services.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to all council staff for their hard work and dedication this year. As well as continuing to deliver council services day to day, they have shaped and embraced new ways of working to ensure that our residents are provided with the best possible local services. Through this year's employee survey we know that an increasing proportion of staff would recommend the council as a place to work and expect to still be working here in a year's time. Their feedback highlights a commitment on an individual and team level to ensuring quality work and to making the changes needed to improve. The council's achievements would not be possible without their tireless efforts, professionalism and commitment. From frontline workers to those who contribute behind the scenes, every member of staff plays an essential role in helping to make Herefordshire a better place to live, work, and visit.

Wishing you all a restful and peaceful Christmas. I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



Title of report: Appointments to Council Committees and Outside Bodies

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 6 December 2024

Report by: Director of Governance and Law

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To exercise those powers reserved to Council to review the representation and determine the allocation of seats on committees and relevant outside bodies to political groups.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) the number of seats on each committee as set out at paragraph 9, and the allocation of those seats to political groups as set out in paragraph 10 be approved.

Alternative options

1. To draw up a different set of committees of a different size and composition with different terms of reference.
2. Council could decide to suspend the rules of proportionality for all committees and establish its own criteria for appointing members to its committees. This would require a vote to do so in respect of each committee to which these rules apply and without any member of the council voting against each proposal. However, such a blanket approach is inconsistent with the spirit of political proportionality within the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and would additionally require

Council to approve which councillor would take each individual seat on the relevant committees and outside bodies.

Key considerations

3. Council is required to review its political composition and how this is applied to appointments to committees and sub-committees of the Council.
4. Following the by-election for the Credenhill ward on 26 September 2024 and the Bishop's Frome and Cradley ward on 7 November 2024, the membership of the respective political groups at the council is shown in the table below:

Political Group	Membership
Conservative Group	21
Independents for Herefordshire	7
Liberal Democrats	12
The Green Party	9
True Independents	2
Total members in a Group	51
Labour	1*
Not aligned	1
<i>Total Members not in a group</i>	2
<i>Total</i>	53

* Under the rules concerning political groups in the constitution (section 2.2.23) a political group must have two or more members. Councillor Adam Spencer identifies as a Labour councillor but for the purposes of the political proportionality calculations is not aligned to any political group.

5. Council is under a duty to ensure membership of those committees and outside bodies covered by the relevant rules reflects the political composition of the council, as far as practicable, by allocating seats on the committees to political groups in proportion to their numerical strength on the council, whilst also maintaining a similar proportional balance of overall seat numbers. Once Council has approved the allocation of seats to political groups, it is a matter for the relevant political group leaders to confirm which of their members will take up any seats allocated to their group. Cabinet (as the executive), the licensing sub committee (a statutory committee) and the health and wellbeing board (with a membership set out by statute) are exempt from the requirements of political proportionality.
6. Any member who is not aligned to a group is not entitled to an allocation of seats within these rules. It is only where the proportionality calculations have been made and if any seats remain unallocated that Council may determine to appoint a member that is not a member of one of the political groups on the Council.
7. These rules of political proportionality should also be applied when allocating seats on outside bodies to which the council makes three or more appointments.
8. It is open to Council to suspend the rules of political proportionality in relation to allocation of seats on any particular body. To do so requires approval by Council with no member voting against the proposal; this is known as a *nem con* vote. Abstentions do not invalidate such a vote.
9. Council has agreed to establish committees of Council as listed in the table below. The terms of reference for these committees are set out within the functions scheme of the constitution currently published on the Council's website (link below):

Committee	Seats
Audit and governance	7
Children and young people scrutiny	7
Connected communities scrutiny	7
Employment panel	6
Environment and sustainability scrutiny	7
Health, care and wellbeing scrutiny	7
Planning and regulatory	15
Scrutiny management board	12
<i>Total seats</i>	<i>68</i>

10. The table below details the allocation of seats on the existing committees based on the political composition of the Council set out in paragraph 4 above. Following the by-elections for the Credenhill electoral ward and the Bishop's Frome and Cradley electoral ward, the political composition of the Council has changed. The change to the political composition of the council resulting from the Credenhill by-election has seen the increase in the number of councillors for the Independents for Herefordshire group, from 6 to 7 and a decrease in the number of councillors for the True Independents from 3 to 2. Following the Bishop's Frome and Cradley by-election the number of Green councillors remains at 9. The previous calculation of proportionality was on 24 May 2024. In a change to the allocation of seats on Council committees it is recommended that the Independents for Herefordshire gain a seat on the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) and the True Independents lose a seat on SMB to ensure political proportionality.

Committee	Conservative	Independents for Herefordshire	Liberal Democrats	Green	True Independents	Not Aligned	Total
Audit and Governance	3	1	2	1	0	0	7
Children and Young People Scrutiny	3	1	1	1	1	0	7
Connected Communities Scrutiny	3	1	2	1	0	0	7
Employment Panel	2	1	1	1	1	0	6
Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny	3	0	2	2	0	0	7
Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny	3	1	2	1	0	0	7
Planning and Regulatory	6	2	3	3	1	0	15
Scrutiny Management Board	5	2	3	2	0	0	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>68</i>

11. Those outside bodies to which three or more appointments are currently made on a politically proportionate basis are detailed in the table below (allocation of seats agreed at the annual meeting of Council on 24 May 2024), with the allocation of seats based on the political composition of the council as set out in paragraph 4 above. Following the by-elections for the Credenhill and Bishop Frome & Cradley electoral wards the political composition of the Council has changed. However, the change to the political composition of the Council is not of such significance to result in a necessary change to the allocation of seats on outside bodies as previously calculated at the annual meeting of Council on 24 May 2024.

Outside Body	Conservative	Independents for Herefordshire	Liberal Democrats	Green	True Independents	Not Aligned	Total
Fire Authority	2	1	1	1	0	1	6
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>

Community impact

12. In accordance with the council's adopted code of corporate governance, the council is accountable for how it uses the resources under its stewardship, including accountability for outputs and outcomes achieved. In addition the council has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies.

Environmental Impact

13. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to how it is in line with the council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

14. 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.
15. 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. As this is a decision on the administrative functions of the Council, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty. However the council will seek to ensure that all appointments are made fairly (i.e. no discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics) and that committee meetings are accessible to all, eg. with consideration to venue and timing.

Resource implications

16. Budgets are in place to cover allowances for any appointments made. All members appointed to positions of special responsibility and to committees are provided with training to enable them to fulfil their duties.

Legal implications

17. The council is required to ensure that the allocation of seats to committees is compliant with relevant rules contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made under that act.
18. In summary these regulations require that in determining the allocation of seats the council must apply the following four principles as far as reasonably practicable:
- a. that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - b. that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - c. subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority; and
 - d. subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
19. The proposals in this report comply with these requirements. Once the proportionate allocation of seats has been made in accordance with the above principles, if any seats remain unallocated Council may determine to appoint a not aligned grouped member to fill the seat.
20. Alternative arrangements not complying with these requirements as set out in paragraph 9 may be made so long as no member of the council votes against it.

Risk management

21.

	Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
	Failure to appoint to committees and outside bodies could render them inquorate or unlawful	The recommendations in this report mitigate these risks by proposing politically proportionate committees.
	Failure to obey the rules of political proportionality could similarly render a committee or body unlawful	The recommendations in this report mitigate these risks by proposing politically proportionate committees.

Consultees

22. No consultees.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 21/11/2024
Finance	Judith Tranmer	Date 22/11/2024
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 18/11/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 14/11/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 18/11/2024
Procurement	Not used	Date Not used
Risk	Jessica Karia	Date 19/11/2024
Approved by	Claire Porter	Date 28/11/2024



Addition of Capital Budget to deliver IT Capital Programme

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 6 December 2024

Report by: Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Budget and policy framework

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

To approve an amendment to the capital programme to utilise underspends to fund two new projects, at a total of £368,000 for delivery of IT projects within this financial year.

Recommendation(s)

That Council

- a) Approves the addition of £368,000 in this year's capital programme, to deliver Wide Area Network (WAN) replacement project and Telephony Contact Centre project, funded from underspends in the capital programme.

Alternative options

1. Do not request Telephony Contact Centre and Wide Area Network Replacement projects funding is reallocated within the 2024/25 capital programme, instead progress for approval in the 2025/26 capital programme. Not recommended. This would delay implementation and in turn delay opportunities to modernise our services and implement transformational change to customer services delivery. In addition, delaying implementation will incur additional licencing and supplier costs to the organisation for only a short period, which does not present a cost-effective solution.

Key considerations

2. The 2024/25 IT capital programme is on track to deliver a projected underspend in the region of £260,000. This underspend could be utilised to fund other IT projects. The underspend is as a result of projected costs within several IT projects being lower than anticipated.
3. Funding for the Wide Area Network Replacement project and Telephony Contact Centre project have been requested in the 2025/26 capital programme. This report requests to bring the funding for these projects into the 2024/25 capital programme.
4. The existing Wide Area Network contract ends in January 2025. Moving to a new solution will enable a revenue saving of £18,000 per annum in 2025/26, then £32,000 in subsequent years.
5. Renewing the contract with the current provider presents a risk of a significant price increase of 23% (approximately £39,500) as it is only a short-term renewal for one year. Inclusion within the 2024/25 capital programme means we can implement a new solution prior to the existing contract end date.
6. The existing contract for the Telephony Contact Centre ends on 31 March 2025. Bringing the decision forward will enable the council to transfer to a new provider and be live with like-for-like functionality before 31 March 2025. This will save £32,000 in licence fees and allow us to build on this foundational work to realise transformation opportunities to support customer service delivery. This will also negate the need to replace current hardware (which is nearing end of life) to run the current telephony platform

Community impact

7. The Council Plan 2024-2028 sets out the ambition to improve the way we use technology across our services by embracing new technologies, test ideas and develop a culture of innovation to improve services and deliver value for money. The council has committed to deliver against bold and ambitious plans and, by working with our local and national partners, we seek to continue to improve the quality of life for the county's residents. Connected to this plan is a stated aim to further embrace digital technology to save costs and improve flexible working practice and service delivery, which directly supports our Transformation priority.

Environmental Impact

8. 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.
9. Whilst this is a decision on back-office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

10. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
11. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision and it has been found to have low impact for equality.

12. Due to the potential impact of this decision being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However the following equality considerations should be taken into account when making a decision about this activity/project:
 - a. The introduction of new technology will have an impact on staff and service delivery. This impact will be taken into consideration within individual projects aligned to this decision, where applicable.

Resource implications

13. Spend the requested budget of £368,000 for the delivery of WAN Replacement project and Telephony Contact Centre project for delivery within the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.
14. Project delivery for both projects will be supported by Hoople Ltd as our technical partner and will be managed with oversight by Herefordshire Council's Project Management Office (PMO) and the Head of ICT and Digital.
15. The WAN Replacement project tender is being run via a further competition through the Crown Commercial Services 'HSCN Access Services DPS's RM3825' framework.
16. A compliant telephony contact centre procurement was completed by Hoople Ltd in December 2023 as part of the ICS wide Telephony procurement under the 'Better use of resource' programme, with procurement funded by NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB). This provides beneficial pricing based on the scale of procurement with take-up from all Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System Organisations. Mobilisation for the new contract is underway ready for contract commencement on 1st April 2025.
17. Delivery of the WAN Replacement and Telephony Contact Centre will present a combined revenue cost of £33,000 in 2025/26, due to the overlap of WAN contracts and net £17k saving from 2026/27.
18. The adjustment in the capital programme for these projects are funded from an underspend on existing IT projects and Fastershire, so there is no effect on the overall borrowing requirement.

Capital cost of project	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Contact Centre Telephony Replacement</i>	82				82
Wide Area Network (WAN) Replacement	286				286
TOTAL	368				368

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Corporate Funded Borrowing</i>	368				368
TOTAL	368				368

Revenue budget implications	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Costs/Savings on license fees</i>		33	(17)		
TOTAL		33	(17)		

19. The Outline Capital Business Cases for WAN Replacement and Telephony Contact Centre are included as appendices to this report.

Legal implications

20. There are no specific legal implications of this report. This report is to comply with capital budget setting requirements within the Constitution and in part, required as there is no ability for officers to vire any capital monies between capital projects even when the overall spend is within budget.

Risk management

21. The risks and opportunities associated with the options as outlined in this paper are as follows:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Risk – not approving the funding will place the authority at risk of not meeting the digital ambitions it has set out in the Council's Digital, Data & Technology strategy 2024 – 2028.	Whilst the Council can continue deliver its services, the ambitions and opportunities outlined within the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy will not be fully realised.
Risk – Not approving the WAN replacement will place the Council's service delivery and regulatory obligations at risk in the event of a network failure (as the current WAN solution is set to go out of support and maintenance in 2025).	The current contract could be extended beyond March 2025, but this is likely to incur additional cost which will not allow Herefordshire Council to achieve the revenue savings detailed above.
Risk - We will not take the opportunity to reduce the likelihood of a cyber-attack on our network as we will not embrace the opportunities a new WAN solution would provide to shore up our defences to this type of malicious activities.	Equipment and services can be replaced tactically on an as-required basis based on risk exposure. This will add complexity to any ongoing contract management and not allow for a holistic view of any security. It will prevent the Council from making key improvements to the network capacity in order to support the current working practices (hybrid on premises/cloud) as well as aspirational 'public cloud first' strategic objectives.
Opportunity – additional benefits to be realised sooner by implementing solutions at an earlier stage	Implementing the Telephony Contact Centre and completing the M365 roll out will allow Herefordshire Council to embrace and build new ways of working and provide a foundation for opportunities to modernise how we work, which in turn will have a positive impact on service delivery.

22. The above risks will be managed within the respective projects in line with project management processes.

Consultees

23. Political Group Consultation was held on 18th November 2024.
24. Councillors in attendance asked for reassurance that these projects, and the changes they will enable, will not remove access to staff and processes for customers who are digitally excluded, or for those who choose not to utilise digital communications with the Council. Assurance was given that, in line with the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy, services will be designed to encourage customers to choose the digital option first, but not to exclude those who do not.
25. It was confirmed that the decision is not predicated on staff savings.
26. Councillors were supportive of the decision.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Outline Strategic Business Case - WAN Replacement

Appendix 2 - Outline Strategic Business Case – Telephony Contact Centre

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 06/11/2024
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 08/11/2024
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 04/11/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 04/11/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 05/11/2024
Procurement	Carrie Christopher	Date 06/11/2024
Risk	Jessica Karia	Date 29/10/2024
Approved by	Rosie Thomas-Easton	Date 28/11/2024

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

WAN – Wide Area Network

M365 – Microsoft 365

PMO – Project Management Office

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services – ICT Services
Scheme Name	Wide Area Network (WAN) replacement
Budget Holder	- Director Resources

Project aims and objectives:

As the digital world is constantly changing, it's paramount to keep on top of technological developments to introduce digital modernisation into the Council. Replacing the Wide Area Network (WAN) at Herefordshire Council offers several strategic, operational, and financial benefits, helping ensure that the Council's network infrastructure is future-proof, secure, and able to meet the growing demands of modern service delivery

Our current aging WAN solution's support contract is set to expire in 2025. By modernising our existing solution this project will support the Council in delivering its strategic "ambition to digitalise and become a digital-first organisation." This will support the Council with its Digital Data & Technology strategy 2024 – 2028 & planning towards digital transformation by providing a stable, modern and fit for purpose infrastructure.

Project Aim:

The primary objective for the project is to support the council in making our network more secure (due to an ever-increasing likelihood of a Cyber-attack taking place) and reliable (as we provide infrastructure services to external partners and in order to support the increase post covid of the number of staff working from home or none council sites). Modernising our network platform will provide additional benefits such as enabling the introduction of AI Capabilities which will facilitate the council's broader goals i.e. improving public services, enhancing digital transformation, and achieving cost efficiency.

The change in system will enable an improved customer service delivery across HC, modern ways of working and will present new opportunities via digital technology which can be facilitated by a new WAN.

Procurement will be through an approved Local Government Procurement Framework (CCS or similar) to ensure that best value is demonstrated.

Commissioning and migration activity will be carried out by the Councils contracted IT provider – Hoople Ltd.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Implementation costs (including supplier and equipment costs)	286				
TOTAL	286				286
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	286				286
TOTAL					
Revenue budget implications					
New - £140k	-32	-32	-32	-32	
Current MLL Contract - £172k					
Overlap of contracts (migration parallel run)	50				
TOTAL	18	-32	-32	-32	

Benefits and risks:**Benefits: -**

An introduction of a replacement WAN will provide:

- **Faster Connectivity:** A modern WAN infrastructure can significantly enhance data transmission speeds, enabling faster access to applications, services, and information for both staff and residents.
- **Reduced Downtime:** Moving to a more reliable WAN can decrease network outages, leading to improved availability and continuity of critical council services.
- **Enhanced User Experience:** Improved network performance will enhance the user experience for staff, residents, and external stakeholders accessing Council services.
- **Cloud Integration:** A modern WAN supports seamless integration with cloud-based services, enabling the Council to leverage Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) applications and cloud storage effectively.
- **Remote and Flexible Working:** A replacement WAN solution would enable better remote access for our staff, supporting flexible working policies and improving productivity.
- **Smart City Initiatives:** Replacing the WAN lays the groundwork for future initiatives like Internet of Things (IoT) implementations, AI-powered services, and enhanced citizen engagement platforms.
- **Increased Network Security:** Newer WAN technology will come with built-in advanced security features like encryption, firewalls, and intrusion detection systems that protect Council data and networks from external threats.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** Replacing our WAN ensures that the Council remains compliant with data protection regulations such as GDPR and cybersecurity frameworks.
- **Centralized Security Management:** A replacement WAN supports more effective, centralised management of security policies across all locations, ensuring consistent security controls are applied throughout the network.
- **Lower Operational Costs:** Modern WAN solutions, offer optimized bandwidth usage and lower costs for long-distance data transfers, reducing overall operational expenses.
- **Scalability:** A modern WAN will provide scalable solutions, allowing the Council to easily expand services as needed without major investments in new hardware.

Risks:

- **Implementation Risks:** Potential challenges during deployment, such as integration issues with existing systems.

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services – ICT Services
Scheme Name	Contact Centre telephony replacement
Budget Holder	- Director Resources

Project aims and objectives:

As the digital world is constantly changing, it's paramount to keep on top of technological developments to introduce digital modernisation into the Council.

The Councils Digital Data & Technology strategy 2024 – 2028 states:

“We will introduce AI-powered telephony systems to provide instant responses to citizen queries, improving overall customer service”.

We will be replacing our aging contact centre telephony system as the current contract is set to expire in March 2025. By modernising our existing solution this project will support the Council in delivering its strategic “ambition to digitalise and become a digital-first organisation.” Alongside “Modernising our services with the introduction and development of new digital capabilities which will make the most of our data and technology to deliver improvements for our customers and our staff”

Project Aim:

To replace the telephony on our existing contact centre as the current contract ends March 2025 with a modern AI (Artificial Intelligence) powered system which will enhance service delivery, improve efficiency, and reduce operational costs.

The change in system will enable an improved customer service delivery across HC, modern ways of working, better data analytics, and will present new opportunities via digital technology which can be delivered by the new system whilst having the potential to transform the contacts centre's operations.

The project will enable the delivery and development of the outputs of the Customer Services Strategy and align to the transformation of service areas (where there is a customer services element), which will save staff time and create efficiencies/better ways of working.

The primary objective for the project is to support the council in making efficiencies in resources and obtaining better quality data to make better decisions. Moving our contacts centre on to a modern telephony system that has built in AI Capabilities will facilitate these ambitions as well as aligning to the council's broader goals, such as improving public services, enhancing digital transformation, and achieving cost efficiency.

Procurement will be through an approved Local Government Procurement Framework (CCS or similar) to ensure that best value is demonstrated.

Commissioning and migration activity will be carried out by the Councils contracted IT provider – Hoople Ltd.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Implementation costs	82				82
TOTAL	82				82
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	82				82
TOTAL	82				82
Revenue budget implications					
Cost of Licences		47	47	47	
(Current cost of licences)		-32	-32	-32	
TOTAL		15	15	15	45

Benefits and risks:**Benefits: -**

An introduction of the Contacts centre telephony replacement will provide:

- Operational Efficiency: Reduction in average call handling time, decrease in operational costs, and improved resource utilization.
- Cost Savings: Lower staffing costs due to automation of routine inquiries.
- Performance Metrics: Improvement in key performance indicators such as call resolution time, customer satisfaction scores, and call abandonment rates.
- Enhanced Customer Experience: Consistent, quick, and personalized service leading to higher customer satisfaction and trust in the council's services.
- Scalability: Ability to handle increased call volumes during peak times without compromising service quality.
- Data-Driven Insights: Real-time analytics and reporting to improve decision-making and continuously optimize contact centre operations.

Risks:

- Implementation Risks: Potential challenges during deployment, such as integration issues with existing systems or resistance to change from staff.



Title of report: Review of Polling Places, Polling Districts and Polling Stations 2024

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 6 December 2024

Report by: (Acting) Returning Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve a new scheme of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.

As a result of the review it is not proposed to make changes to polling districts or places but there are some changes to polling stations proposed.

Recommendation(s)

That:

1. no changes be made to the existing Polling Districts as set out in appendix A;
2. each entire Polling District continues to be designated as the Polling Place for that Polling District; and
3. Changes to the following polling stations (as detailed at appendix A) be approved:
 - a. Eardisley Village Hall to replace Kinnersley Castle
 - b. Whitney-on-Wye Village Hall to replace Winforton Community Hall
 - c. Scouts Corner to replace Hereford City Platoon Detachment Building
 - d. Aylestone Court Hotel to replace Bryngwyn Court
 - e. The Point 4 to replace St Barnabus Church
 - f. Bartestree Village Hall to replace The Gateway Centre
 - g. The Burgage Hall added as an additional station in Ledbury North
 - h. Ledbury Rugby Club added as an additional station in Ledbury South
 - i. The Belmont Community Centre to replace The Three Counties Hotel
 - j. Redhill Residents Association to replace Pentwyn Court
 - k. Marden Links Parish Hub to replace Marden Community Centre
 - l. Hereford Football Club to replace The Courtyard Theatre

Alternative options

The decision maker can, if they wish, approve alternative options for polling districts, polling places and polling stations. This is not recommended as there is no supporting evidence to propose any additional changes.

Key considerations

The Representation of the People Act 1983 makes every relevant council in the UK responsible for dividing its area into polling districts for UK parliamentary elections and for keeping the polling districts, polling places and polling stations under review.

The council has a duty to divide its area into Polling Districts and to designate Polling Places for each district and review these every 5 years.

The review is designed to see if the polling districts and polling places in Herefordshire are arranged to suit the needs of voters and covers the following:

- I. the polling district boundaries within each ward in the borough
- II. the location of the polling places and stations in each polling district
- III. the access to each polling station

The council cannot review the ward boundaries or the constituency boundaries.

The following statutory considerations have been taken into account when drawing up the proposals:

- I. The council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- II. The council must seek to ensure that so far as reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.
- III. Every parish shall be a separate polling district.
- IV. Ideally the polling place should be in its own polling district.

This report and the appendices set out the council's final proposals for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as a result of this review. We have suggested some changes to our polling stations following responses received during our consultation period where various individuals and organisations were notified of the review. We have undertaken site visits to review all new venues which will either better accommodate the number of electors in the particular area, replace a venue which is no longer available for our use, or will provide improved facilities.

Community impact

Legislation stipulates that ideally there should be no more than 2,500 electors to each polling place.

The council is also required by law to ensure that all electors have access to such reasonable facilities for voting as practicable in the circumstances. The review has aimed to ensure that this requirement has been complied with as far as possible.

The proposals have been mindful of further development in the county.

Equality duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is part of the Equality Act 2010. It says: All public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- c) foster good relations between different groups

It is a statutory requirement that as far as it is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled. This review has taken this requirement into

account. However, due to the ages of some of the buildings used and their location, disabled access is not always as effective as the council would normally require and whilst we ensure that there are suitable transport links, no access issues due to main/busy roads, adequate parking facilities in as many venues as possible, some special measures have had to be put in place when the building is used as a polling place, an example of which is the provision of wheel chairs and mobile ramps.

Resource implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the review. The costs of hiring and equipping venues for voting are met from within existing budget provision. Costs incurred in relation to European, General, Parish, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and Neighbourhood Planning Referendums are recouped from the relevant funding body; where elections/referendums are running concurrently the costs are apportioned as appropriate.

Legal implications

The Electoral Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and places. This review must have been started and must be completed between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive).

Schedule A1 to the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983 sets out the steps the council must follow in undertaking any review. The Consultation period took place between 16 September 2024 and 18 November 2024 and details of those consulted are attached as appendix B to this report. The council was required to seek representations from such persons it thought had particular expertise in relation to:

- I. Access to premises or
- II. Facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

Such persons must have been given the opportunity to make representations and to comment on the proposals being put forward. Disability awareness groups were therefore, invited to take part in this review. In addition, any elector could make proposals to the council.

Risk management

Failure to agree a polling scheme would mean that the council would be in breach of its statutory duty and electors would be disadvantaged. The Electoral Commission could intervene and direct the council to alter any polling arrangements that arise from the review and the commission could make these alterations itself if the council failed to respond.

Consultees

During the review any elector in a constituency located in wholly or partly in the council's area may make representations. By law, representations must also be sought from such persons as the council considers to have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability; such persons must also have an opportunity to make representations and comment on the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations. The council invited responses via email from Hereford Mencap, Royal National College for the blind (RNCB), National Autistic Society, Disability Rights UK, Herefordshire Scope, Herefordshire Mind and Active Hereford & Worcester.

Copies of the council's proposals and the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations were published on the elections section of the council's website with the option to complete an online survey. The link to these proposals was distributed via the council's social media and they were also available for inspection at Blueschool House, Hereford Town Hall and libraries in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington, Ross-on-wye and Bromyard, where an email and postal address was provided to submit comments.

The council also sought representations on its proposals and the (Acting) Returning Officer's representations via email from a number of groups. The following were offered the opportunity to respond via email or by using the online survey on our website:

- I. Local Political Party Agents
- II. Herefordshire Councillors
- III. Parish Clerks
- IV. Parish Councils (via parish clerks)
- V. Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
- VI. Herefordshire MOD
- VII. Herefordshire Council employees (via Herefordshire Council's internal newsletter), Occupational Health, Customer Services offices and libraries
- VIII. Talk Community hubs

Details of the responses received during the consultation period are listed in Appendix B, Electoral Services have provided comment where necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A – Final recommendations

Appendix B – Representations / summary of consultation responses

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 21/11/2024
Finance	Judith Tranmer	Date 21/11/2024
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 19/11/2024
Communications	Luenne featherstone	Date 18/11/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 19/11/2024
Procurement	Claire Powell	Date 18/11/2024
Risk	Jessica Karia	Date 19/11/2024

Approved by	Claire Porter	Date 21/11/2024
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Appendix A

The final recommendations for Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Eardisland	AR01N	North Herefordshire	Eardisland	Eardisland Village Hall Eardisland Leominster	No change
Knill	AR02N	North Herefordshire	Knill/Titley	Titley Village Hall Titley Kington	No change
Lyonshall	AR03N	North Herefordshire	Lyonshall	Lyonshall Memorial Hall Lyonshall Kington	No change
Pembridge	AR04N	North Herefordshire	Pembridge	Pembridge Parish Hall Bearwood Road Pembridge	No change
Rodd, Nash & Little Brampton	AR05N	North Herefordshire	Rodd, Nash & Little Brampton/Titley	Titley Village Hall Titley Kington	No change
Shobdon	AR06N	North Herefordshire	Shobdon	Shobdon Village Hall Shobdon School Shobdon Leominster	No change
Staunton-on-Arrow	AR07N	North Herefordshire	Staunton-on-Arrow/Titley	Titley Village Hall Titley Kington	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Titley	AR08N	North Herefordshire	Titley	Titley Village Hall Titley Kington	No change
Hereford (Aylestone Hill)	AY01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Whitehouse Community Hub (No 1) Whittern Way Hereford	No change
Hereford (Aylestone Hill)	AY02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Whitehouse Community Hub (No 1) Whittern Way Hereford	No change
Hereford (Aylestone Hill)	AY03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Whitehouse Community Hub (No 2) Whittern Way Hereford	No change
Dormington	BA01N	North Herefordshire	Dormington /Tarrington	The Lady Emily Community Centre The Old School Tarrington, Hereford	No change
Fownhope	BA02N	North Herefordshire	Fownhope	Fownhope New memorial Hall Ross Road Fownhope Hereford	No change
Hampton Bishop	BA03N	North Herefordshire	Hampton Bishop	Hampton Bishop Village Hall Hampton Bishop Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Mordiford	BA04N	North Herefordshire	Mordiford	Mordiford C of E Primary School Mordiford Hereford	No change
Stoke Edith	BA05N	North Herefordshire	Stoke Edith /Tarrington	The Lady Emily Community Centre The Old School Tarrington Hereford	No change
Tarrington	BA06N	North Herefordshire	Tarrington	The Lady Emily Community Centre The Old School Tarrington Hereford	No change
Belmont Rural	BE01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Belmont Rural	Northolme Community Centre (No 1) Northolme Road Hereford	No change
Belmont Rural	BE02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Belmont Rural	Northolme Community Centre (No 2) Northolme Road Hereford	No change
Aconbury	BH01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Aconbury /Little Birch	Little Birch Village Hall Barrack Hill Little Birch Hereford	No change
Garway	BH02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Garway	Garway Community Centre Garway Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Harewood	BH03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Harewood/Much Birch	Much Birch Community Hall Much Birch Hereford	No change
Little Birch	BH04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Little Birch	Little Birch Village Hall Barrack Hill Little Birch Hereford	No change
Llandinabo	BH05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llandinabo /Much Birch	Much Birch Community Hall Much Birch Hereford	No change
Llanwarne	BH06S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llanwarne/Much Birch	Much Birch Community Hall Much Birch Hereford	No change
Much Birch	BH07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Much Birch	Much Birch Community Hall Much Birch Hereford	No change
Orcop	BH08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Orcop	Orcop Parish Hall Orcop Hereford	No change
Pencoyd	BH09S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Pencoyd/St Weonards	St Weonards Village Hall St Weonards Hereford	No change
St Weonards	BH10S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	St Weonards	St Weonards Village Hall St Weonards Hereford	No change
Tretire with Michaelchurch	BH11S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Tretire with Michaelchurch /St Weonards	St Weonards Village Hall St Weonards Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Croft & Yarpole	BI01N	North Herefordshire	Croft & Yarpole	Yarpole Parish Hall Green Lane Yarpole Leominster	No change
Eye, Moreton & Ashton	BI02N	North Herefordshire	Eye, Moreton & Ashton	Cawley Hall Eye Leominster	No change
Eyton	BI03N	North Herefordshire	Eyton/Luston	Luston Methodist Church Luston Leominster	No change
Kingsland	BI04N	North Herefordshire	Kingsland	Kingsland Coronation Hall Kingsland Leominster	No change
Lucton	BI05N	North Herefordshire	Lucton/Yarpole	Yarpole Parish Hall Green Lane Yarpole Leominster	No change
Luston	BI06N	North Herefordshire	Luston	Luston Methodist Church Luston Leominster	No change
Orleton	BI07N	North Herefordshire	Orleton	Orleton Village Hall Milbrook Way Orleton Ludlow	No change
Richards Castle	BI08N	North Herefordshire	Richards Castle	Richards Castle Village Hall Richards Castle Ludlow	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Acton Beauchamp	BM01N	North Herefordshire	Acton Beauchamp/Stanford Bishop	Stanford Bishop Village Hall Melvern Road Worcester	No change
Avenbury	BM02N	North Herefordshire	Avenbury /Bishops Frome	Bishops Frome Village Hall Village Green Bishops Frome Worcester	No change
Bishops Frome	BM03N	North Herefordshire	Bishops Frome	Bishops Frome Village Hall Village Green Bishops Frome Worcester	No change
Bishops Frome	BM04N	North Herefordshire	Bishops Frome	Bishops Frome Village Hall Village Green Bishops Frome Worcester	No change
Cradley	BM05N	North Herefordshire	Cradley	Cradley Village Hall Rectory Lane Cradley Malvern	No change
Cradley	BM06N	North Herefordshire	Cradley	Storrige Village Hall Storrige Malvern	No change
Evesbatch	BM07N	North Herefordshire	Evesbatch/Stanford Bishop	Stanford Bishop Village Hall Malvern Road Worcester	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Stanford Bishop	BM08N	North Herefordshire	Stanford Bishop	Stanford Bishop Village Hall Melvern Road Worcester	No change
Hereford (Bobblestock)	BS01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Westfields Hall (No 1) Highmore Street Hereford	No change
Hereford (Bobblestock)	BS02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Westfields Hall (No 2) Highmore Street Hereford	No change
Brockhampton	BT01N	North Herefordshire	Brockhampton	Brockhampton Primary School Bringsty Worcester	No change
Bromyard (East)	BT02N	North Herefordshire	Bromyard	Bromyard Public Hall (No 1) Rowberry Street Bromyard	No change
Bromyard (East)	BT03N	North Herefordshire	Bromyard	Bromyard Public Hall (No 1) Rowberry Street Bromyard	No change
Edvin Loach & Saltmarshe	BT04N	North Herefordshire	Edvin Loach & Saltmarshe	Saltmarshe & District Hall Tedstone Wafre Bromyard	No change
Linton	BT05N	North Herefordshire	Linton/Brockhampton	Brockhampton Primary School Bringsty Worcester	No change
Norton	BT06N	North Herefordshire	Norton/Brockhampton	Brockhampton Primary School Bringsty Worcester	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Tedstone Delamere	BT07N	North Herefordshire	Tedstone Delamere/Saltmarshe	Saltmarshe & District Hall Tedstone Wafre Bromyard	No change
Tedstone Wafre	BT08N	North Herefordshire	Tedstone Wafre/Saltmarshe	Saltmarshe & District Hall Tedstone Wafre Bromyard	No change
Upper Sapey	BT09N	North Herefordshire	Upper Sapey	Upper Sapey Village Hall Cross Roads Upper Sapey Worcester	No change
Whitbourne	BT10N	North Herefordshire	Whitbourne	Whitbourne Village Hall Whitbourne Worcester	No change
Wolferlow	BT12N	North Herefordshire	Wolferlow/Upper Sapey	Upper Sapey Village Hall Cross Roads Upper Sapey Worcester	No change
Wolferlow	BT13N	North Herefordshire	Wolferlow/Upper Sapey	Upper Sapey Village Hall Cross Roads Upper Sapey Worcester	No change
Bromyard (West)	BW01N	North Herefordshire	Bromyard	Bromyard Methodist Church Hall 20 New Road Bromyard	No change
Bromyard (West)	BW02N	North Herefordshire	Bromyard	Bromyard Public Hall (No 2) Rowberry Street Bromyard	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Almeley	CA01N	North Herefordshire	Almeley	Almeley Village Hall Almeley Hereford	No change
Brilley	CA02N	North Herefordshire	Brilley	Brilley & Michaelchurch Village Hall Brilley Hereford	No change
Brobury with Monnington-on-Wye	CA03N	North Herefordshire	Brobury with Monnington-on-Wye/Staunton-on-Wye	Staunton-on-Wye Village Hall Staunton-on-Wye Hereford	No change
Eardisley	CA04N	North Herefordshire	Eardisley	Eardisley Village Hall Eardisley Hereford	No change
Kinnersley	CA05N	North Herefordshire	Kinnersley	Eardisley Village Hall Eardisley Hereford	New polling station established as the previous venue (Kinnersley Castle) is no longer suitable
Letton	CA06N	North Herefordshire	Letton/Kinnersley	Eardisley Village Hall Eardisley Hereford	New polling station established as the previous venue (Kinnersley Castle) is no longer suitable
Norton Canon	CA07N	North Herefordshire	Norton Canon	Norton Canon Village Hall Kitty's Lane Norton Canon Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Sarnesfield	CA08N	North Herefordshire	Sarnesfield/Norton Canon	Norton Canon Village Hall Kitty's Lane Norton Canon Hereford	No change
Staunton-on-Wye	CA09N	North Herefordshire	Staunton-on-Wye	Staunton-on-Wye Village Hall Staunton-on-Wye Hereford	No change
Whitney-on-Wye	CA10N	North Herefordshire	Whitney-on-Wye	Whitney-on-Wye Village Hall Whitney-on-Wye Hereford	New polling station established to replace Winforton Community Hall as it is a more suitable venue
Willersley & Winforton	CA11N	North Herefordshire	Willersley & Winforton/Whitney-on-Wye	Whitney-on-Wye Village Hall Whitney-on-Wye Hereford	New polling station established to replace Winforton Community Hall as it is a more suitable venue
Hereford (Central)	CE01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	St Johns Methodist Church Hall St Owen Street Hereford	No change
Hereford (Central)	CE02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	St Johns Methodist Church Hall St Owen Street Hereford	No change
Hereford (Central)	CE03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Scouts Corner Eign Road Hereford	New polling station established to replace Hereford City Platoon Detachment Building due to better accessibility

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (College)	CL01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Aylestone Court Hotel 2 Aylestone Hill Hereford	New polling station established to replace Bryngwyn Court due to better suitability
Hereford (College)	CL02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Point 4 Venns Lane Hereford	New polling station established to replace St Barnabus Church Centre which is no longer available.
Breinton	CR01N	North Herefordshire	Breinton	Breinton Village Hall Breinton Hereford	No change
Credenhill	CR02N	North Herefordshire	Credenhill	Credenhill Community Hall Station Road Credenhill Hereford	No change
Stretton Sugwas	CR03N	North Herefordshire	Stretton Sugwas	Stretton Sugwas Village Hall Stretton Sugwas Hereford	No change
Ballingham	DH01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ballingham /Little Dewchurch	Little Dewchurch Village Hall Little Dewchurch Hereford	No change
Bolstone	DH02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Bolstone/Little Dewchurch	Little Dewchurch Village Hall Little Dewchurch Hereford	No change
Dinedor	DH03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Dinedor	Dinedor Village Hall Church Road Dinedor Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hentland	DH04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hentland/Sellack (Llangarron Ward)	Sellack Village Hall Sellack Ross-on-Wye	No change
Holme Lacy	DH05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Holme Lacy	Holme Lacy Village Hall Holme Lacy Hereford	No change
Little Dewchurch	DH06S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Little Dewchurch	Little Dewchurch Village Hall Little Dewchurch Hereford	No change
Lower Bullingham (Lower Bullingham)	DH07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Lower Bullingham (Lower Bullingham)/Dinedor	Dinedor Village Hall Church Road Dinedor Hereford	No change
Lower Bullingham (Withy Brook)	DH08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Lower Bullingham (Withy Brook)	The Forge 161 Holme Lacy Road Hereford	No change
Hereford (Eign Hill)	EH01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Rose Garden Ledbury Road Hereford	No change
Hereford (Eign Hill)	EH02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Rose Garden Ledbury Road Hereford	No change
Hereford (Eign Hill)	EH03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Tupsley Scout & Guide HQ Wellington Place Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Blakemere	GN01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Blakemere/Preston-on-Wye	Preston-on-Wye Village Hall Blakemere Road Preston-on-Wye	No change
Bredwardine	GN02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Bredwardine/Moccas	Moccas Village Hall Moccas Hereford	No change
Clifford	GN03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Clifford	Clifford Community Centre Pen-Y-Park Clifford Hereford	No change
Cusop	GN04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Cusop	Cusop Village Hall Lower Mead Cusop Hay-on-Wye	No change
Dorstone	GN05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Dorstone	Dorstone Village Hall Dorstone Hereford	No change
Moccas	GN06S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Moccas	Moccas Village Hall Moccas Hereford	No change
Peterchurch	GN07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Peterchurch	Peterchurch Village Hall Closure Place Peterchurch Hereford HR2 0RS	No change
Preston-on-Wye	GN08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Preston-on-Wye	Preston-on-Wye Village Hall Blakemere Road Preston-on-Wye	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Tyberton	GN09S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Tyberton /Preston-on-Wye	Preston-on-Wye Village Hall Blakemere Road Preston-on-Wye	No change
Abbeydore	GS01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Abbeydore	Abbeydore Village Hall Abbeydore Hereford	No change
Bacton	GS02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Bacton/Abbeydore	Abbeydore Village Hall Abbeydore Hereford	No change
Craswall	GS03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Craswall/Michaelchurch Escley	Escley & District Sports Pavillion Michaelchurch Escley Hereford	No change
Dulas	GS04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Dulas/Ewyas Harold	Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall Ewyas Harold Hereford	No change
Ewyas Harold	GS05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ewyas Harold	Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall Ewyas Harold Hereford	No change
Kentchurch	GS06S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Kentchurch/Ewyas Harold	Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall Ewyas Harold Hereford	No change
Llancillo	GS07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llancillo /Ewyas Harold	Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall Ewyas Harold Hereford	No change
Llanveynoe	GS08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llanveynoe/Longtown	Longtown Village Hall Longtown Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Longtown	GS09S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Longtown	Longtown Village Hall Longtown Hereford	No change
Michaelchurch Escley	GS10S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Michaelchurch Escley	Escley & District Sports Pavillion Michaelchurch Escley Hereford	No change
Newton	GS11S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Newtown/Michaelchurch Escley	Escley & District Sports Pavillion Michaelchurch Escley Hereford	No change
Rowlstone	GS12S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Rowlstone/Michaelchurch Escley	Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall Ewyas Harold Hereford	No change
St Margaret's	GS13S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	St Margaret's/Vowchurch	Vowchurch & Turnastone Village Hall Vowchurch Hereford	No change
Turnastone	GS14S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Turnastone/Vowchurch	Vowchurch & Turnastone Village Hall Vowchurch Hereford	No change
Vowchurch	GS15S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Vowchurch	Vowchurch & Turnastone Village Hall Vowchurch Hereford	No change
Walterstone	GS16S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Walterstone/Longtown	Longtown Village Hall Longtown Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (Greyfriars)	GY01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Railway Club (GWRSA) No 1 Barton Yard Hereford	No change
Hereford (Greyfriars)	GY02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Railway Club (GWRSA) No 2 Barton Yard Hereford	No change
Bartestree	HG01N	North Herefordshire	Bartestree	Bartestree Village Hall Bartestree Hereford	New polling station established to replace The Gateway Centre due to unavailability of venue
Lugwardine	HG02N	North Herefordshire	Lugwardine/Bartestree	Bartestree Village Hall Bartestree Hereford	No change
Preston Wynne	HG03N	North Herefordshire	Preston Wynne/Withington	Withington Village Hall Coppice Close Withington Hereford	No change
Westhide	HG04N	North Herefordshire	Westhide/Withington	Withington Village Hall Coppice Close Withington Hereford	No change
Withington	HG05N	North Herefordshire	Withington	Withington Village Hall Coppice Close Withington Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Bodenham	HM01N	North Herefordshire	Bodenham	Bodenham Parish Hall Bodenham Hereford	No change
Bredenbury	HM02N	North Herefordshire	Bredenbury	Bredenbury Village Hall Bredenbury Bromyard	No change
Collington	HM03N	North Herefordshire	Collington/Edwyn Ralph	Edwyn Ralph Village Hall Edwyn ralph Bromyard	No change
Docklow & Hampton Wafre	HM04N	North Herefordshire	Docklow & Hampton Wafre/Pudleston	Pudleston Village Hall Pudleston Leominster	No change
Edwyn Ralph	HM05N	North Herefordshire	Edwyn Ralph	Edwyn Ralph Village Hall Edwyn ralph Bromyard	No change
Ford & Stoke Prior	HM06N	North Herefordshire	Ford & Stoke Prior	Stoke prior Village Hall Stoke prior Leominster	No change
Grendon Bishop	HM07N	North Herefordshire	Grendon Bishop/Bredenbury	Bredenbury Village Hall Bredenbury Bromyard	No change
Hampton Charles	HM08N	North Herefordshire	Hampton Charles/Pudleston	Pudleston Village Hall Pudleston Leominster	No change
Hatfield & Newhampton	HM09N	North Herefordshire	Hatfield & Newhampton/Pudleston	Pudleston Village Hall Pudleston Leominster	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Humber	HM10N	North Herefordshire	Humber	Humber Parish Hall Risbury Leominster	No change
Little Cowarne	HM11N	North Herefordshire	Little Cowarne	Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall Pencombe Bromyard	No change
Pencombe with Grendon Warren	HM12N	North Herefordshire	Pencombe with Grendon Warren	Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall Pencombe Bromyard	No change
Pudleston	HM13N	North Herefordshire	Pudleston	Pudleston Village Hall Pudleston Leominster	No change
Thornbury	HM14N	North Herefordshire	Thornbury/Edwyn Ralph	Edwyn Ralph Village Hall Edwyn ralph Bromyard	No change
Wacton	HM15N	North Herefordshire	Wacton/Bredenbury	Bredenbury Village Hall Bredenbury Bromyard	No change
Hereford (Hinton & Hunderton)	HN01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Scout Hut Blackmarston Road Hereford	No change
Hereford (Hinton & Hunderton)	HN02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Riverside Primary School Belmont Avenue Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (Hinton & Hunderton)	HN03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hinton Community Centre Ross Road Hereford	No change
Holmer & Shelwick	HO01N	North Herefordshire	Holmer & Shelwick	Holmer Church Parish Centre (No 1) Holmer Hereford	No change
Hereford (Victoria Park)	HO02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Point 4 Venns Lane Hereford	Changed to a dual polling station to also house PD CL02S
Hereford (Racecourse)	HO03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Holmer Church Parish Centre (No 2) Holmer Hereford	No change
Bosbury	HP01N	North Herefordshire	Bosbury	Bosbury Parish Hall Bosbury Ledbury	No change
Coddington	HP02N	North Herefordshire	Coddington/Bosbury	Bosbury Parish Hall Bosbury Ledbury	No change
Colwall	HP03N	North Herefordshire	Colwall	Wyche Free Church Jubilee Drive Upper Colwall Malvern	No change
Colwall	HP04N	North Herefordshire	Colwall	Colwall Village Hall Mill Lane Colwall Malvern	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Mathon	HP05N	North Herefordshire	Mathon	Mathon Parish Hall Lane End Mathon Malvern	No change
Ganerew	KB01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ganarew	Whitchurch & Ganarew Memorial Hall Old Monmouth Road Whitchurch Ross-on-Wye	No change
Goodrich	KB02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Goodrich	Goodrich Village Hall Goodrich Ross-on-Wye	No change
Walford	KB03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Walford	Walford Village Hall (Robert Pashley Memorial Hall) Walford Ross-on-Wye	No change
Welsh Bicknor	KB04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Welsh Bicknor/Goodrich	Goodrich Village Hall Goodrich Ross-on-Wye	No change
Whitchurch	KB05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Whitchurch	Whitchurch & Ganarew Memorial Hall Old Monmouth Road Whitchurch Ross-on-Wye	No change
Hereford (Kings Acre)	KG01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Cricket Centre (Bulmers Bowling Club) Bredon Drive Hereford	Venue unchanged but no longer a dual station with KG02S

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (Kings Acre)	KG02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Cricket Centre (Bulmers Bowling Club) Bredon Drive Hereford	Venue unchanged but no longer a dual station with KG01S
Huntington	KT01N	North Herefordshire	Huntington/Kingswood	Kingswood Village Hall Kingswood Kington	No change
Kington	KT02N	North Herefordshire	Kington	Kington Town Football Club 33 Mill Street Kington	No change
Kington Rural	KT03N	North Herefordshire	Kington	Kington Town Football Club 33 Mill Street Kington	No change
Kington Rural	KT04N	North Herefordshire	Kingswood	Kingswood Village Hall Kingswood Kington	No change
Lower Harpton	KT05N	North Herefordshire	Lower Harpton/Kington	Kington Town Football Club 33 Mill Street Kington	No change
Ledbury (North)	LEN01N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Ledbury Community Hall Lawnside Road Ledbury	No change
Ledbury (North)	LEN02N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	The Burgage Hall Church Lane Ledbury	New polling station established in the polling district to replace Ledbury Community Centre for LEN02N to better serve the

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
					electorate
Wellington Heath	LEN03N	North Herefordshire	Wellington Heath	Christ Church Church Lane Wellington Heath Ledbury	No change
Donnington	LES01N	North Herefordshire	Donnington/Ledbury	Ledbury Rugby Club Ross Road Ledbury	New polling station established for LES01N to replace Holy Trinity Church due to an increased electorate
Eastnor	LES02N	North Herefordshire	Eastnor	Eastnor Cricket Club Pavilion Eastnor Ledbury	No change
Ledbury (South)	LES03N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Holy Trinity Church New Street Ledbury	No change
Ledbury (South)	LES04N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Ledbury Rugby Club Ross Road Ledbury	New polling station established to replace LES04N Holy Trinity Church due to an increased electorate
Ledbury (West)	LEW01N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Ledbury Swimming Pool Lawnside Road Ledbury	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Ledbury (West)	LEW02N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Ledbury Primary School Long Acres Ledbury	No change
Ledbury (West)	LEW03N	North Herefordshire	Ledbury	Ledbury Primary School Long Acres Ledbury	No change
Leominster (East)	LOE01N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Green Lane Methodist Church Green Lane Leominster	No change
Leominster (East)	LOE02N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Leominster Sports & Social Club No 1 South Street Leominster	No change
Brimfield	LON01N	North Herefordshire	Brimfield	Brimfield Village Hall Brimfield Ludlow	No change
Kimbolton	LON02N	North Herefordshire	Kimbolton	Kimbolton Village Hall Kimbolton	No change
Leominster (North)	LON03N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Bridge Street Sports Centre Bridge Street Leominster	No change
Leysters	LON04N	North Herefordshire	Leysters	Leysters & Middleton-on-the-Hill Parish Hall Leysters Leominster	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Little Hereford	LON05N	North Herefordshire	Little Hereford	Little Hereford Parish Hall Little Hereford Ludlow	No change
Middleton-on-the-Hill	LON06N	North Herefordshire	Middleton-on-the-Hill	Leysters & Middleton-on-the-Hill Parish Hall Leysters Leominster	No change
Leominster (South)	LOS01N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Leominster Sports & Social Club No 2 South Street Leominster	No change
Leominster (South)	LOS02N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Leominster Sports & Social Club No 2 South Street Leominster	No change
Leominster (South)	LOS03N	North Herefordshire	Ivington	Ivington Village Hall Ivington Leominster	No change
Monkland & Stretford	LOS04N	North Herefordshire	Monkland & Stretford	Monkland Village Hall The Common Monkland Leominster	No change
Leominster (West)	LOW01N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Barons Cross Community Centre 1 Far Meadow Road Barons Cross Leominster	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Leominster (West)	LOW02N	North Herefordshire	Leominster	Barons Cross Community Centre 1 Far Meadow Road Barons Cross Leominster	No change
Bridstow	LR01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Bridstow	Bridstow Parish Hall Bridstow Ross-on-Wye	No change
Llangarron	LR02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llangarron	The Garron Centre Llangarron Ross-on-Wye	No change
Llangarron	LR03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llangarron/Llangrove	Llangrove Village Hall Llangrove Ross-on-Wye	No change
Llanrothal	LR04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Llanrothal	Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Village Hall Welsh Newton Monmouth	No change
Marstow	LR05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Marstow/Llangarron	The Garron Centre Llangarron Ross-on-Wye	No change
Peterstow	LR06S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Peterstow	St Peter's Hall St Peter's Church Peterstow Ross-on-Wye	No change
Sellack	LR07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Sellack	Sellack Village Hall Sellack Ross-on-Wye	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Welsh Newton	LR08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Welsh Newton	Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Village Hall Welsh Newton Monmouth	No change
Adforton	MT01N	North Herefordshire	Adforton/Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Aymestrey	MT02N	North Herefordshire	Aymestrey	Aymestrey Village Hall Aymestrey Leominster	No change
Brampton Bryan	MT03N	North Herefordshire	Brampton Bryan/Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Buckton & Coxall	MT04N	North Herefordshire	Buckton & Coxall/Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Burrington	MT05N	North Herefordshire	Burrington/Leintwardine	Leintwardine Village Hall & Community Centre Leintwardine Craven Arms	No change
Byton	MT06N	North Herefordshire	Byton/Kinsham	The Arkwright Hall Kinsham Presteigne	No change
Combe	MT07N	North Herefordshire	Combe/Kinsham	The Arkwright Hall Kinsham Presteigne	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Downton	MT08N	North Herefordshire	Downton/Leintwardine	Leintwardine Village Hall & Community Centre Leintwardine Craven Arms	No change
Elton	MT09N	North Herefordshire	Elton/Wigmore	Wigmore Village Community Centre Ford Street Wigmore Leominster	No change
Kinsham	MT10N	North Herefordshire	Kinsham	The Arkwright Hall Kinsham Presteigne	No change
Leinthall Starkes	MT11N	North Herefordshire	Leinthall Starkes/Wigmore	Wigmore Village Community Centre Ford Street Wigmore Leominster	No change
Leintwardine	MT12N	North Herefordshire	Leintwardine	Leintwardine Village Hall & Community Centre Leintwardine Craven Arms	No change
Lingen	MT13N	North Herefordshire	Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Pipe Aston	MT14N	North Herefordshire	Pipe Aston/Wigmore	Wigmore Village Community Centre Ford Street Wigmore	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
				Leominster	
Stapleton	MT15N	North Herefordshire	Stapleton/Kinsham	The Arkwright Hall Kinsham Presteigne	No change
Walford, Letton & Newton	MT16N	North Herefordshire	Walford, Letton & Newton/Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Wigmore	MT17N	North Herefordshire	Wigmore	Wigmore Village Community Centre Ford Street Wigmore Leominster	No change
Willey	MT18N	North Herefordshire	Willey/Lingen	Lingen Village Hall Lingen Bucknell	No change
Hereford (Newton Farm)	NF01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Belmont Community Centre No 1 Eastholme Avenue Belmont Hereford	Now a dual station with NF02S
Hereford (Newton Farm)	NF02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	The Belmont Community Centre No 2 Eastholme Avenue Belmont Hereford	New polling station established to replace The Three Counties Hotel as this venue is no longer available. Now a dual station with NF01S

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Brampton Abbots	OG01N	North Herefordshire	Brampton Abbots	Brampton Abbots Village Hall Brampton Abbots Ross-on-Wye	No change
Brockhampton with Much Fawley	OG02N	North Herefordshire	Brockhampton with Much Fawley	Brockhampton Parish Hall Brockhampton Hereford	No change
Foy	OG03N	North Herefordshire	Foy/Brampton Abbots	Brampton Abbots Village Hall Brampton Abbots Ross-on-Wye	No change
Foy	OG04N	North Herefordshire	Foy/Brampton Abbots	Brampton Abbots Village Hall Brampton Abbots Ross-on-Wye	No change
How Caple	OG05N	North Herefordshire	How Caple/Brockhampton	Brockhampton Parish Hall Brockhampton Hereford	No change
Kings Caple	OG06N	North Herefordshire	Kings Caple	Kings Caple Village Hall (The Old School) Kings Caple Hereford	No change
Much Marcle	OG07N	North Herefordshire	Much Marcle	Much Marcle Memorial Hall Much Marcle Ledbury	No change
Sollers Hope	OG08N	North Herefordshire	Sollers Hope/Brockhampton	Brockhampton Parish Hall Brockhampton Hereford	No change
Upton Bishop	OG09N	North Herefordshire	Upton Bishop	Upton Bishop Millennium Hall Upton Bishop Ross-on-Wye	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Woolhope	OG10N	North Herefordshire	Woolhope	Woolhope Parish Hall Berryfield Woolhope Hereford	No change
Yatton	OG11N	North Herefordshire	Yatton/Brockhampton	Brockhampton Parish Hall Brockhampton Hereford	No change
Aston Ingham	PE01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Aston Ingham	Aston Ingham Village Hall Aston Ingham Ross-on-Wye	No change
Hope Mansell	PE02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hope Mansell	Hope Mansell Village Hall School Lane Hope Mansell Ross-on-Wye	No change
Lea	PE03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Lea	Lea Village Hall Lea Ross-on-Wye	No change
Linton	PE04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Linton	Linton Village Hall Linton Ross-on-Wye	No change
Weston-under-Penyard	PE05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Weston –under-Penyard	Weston-under-Penyard Village Hall, Weston-under-Penyard, Ross-on-Wye	No change
Burghill	QU01N	North Herefordshire	Burghill	Burghill Simpson Hall Burghill Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Dinmore	QU02N	North Herefordshire	Dinmore/Wellington	Wellington Community Hall Wellington Hereford	No change
Hope-under-Dinmore	QU03N	North Herefordshire	Hope-under-Dinmore	Hope-under-Dinmore Village Hall Hope-under-Dinmore Leominster	No change
Newton	QU04N	North Herefordshire	Newton/Hope-under-Dinmore	Hope-under-Dinmore Village Hall Hope-under-Dinmore Leominster	No change
Pipe & Lyde	QU05N	North Herefordshire	Pipe & Lyde/Moreton-on-Lugg	Moreton-on-Lugg Village Hall No 1 Moreton-on-Lugg Hereford	No change
Wellington	QU06N	North Herefordshire	Wellington	Wellington Community Hall Wellington Hereford	No change
Hereford (Red Hill)	RH01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Redhill Residents Association No 1 Green Croft Hereford	New polling station established to replace Pentwyn Court Residents Lounge as this venue is no longer suitable. Now a dual station with RH02S.
Hereford (Red Hill)	RH02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Redhill Residents Association No 2 Green Croft Hereford	Now a dual station with RH01S

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Ross (East)	ROE01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Larruperz Community Centre Grammar School Close Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (East)	ROE02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Tudorville & District Community Centre Walford Road Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (East)	ROE03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Larruperz Community Centre Grammar School Close Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (North)	RON01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Ross Swimming Pool Red Meadow Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (North)	RON02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Ross Swimming Pool Red Meadow Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (North)	RON03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Ross-on-Wye Rugby Club Abbotts Close Greytree Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (West)	ROW01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Ross-on-Wye Bowling Club (No 1) Old Maids Walk Ross-on-Wye	No change
Ross (West)	ROW02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Ross-on-Wye	Ross-on-Wye Bowling Club (No 2) Old Maids Walk Ross-on-Wye	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (Saxon Gate)	SG01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Putson Baptist Church 41 Web Tree Avenue Hereford	No change
Hereford (Saxon Gate)	SG02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Saxon Hall Hoarwithy Road Putson Hereford	No change
Bishopstone	SS01N	North Herefordshire	Bishopstone/Bridge Sollers	The New Bridge Community Centre St Andrews Church Bridge Sollers Hereford	No change
Bridge Sollers	SS02N	North Herefordshire	Bridge Sollers	The New Bridge Community Centre St Andrews Church Bridge Sollers Hereford	No change
Byford	SS03N	North Herefordshire	Byford/Bridge Sollers	The New Bridge Community Centre St Andrews Church Bridge Sollers Hereford	No change
Clehonger	SS04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Clehonger	Clehonger Village Hall Birch Hill Road Clehonger	No change
Eaton Bishop	SS05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Eaton Bishop	Eaton Bishop Village Hall Eaton Bishop Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Kenchester	SS06N	North Herefordshire	Kenchester/Bridge Sollers	The New Bridge Community Centre St Andrews Church Bridge Sollers Hereford	No change
Madley	SS07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Madley	Madley Village Hall Madley Hereford	No change
Mansel Gamage	SS08N	North Herefordshire	Mansel Gamage/Bridge Sollers	The New Bridge Community Centre St Andrews Church Bridge Sollers Hereford	No change
Marden	SW01N	North Herefordshire	Marden	Marden Links Parish Hub Walkers Green Marden Hereford	New polling station established to replace Marden Community Centre which has limited availability
Moreton-on-Lugg	SW02N	North Herefordshire	Moreton-on-Lugg	Moreton-on-Lugg Village Hall No 2 Moreton-on-Lugg Hereford	No change
Sutton	SW03N	North Herefordshire	Sutton St Nicholas	Sutton St Nicholas Village Hall Sutton St Nicholas Hereford	No change
Ashperton	TC01N	North Herefordshire	Ashperton	Ashperton Village Hall Ashperton Ledbury	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Aylton	TC02N	North Herefordshire	Aylton/Putley	Putley Parish Hall Putley Green Ledbury	No change
Canon Frome	TC03N	North Herefordshire	Canon Frome/Ashperton	Ashperton Village Hall Ashperton Ledbury	No change
Castle Frome	TC04N	North Herefordshire	Castle Frome/Ashperton	Ashperton Village Hall Ashperton Ledbury	No change
Eggleton	TC05N	North Herefordshire	Eggleton/Ashperton	Ashperton Village Hall Ashperton Ledbury	No change
Little Marcle	TC06N	North Herefordshire	Little Marcle/Putley	Putley Parish Hall Putley Green Ledbury	No change
Moreton Jeffries	TC07N	North Herefordshire	Moreton Jeffries/Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate Village Hall Burley Gate Hereford	No change
Much Cowarne	TC08N	North Herefordshire	Much Cowarne/Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate Village Hall Burley Gate Hereford	No change
Munsley	TC09N	North Herefordshire	Munsley	Munsley & District Womens Institute Hall Munsley Ledbury	No change
Pixley	TC10N	North Herefordshire	Pixley/Munsley	Munsley & District Womens Institute Hall Munsley Ledbury	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Putley	TC11N	North Herefordshire	Putley	Putley Parish Hall Putley Green Ledbury	No change
Stretton Grandison	TC12N	North Herefordshire	Stretton Grandison/Ashperton	Ashperton Village Hall Ashperton Ledbury	No change
Yarkhill	TC13N	North Herefordshire	Yarkhill	Yarkhill Village Hall Yarkhill Hereford	No change
Felton	TC14N	North Herefordshire	Felton/Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate Village Hall Burley Gate Hereford	No change
Ocle Pychard	TC15N	North Herefordshire	Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate Village Hall Burley Gate Hereford	No change
Stoke Lacy	TC16N	North Herefordshire	Stoke Lacy	Stoke Lacy Village Hall Stoke Lacy Bromyard	No change
Ullingswick	TC17N	North Herefordshire	Ullingswick/Ocle Pychard	Burley Gate Village Hall Burley Gate Hereford	No change
Weston Beggard	TC18N	North Herefordshire	Weston Beggard/Yarkhill	Yarkhill Village Hall Yarkhill Hereford	No change
Hereford (Tupsley)	TU01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hampton Park United Reform Church No 1 Hampton Dene Road Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Hereford (Tupsley)	TU02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hampton Park United Reform Church No 2 Hampton Dene Road Hereford	No change
Birley with Upper Hill	WE01N	North Herefordshire	Birley with Upper Hill	The Bush Inn Bush Bank Hereford	No change
Brinsop & Wormsley	WE02N	North Herefordshire	Brinsop & Wormsley/Mansel Lacy	Mansel Lacy Community Hall St Michaels Church Mansel Lacy Hereford	No change
Canon Pyon	WE03N	North Herefordshire	Canon Pyon	Canon Pyon Parish Hall Canon Pyon Hereford	No change
Dilwyn	WE04N	North Herefordshire	Dilwyn	Dilwyn Cedar Hall Dilwyn Hereford	No change
Kings Pyon	WE05N	North Herefordshire	Kings Pyon	Canon Pyon Parish Hall Canon Pyon Hereford	No change
Kings Pyon	WE06N	North Herefordshire	Kings Pyon/Weobley	Canon Pyon Parish Hall Canon Pyon Hereford	No change
Mansel Lacy	WE07N	North Herefordshire	Mansel Lacy	Mansel Lacy Community Hall St Michaels Church Mansel Lacy Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Weobley	WE08N	North Herefordshire	Weobley	Weobley Village Hall Gadbridge Road Weobley Hereford	No change
Yazor	WE09N	North Herefordshire	Yazor/Mansel Lacy	Mansel Lacy Community Hall St Michaels Church Mansel Lacy Hereford	No change
Hereford (Whitecross)	WH01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Musical Theatre Company (Side Hall) 152 Whitecross Road Hereford	No change
Hereford (Whitecross)	WH02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Westfaling Street Scout Hut Westfaling Street Hereford	No change
Hereford (Widemarsh)	WI01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Football Club Edgar Street Hereford	New polling station established to replace The Courtyard Theatre due to suitability of the rooms available to us
Hereford (Widemarsh)	WI02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	Hereford Football Club Edgar Street Hereford	New polling station established to replace The Courtyard Theatre due to suitability of the rooms available to us
Hereford (Widemarsh)	WI03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Hereford	St Marys Church (Main Hall) Grandstand Road Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Allensmore	WM01S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Allensmore	Pateshall Hall Allensmore Hereford	No change
Callow	WM02S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Callow	Callow Parish Hall Callow Hereford	No change
Dewsall	WM03S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Dewsall/Callow	Callow Parish Hall Callow Hereford	No change
Grafton	WM04S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Grafton/Callow	Callow Parish Hall Callow Hereford	No change
Haywood	WM05S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Haywood/Callow	Callow Parish Hall Callow Hereford	No change
Kilpeck	WM07S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Kilpeck	Kilpeck Village Hall Kilpeck Hereford	No change
Kingstone	WM08S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Kingstone	Kingstone & Thruxton Village Hall Green Lane Kingstone Hereford	No change
Much Dewchurch	WM09S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Much Dewchurch	Much Dewchurch Memorial Hall Church View Much Dewchurch Hereford	No change

Polling District (PD)	PD Code	Constituency	Polling Place	Polling Station	Proposals
Thruxton	WM11S	Hereford & South Herefordshire	Thruxton/Kingstone	Kingstone & Thruxton Village Hall Green Lane Kingstone Hereford	No change

Appendix B

Representations/Summary of Consultation Responses made during the consultation period of 16 September – 18 November 2024 for the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Ward/Polling District	Polling Place	Comments	Returned via	Sender
Munsley & Pixley Parishes	Munsley WI	<p>As only having a small electorate I feel the parishes of Pixley and Munsley could move to either Ashperton Hall or Putley Hall to cast their votes. All voters arrived by car rather than walked so to drive a further two miles at most would not be a problem, and there is no disabled access at Munsley WI Hall. Also for the staff the kitchen is poorly equipped.</p> <p>Where possible we try to have a polling station in every polling district to best serve the electorate. There are already several polling districts at Ashperton and Putley Village Halls so we would not look to merge these and increase them. A temporary ramp is installed at Munsley for disabled access purposes.</p>	Online response	Presiding Officer at Elections
Eign Hill Ward	All	No objections made	Online response	Member of the public
Bromyard Parish	Brockhampton primary School	<p>Stop using Brockhampton School as a polling station. The school has to be closed to children for the day and they are missing valuable time at school and parents are having to take time of work to accommodate. It doesn't appear to be used in large numbers - surely there is another alternative for those who do go there to vote</p> <p>We have looked at this venue in the past and there are no other available/suitable venues in the area. We are able to use schools free of charge for the purpose of taking polls under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule1 Part III. We give them almost a years notice for national elections. We are not making any changes at the moment but will continue to look for an alternative venue.</p>	Online response	Member of the public

Ward/Polling District	Polling Place	Comments	Returned via	Sender
Ross North Ward	Ross Rugby Club	Ross Rugby Club is too far for many residents of St Mary's Garden Village. Recommendation is using St Mary's Garden Village Community Hub <i>We visited St Mary's Garden Village Hub and it is a suitable venue for the use of taking a poll. However, the Rugby club is more central to the majority of the electorate in this polling district so we are not changing it at the moment. We would look to use St Mary's as a contingency venue if the Rugby Club was not available.</i>	Online response	Member of the public
College Ward, CL02S	St Barnabus Church Cantre	Polling district CL02S. The current and proposed polling stations are outside the district and a considerable distance from many of the properties in the district. There is not a suitable community building within the district but I would like to suggest that a porta cabin or similar is installed in the area behind College Green stores for voting. This is highly central to the district and has ample parking. I suggest this will increase turnout in the district. <i>We will not look to use a porta cabin due to the high cost and logistics of getting this in place. The proposed polling station at The Point 4 has already been appointed as a temporary station and works well, it is close to the polling district and has ample parking.</i>	Online response	Councillor
Burghill Parish	Burghill Simpson Hall	Accessibility in rural area by car only. No alternative polling stations recommended <i>The Simpson Hall is a central venue in this polling district, we are not looking to change this venue at this time</i>	Online response	Member of the public
Wellington Heath Parish	Christ Church	We currently go to the Parish church to vote....and my wife and I are happy with this. Alternative suggested Wellington Heath Memorial Hall - but only if the church was not suitable. <i>We are not looking to change this venue, it is suitable and has good availability. The memorial hall would be contacted if this venue was unavailable</i>	Online response	Member of the public
Whitecross Ward	Hereford Musical Theatre	We are part of the Whitecross ward, which means going to vote at the Tomkins Centre, however we are only 100m from the Scout Hut, which would be much easier for us.	Online response	Member of the public

Ward/Polling District	Polling Place	Comments	Returned via	Sender
Dorstone Parish	Dorstone Village Hall	Village Hall is perfect for the election polling station	Online response	Councillor
Dorstone Parish	Dorstone Village Hall	No objections made	Online response	Councillor
Dorstone Parish	Dorstone Village Hall	Happy with Dorstone Village Hall	Online response	Member of the public
Ledbury North, Ledbury South, Ledbury West	List all polling stations in Ledbury	Please could the following locations be considered as possible polling station locations for these wards - following agreement from their owners - St Katherine's Hall (Ledbury Parish Church), Pavilion Rooms (Ledbury Rugby Club), Leadon Bank (Shaw Healthcare). All these locations have close access to parking, loos and level entry for disabled. St Katherine's has been used in previous years and is not a suitable venue due to access. We also wouldn't want to use care facilities as these become unavailable during outbreaks such as coronavirus or norovirus. We have visited numerous venues in Ledbury including The Ledbury Community Hub, Ledbury Tennis Club, Ledbury Rugby Club, The Burgage Hall and Ledbury Football club. Following our review, Ledbury Rugby Club will be implemented in the South and The Burgage Hall will be implemented in the North. We will be looking into the west in more detail in the future.	Online response	Councillor
Fownhope Parish	Fownhope Village Hall	Present arrangements very satisfactory.	Online response	Member of the public
Wellington Heath Parish	Christ Church	At a fairly recent PC meeting, Wellington Heath Councillors were in favour of these type of events continuing to be held in the Church at W/Heath rather than in the Memorial Hall. We are not looking to change this venue, it is suitable and has good availability. The memorial hall would be contacted if this venue was unavailable	Email	Parish Clerk
Shobdon Parish	Shobdon Village Hall	Shobdon Parish Council has had their bid to purchase Shobdon Methodist Chapel accepted and as such this would make a good venue for a polling station.	Email	Parish Clerk

Ward/Polling District	Polling Place	Comments	Returned via	Sender
		<p>The current polling station in Shobdon is in the village hall and this means that Shobdon pre-school has to close on polling days.</p> <p>We are not looking to change this venue at present as it is fit for purpose. We will look to visit the Methodist Chapel in future to ascertain whether it is suitable.</p>		
Arrow Ward	List polling stations	<p>I will consult with PCs and communities but my existing five Pembridge village hall, Shobdon village Hall, Lyonshall memorial hall, Eardisland village hall and Titley Village Hall I would consider satisfactory and available to continue as polling stations</p>	Email	Councillor
Bromyard West	Bromyard Methodist Church Hall	<p>Town Council recommends that this polling station is REMOVED, retaining only the polling station at The Public Hall, which is in a more central location and has better parking facilities.</p> <p>We are not looking to change this venue as it is fit for purpose and it lies within Bromyard West Ward. Merging it with The Public Hall in Bromyard Bringsty Ward will put additional pressure on a venue that already houses two polling stations (dual station). Electoral Commission states that we are to have an electorate of less than 2500 in each polling station.</p>	Email	Town Clerk
Kings Pyon	The Bush Inn	<p>Potential drop in turnout. The existing Canon Pyon polling station is on the commuter route from Kings Pyon to Hereford, and voting can form part of a multi-purpose journey. In all probability those from Kings Pyon parish will vote on their way to work or perhaps to the shop, which makes Canon Pyon polling station a "stopover." The Bush Inn may be closer, but may not be en-route."</p> <p>We are no longer looking to change this venue at present as it is fit for purpose.</p>	Email	Councillor
Kings Pyon	The Bush Inn	<p>Seems sensible and there is enough parking space</p> <p>We are no longer looking to change this venue at present as it is fit for purpose.</p>	Email	Councillor

Ward/Polling District	Polling Place	Comments	Returned via	Sender
Ledbury		<p>Need to be clearer to the electorate as to which polling station they can vote at; it was a nightmare having to go from one station to another as I was not on the list for that station</p> <p>Every eligible voter is sent a poll card at least 4 weeks before the date of poll. The purpose of this poll card is to tell people where their polling station is. The staff at each polling station are also able to assist if you are in the wrong polling station, they can find out the correct one for you.</p>	Online response	Member of the public
Ross-on-Wye North Ward	Ross Rugby Club	<p>Request that the venue with the polling district code that covers St Mary's Garden Village is moved to St Mary's Garden Village.</p> <p>We visited St Mary's Garden Village Hub and it is a suitable venue for the use of taking a poll. However, the Rugby club is more central to the majority of the electorate in this polling district so we are not changing it at the moment. We would look to use St Mary's as a contingency venue if the Rugby Club was not available.</p>	Online response	Town Council



Title of report: Leader's report to Council

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 6 December, 2024

Report by: The Leader of the Council

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide an update on the work of the Cabinet since the meeting of Council held on 11 October 2024.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the report be noted.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options; the constitution requires the Leader to provide Council with reports on the activities of the executive.

Key considerations

2. It is a constitutional requirement for the Leader of the Council to provide a report to the council meeting, other than the budget and annual meeting, on the work of cabinet since the last meeting. The leaders report is set out in appendix 1.
3. The report includes a summary of the matters decided by the cabinet and the cabinet members, any decisions taken under the urgency provisions and those subject to call in.
4. It is customary for all of the decisions to be listed in an annex to this report (please see appendix 2). These decisions have been made available on the council's website, with the exception of two decisions taken by the Shareholder Committee on [14 October, 2024](#). These reports were restricted by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. All

councillors and members of the public have the opportunity to review all of the executives fully open decisions as they are being made.

5. Of the decisions taken since my last report no decision have been taken under the general exception provisions (giving more than five but less than 28 calendar days' notice) and no decisions were taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice).
6. Included in my report is a summary of what I consider the most significant priorities, as well as some additional subjects that I hope will be of interest.

Community impact

7. The decision taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members are guided by the objectives set out in the adopted [Council Plan, 2024 to 2028](#).
 - a. **People** - enabling residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported.
 - b. **Place** - Protecting and enhancing our environment and ensure that Herefordshire remains a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers.
 - c. **Growth** - Creating the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure.
 - d. **Transformation** – an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money.
8. [The Delivery Plan 2024-2025](#) outlines how the council's priorities and objectives will be achieved and what will be delivered in this 2024/25 municipal year. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed annually and progress will be reported on a regular basis through each directorate's service delivery plans.
9. The community impact of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken. Reporting to Council the activities of the executive demonstrates the council's commitment to the code of corporate governance principle of implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Environmental Impact

10. The environmental impacts of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken. Reporting to Council the activities of the executive demonstrates the council's commitment to the council's [environmental policy commitments](#) and aligns to the objectives set out in the Council Plan (2024 to 2028) which include.
 - a) Valuing nature and upholding environmental standards to minimise pollution and maximise biodiversity;
 - b) Reducing waste, increasing reuse and recycling;
 - c) Working towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero by 2030/31, and
 - d) Working with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Equality duty

11. 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 report provides a summary of activity undertaken, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty. These considerations are set out in each of the relevant reports informing the decisions listed at appendix 2 and will inform any future decision making.

Resource implications

13. There are no new resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The resource implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 2 have been set out within the relevant decision report and considered at the time the decision was taken and will inform any future decision making.

Legal implications

14. The council and committee, and cabinet rules within the constitution require the Leader to provide a report to Council on the work of the cabinet since the last meeting of Council and, at the first meeting to follow the annual meeting of Council (except in a year when there are ordinary elections), on the priorities of the cabinet and progress made in meeting those priorities. This report ensures these requirements are met.
15. There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The legal implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Risk management

16. There are no risks arising from the recommendations of this report. The risks of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix A have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken and will inform future decision making.

Consultees

None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Leaders report to Council, 6 December 2024

Appendix 2: Executive decisions taken since 4 October to 28 November 2024

Appendix 3: Cabinet member portfolios

Background papers:

None Identified

I wish to open my report by welcoming our newest member, Councillor Rebecca Tully, as the elected member for Bishop's Frome and Cradley Ward. I know you will want to join me in offering Cllr Tully our best wishes and support as she takes up her position.

Despite it only being a few weeks since the October Council meeting, it has been a busy period of activity. But I don't want to just highlight the work of Cabinet and Cabinet members. I want to recognise and celebrate just some of the brilliant work that the officers of this council undertake in delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do.

Last week Herefordshire Council won the prestigious Excellence in Governance, Reporting and Assurance Award. We were selected ahead of several other local authorities – a true accolade to be proud of - I offer my warmest congratulation to our Finance and Senior Leadership Team on their achievement.

The Council also won the Royal Town Planning Institute for Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment award. This category celebrates exceptional projects that actively contribute to preserving, improving, or rejuvenating our natural resources and was awarded to Herefordshire for our work on the Luston Wetlands.

This follows hot on the heels of the Team of the Year award at the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC): for excellence in waste management and recycling services nationally.

Our Council's Community Protection Team continue to crackdown on fly-tipping in the county. Their role is so essential in keeping our communities safe as well as protecting the environment for all residents. Their work also serves as a key deterrent for those intent on illegally disposing of waste. Offenders need to be aware that they will be actively pursued and prosecuted for their waste related crimes.

The number of fly tipping enquiries passed to the Community Protection team since January 2024, stands at 234 plus an additional 109 littering enquiries and complaints. All of these are investigated by the team and where appropriate dealt with by way of a fixed penalty notice or a prosecution. Since January, the team have secured 4 convictions through the courts.

Over 2024, Trading Standards enforcement activity saw 23,860 illegal cigarettes and 18kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco seized. Over 100 advisory visits to vape retailers in Herefordshire were undertaken, resulting in 776 illegal vapes seized. The team completed two separate under-age test purchasing operations; this led to 1 criminal prosecution being taken and concluded. Due to the backlog of criminal cases in the court system, 4 other prosecutions relating to illegal tobacco and vapes were initiated and will be concluded in late 2024.

The work of our teams is also being noticed further afield with the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) announcing that Herefordshire Council is one of the finalists in the Environmental Health best performer category at their [Performance Networks Awards 2024](#).

In a similar vein, the council's Corporate Fraud Service, have also been working hard to prevent fraud against the council. Whether this is council tax, business rate or social care fraud - the council is taking measures to prevent it. Crucially, we can't and don't do this without

the support and vigilance of our local communities; over the last financial year for instance, heightened fraud awareness locally contributed to a 142% increase in new fraud referrals. It is important to not lose sight of why we do this; money fraudulently taken away from our hard-working tax-payers and businesses is money taken away from vital local services.

Our work progresses on the roll-out of more electric vehicle charge-points across Herefordshire. Our core aim is making electric vehicle charging accessible to a wider range of residents within the county, especially to those without access to off-street parking. Charge points will be strategically placed to best serve the needs of local communities and meet growing demand. This is a good step toward achieving the council's pledge to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Continuing with the transport theme, the new Transport Hub for Herefordshire is out for tender. Once complete, the Hub will improve travel experience for all, providing accessible, safe and green transport connections. Located at the station and its surrounding area, the hub will provide a key entry point to the city tying together public transportation, active travel and improved access. Its design will also help to revive the local heritage as well as create an attractive environment for visitors and commuters.

Separately, on 21 November we had confirmation of £3.2m to support the Bus Service Improvement Plan. The revenue element of the grant funding, around £1.8m, will be used to extend the services that are currently supported by grant funding. The decision about how the remainder is spent will be made by the Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership, which is an official partnership between the council and the bus operators where decisions about the distribution and investment of Government grants to improve bus travel are made.

Members will no doubt be aware of the unacceptably poor rail services within the county. I want to give you my assurance that I and my cabinet colleagues continue to press and challenge the rail operators and government on urgent action to improve this service.

Last Friday (29th November) I was also very pleased to attend a celebration event for the Hereford Enterprise Zone, known as Skylon Park. Over the last 10 years or so the Enterprise Zone has delivered over 60 acres of land and sold or developed, over 60,000 sqm of new workspace. There has also been investment in land and buildings in excess of £60m. Over 1,100 higher value jobs have been created. In recent years we have also seen the development of the £7.7m Shell Store business incubation space, the £9m Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, and the £7.2 m NMITE Skylon Campus.

The celebration event recognised the role played by the Hereford Enterprise Zone Ltd Board in this success and, as the company now comes to a close as we move to a new phase of delivery, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of my fellow Board members for their time, expertise, and dedication to supporting the growth of our great county.

With the recent spell of wintery weather, I am pleased to confirm that, as part of our response to rough sleeping in the county, the Winter Shelter once again reopened on Wednesday 4 December. The shelter will provide overnight accommodation for male and female rough sleepers throughout the winter. As was the case last year, partners on the Homelessness Forum are working together to support the shelter in terms of food, washing provision and Caring for Communities and People (CCP). They will also, once again, provide the general management and staffing of the shelter.

Whilst we are on wintery weather, it is timely to acknowledge the essential, often lifesaving work that our local road gritting teams undertake. Their preparations are so important to keeping the county moving and keeping our road users safe. We also have a fleet of 15 newly

procured gritters, on standby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, until the end of March 2025. This gives the council strong capability to deal with even the more severe weather extremes that we can face over the winter period.

All too often, however, the most severe weather we receive is in the form of storms that in turn generate significant flooding events in the County. Given the recent adverse weather and the flooding events of the 16th October and the 24th November we are reviewing how we respond to emergencies and flooding events. This review will focus on accelerating and strengthening our response and we will update members on the actions we are taking in due course.

Parish and Town Councils play a huge role in helping us maintain and improve our highways network. To improve this partnership further, members may recall that in July 2024, Town and Parish Councils were invited to provide submissions for the £445k of grant funding for drainage works. The funding was made available for ditching works, drainage surveys, minor drainage schemes, gully clearing and cleansing.

Submissions from 67 Town and Parish Councils have been received and approved at this stage, with offers totalling £288,794.00 of works being made. Whilst the grant funding closed to new applications at the end of September, the highways team are continuing to review applications submitted for minor drainage schemes and will be in touch with Parish Councils directly on these.

Our additional £5m investment in road resurfacing for 2024/25 has received positive feedback from residents and local businesses across the county. At the end of November 94% of the programme had been completed and plans are currently being drawn up for the next £5m of investment which will be delivered in 2025/26. Alongside the investment in A&B roads, we received further funding from the Department of Transport this year which has been used to deliver a surface dressing programme on our C and U network. I would like to thank our highways team and the contractors involved in delivery for minimising disruption to residents by utilising overnight closures where appropriate.

We received notification on Monday, 25 November that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be visiting us to look at our arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their fieldwork began on Thursday 28 November and inspectors remain on-site until 6 December. This is a major inspection and there was a lot of work to do in advance to prepare. I'd like to offer my thanks to the staff involved in supporting this visit.

Staying with children's services, we had a very helpful visit, on Friday 22 November to Coventry to explore their 'Child Friendly Cov' campaign. This is an initiative to make Coventry a child and young person friendly city, a place where children and young people are valued and supported. They work together with local children and young people to create a city where young people have access to opportunities, feel safe, healthy and loved. It is my hope that we can apply similar thinking and practices to make Herefordshire a great place for children and young people to grow, thrive and live.

Since my last report, the Government consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) closed 24 September 2024. The revised NPPF is likely to be in effect by the end of the year. The reforms are part of wider changes the Government is making to achieve its new targets for new homes.

The planning reforms will reinstate the mandatory housing targets for local planning authorities (LPAs). The new standard method for calculating housing need means an estimated requirement for 27.5k of additional homes for Herefordshire.

Locally, we also have some positive developments. The council's newly revamped Planning Advice Service provides a faster response to any planning-related questions. The planning team have developed the new service as part of the ongoing transformation of Planning and Building Control. It is an excellent new service and a major step forward in delivering our commitment to offer the best possible service for the public.

In November, we held a successful 2nd rivers conference. Its focus was on arable farming and healthy soils. It was well attended by farmers, environmentalists and wider sectors including agronomy, food supply chain and academics. The Cabinet Member for Environment has met with the Wye Catchment Partnership and Minister Hardy and Huw Irranca Davies. We continue to press for urgent action to be taken and to ensure the restoration of our local rivers remains a top priority.

We have written to the Secretary of State for Transport to seek clarification about funding for capital projects, requesting confirmation that £106m for roads maintenance (£3.66m of which has already been received) and £102m for Local Transport (LTF) type schemes, are to be received by Herefordshire. Also that the £35m, can be released to support construction of the Hereford Western Bypass. We are yet to receive a response.

I continue to keep up to date with the latest views of ministers and other local authorities through my attendance at the recent Local Government Association and County Council Networks held in November.

The Chancellor announced the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024; a one-year spending review for 2025/26 with a multi-year spending review for subsequent years expected in Spring 2025. A Local Government Finance Policy Statement is expected in November which will set out further details on 25/26 and the multi-year settlement from 26/27 with the provisional Settlement in mid-December. We await further details, as to how the budget applies to Herefordshire, but some of the key headlines are:

- Changes to the Fiscal Rules, net financial debt must decrease as a proportion of GDP (by third year of forecast or 2029-30); the core spending power will increase in real terms by approximately 3.2% (including council tax and retained business rates).*
- A new financial commitment to supporting Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) of £1bn,*
- National Insurance Contributions increased to 15% with the threshold being reduced to £5,000 – allowance made for impact on public sector organisations.*
- Extended Producer Responsibility – expected to be £1.1bn for 2025-26, first year guaranteed by HMT. Allocations to follow in the Autumn.*
- Consumer Price Index close to 2% target but remaining above 2% until 2029.*
- Household Support Fund continues for 2025-26, and*
- A white paper on English Devolution is expected later this year.*

It is of course that time where the Cabinet is turning its attention to our own budgetary matters. We are asking residents and businesses about how Herefordshire Council's budget should be prioritised. Residents can also try our online interactive budget simulator tool. It's a really useful way to demonstrate how changes in income and expenditure can impact on the delivery of services. The consultation remains open until 15 December - please encourage as many of your constituents as possible to share their views via: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/budgetconsultation>

Finally, as we approach the festive period please let your constituents know that Herefordshire is welcoming residents and visitors to come and enjoy community events and late night shopping with free parking funded by Herefordshire Council. I hope this will provide a very

welcome boost for the many hard-working businesses who make such a significant contribution to our local economy.

And on that theme, and as this is our last Council meeting of 2024, may I take this opportunity to wish you all, and the residents of Herefordshire, a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

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My Report to Council:

Herefordshire Council Plan – 2024 to 2028. Through the development of the Herefordshire Council Plan, four corporate priorities have been identified. These are:

- I. **People** – We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and to be part of great communities who support each other. We want all children to have the best start in life.
- II. **Place** – We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire is a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place, we will support access to green spaces and we will do everything we can to recover the health of our rivers.
- III. **Growth** – We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure, and
- IV. **Transformation** – We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money.

The Herefordshire Council Plan, alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy, provides the overarching policy framework within which decisions will be taken and resources allocated over the next 4 years.

Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025 – turning the strategic vision into delivery

Central to the realisation of the Council Plan is the Delivery Plan 2024-25, which sets out the milestones and progress against our priorities of People, Place, Growth and Transformation. As members of this council you will be able to mark our progress through quarterly reporting into Cabinet and routine financial monitoring against the approved revenue budget and capital programme. Alongside this we are developing annual service plans within each of the directorates which will be reporting progress monthly to the corporate leadership team.

In my report below, I have outlined where the cabinet and cabinet member's decisions begin the delivery of those stated objectives.

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Theme 1 - People: We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and to be part of great communities that support each other. We want all children to have the best start in life.

1: Community Spaces Capital Grant Scheme

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work with partners and residents to build connected and resilient communities

This year we will: Implement the findings of the Talk Community strategic review, to help deliver this we will launch the community capital grants scheme

Following the approval of the outline business case for this scheme the decision was taken to approve the drawdown of the £2m allocated within the capital budget. The aims of the scheme are to transform and improve unused buildings for community benefit. It will increase opportunities for people to access integrated services in their community and to provide healthcare for all ages.

This community led approach will identify and enable solutions to meet locally understood needs. The scheme will also help reduce pressures on statutory services by working toward the development of community hubs that focus on understanding and addressing health and care needs. An outcomes framework is being developed to understand the impact of this investment in the community.

2: Support all children to have the best start in life

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Increase capacity of specialist Special Educational Needs (SEND) school places so that children and young people can attend a local provision that meets their needs

The Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability, 2020-2030 strategy, will ensure high quality sustainable specialist educational accommodation for children and young people with SEND, including those who require Alternative Provision (AP), in Herefordshire. It will work in combination with the refreshed Education Strategy agreed in the summer of 2024.

The additional Department for Education funding of £4.23m will be targeted toward the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education High Needs Provision Capital Grant will create additional special and mainstream school places to meet growing demand across Herefordshire. This investment will allow for the much needed refurbishment of the Ryefield Centre, Ross-on Wye, to create a small special school for children with SEND; expand the council's inclusion offer at Aylestone, Leominster and Trinity Primary Schools and the relocation of the Herefordshire Pupil Referral Unit provision on a single site.

This investment builds on £2.67m investment into the expansion of the Language and Communication Centre (LCC) at Hampton Dene Primary School and improvements at Barrs Court School.

High quality alternative provision, including for social, emotional and mental health needs, will create additional capacity for mainstream school leaders and staff to address challenging behaviour earlier and re-engage pupils in education. Interventions will be based on a three-tier model with a focus on targeted support whilst children are in mainstream school, to deal with needs early and reduce preventable exclusion.

Time-limited or transitional placements into an alternative provision setting will provide more intensive intervention or longer-term support where it is needed, before these young people return to a new mainstream setting or progress to a sustainable post-16 destination.

3: Accommodation based support service for 16-25 year old children in care and care leavers.

Contributes to Delivery Plan Objective: Tackle inequality and facilitate social mobility by focussing on early intervention and prevention activities that enable people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

This year we will: Develop support for young adults up to 25 years who may be at risk of exploitation and a transition pathway.

Young people in our care can have multiple vulnerabilities including chaotic lifestyles including substance misuse, mental health needs, antisocial or challenging behaviour, offending history and vulnerability to criminal or sexual exploitation.

This decision makes provision to begin the commissioning of an accommodation based support service up to 31 March 2030. Young people living in this accommodation will be children in care and care leavers aged 16-25 who may have experienced trauma, or adverse childhood experiences. This decision also ensures that the council's duty to children in our care and our care leavers is being delivered by providing appropriate and safe accommodation.

The Council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People 2023-2028 highlights the need to take multiple approaches to build capacity across all placements. In light of the continuing growth, particularly for 16-17 years entering care, there is a need for additional local accommodation. Due to these levels of demand, a number of young people continue to be accommodated out of county in placements which are often spot purchased at significant cost. This new contract will deliver a minimum of 15 homes for young people with different levels of need.

Alongside this, the service will work in partnership to develop and implement a personalised support plan for each person, identifying how they can manage their own needs, mitigate risks and take up opportunities.

The Council has also recently secured funding from the government to deliver a Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP). SHAP funding can be utilised to provide supported housing for young people over the age of 18 who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping. This funding has allowed the Council to purchase 10 additional properties offering homes to 10 single young people. All properties used under this contract will be owned by Herefordshire Council. Each young person has their own private space (kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living area) but the property also offers communal and shared spaces.

The service will also provide housing management to promote all young people's capacity to manage their own tenancies in the future, delivering floating support for 12 months for those young people who have secured a move into independent tenancies in the community. This tailored support will encourage independence and supports the development of life skills to move on or towards independent living, and encourage all young people to access education, training, work experience and employment.

4: Household Support Fund Grant 6

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Tackle inequality and facilitate social mobility by focussing on early intervention and prevention activities that enable people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

This year we will: Deliver schemes to tackle inequality and support our most vulnerable residents and deliver the Household Support Fund (HSF) to those affected by cost of living

The Household Support Fund (HSF) is designed to support vulnerable households most affected by rising living costs. It is available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities across England. In a grant determination letter dated 24 September 2024, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirmed that Herefordshire Council has been allocated £1,329,601.78 for this six-month period.

The expectation for this next round of the HSF covering October 2024 to March 2025, is that it will provide crisis support to vulnerable households with the cost of essentials. This will particularly target those who may not be eligible for other recent government support but are still struggling due to the increased cost of living.

Local authorities have discretion on how the HSF is used within the parameters set out in the grant determination letter and guidance. The fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people, larger families, single-person households and those struggling with one-off shocks or unforeseen circumstances.

The HSF can be used to support these households with the cost of food, essential expenses related to energy, food and water, and other necessities. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can also be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this need.

While the guidance for this new HSF period is largely similar to the previous round (April 2024 to September 2024), a portion of the funding may be used for supplementary advice services. A notable addition to the new guidance allows funding to be used for preventative support, which aims to prevent poverty, build community resilience, and help residents avoid falling into crisis or worsening financial hardship.

Theme: Growth - We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure.

5: Draw down of the Acquisition Fund for Housing Provision

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work with partners to provide high quality and affordable housing to meet all needs

This year we will: Enable the delivery of affordable properties in the county, including council owned land, through registered providers and developers

The council faces an increasing demand for social housing alongside a lack of local provision to meet this need. As such, people are being placed in temporary accommodation which isn't fit for purpose and has significant additional costs.

In July 2024, full council approved an outline business case to add £5m to the capital programme to enable the critical housing provision we need in the county.

The council's Herefordshire Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, aligns with the central government policy in the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA). These statutory obligations impose a resource implication on the council that has increased by almost 100% over the last two years. In March 2022 the council housed 74 families, in May 2024 this rose to 141.

In 2023/24, Housing Solutions, our own council run service, spent £3,415,832.27 on accommodation solutions, which comprised £3,030,030.55 on budget hotel style accommodation and £385,801.72 on private sector rental accommodation. Due to the relatively limited supply of this type of accommodation and increasing demand, the costs of securing these places continues to rise.

The council has a statutory duty to hold a waiting list, currently there are 2097 households registered for rental accommodation. Approving the spend of this £5M will enable the council to respond more quickly to and acquire and develop further housing stock to meet this demand. It will also decrease the council's costs on temporary accommodation.

Each proposed acquisition and development will be subject to the completion of a due diligence business case review, detailing the specific need/ demand in the location of each project, and how investment recovery costs will be met.

Requested Update: Strategic Housing Provision

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work with partners to provide high quality and affordable housing to meet all needs

This year we will: Enable the delivery of affordable properties in the county, including council owned land, through registered providers and developers

Members will recall that at full Council on 8 December 2023, we agreed that cabinet would develop a programme to deliver an ambitious number of units of social housing, market-rent lifetime tenancies, affordable home ownership and market sale properties, funded through the prudent use of borrowing, capital receipts and the management of council assets. This would be in time for this to be agreed by Council as part of next year's capital programme.

Council also requested that – as part of my Leader's report – I provide an update on housing delivery at each ordinary meeting of the Council.

Members will be aware that the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee (CCSC) considered the 'Best Practice: Review of approaches to developing & delivering affordable/ social housing' report from the Three Dragon's Consultancy team. We will be considering CCSC's well-reasoned, measured and sensible recommendations carefully.

The Three Dragons report will go on to be considered by the cross party housing working group. They have outlined the current estimated need for affordable housing in Herefordshire. Drawn from the Housing Market Area Needs assessment data (2021) it suggests that 597 affordable, 422 social/affordable rented, and 175 affordable home ownership homes are required across the county, with around 65% being required in Hereford and Ross on Wye.

Three Dragon's go on to report that Herefordshire Council owns a number of sites that are capable of delivering policy compliant affordable and market homes. There are over 2,000 units on 18 sites worthy of further investigation, 10 sites have potential capacity for up to 75 units.

There is clearly capacity to unlock further opportunities to increase supply of affordable housing within the county. For example, working with registered providers who have stock holding in Herefordshire but is not currently in development. Exploring the potential to do more to increase housing supply on those sites and how we can be more creative in using the council's own funds (e.g. collected from commuted sums (money received from housing developers)) to support delivery of the right housing types to meet the demand.

Housing delivery update

As at the point of drafting, £1,298,294.52 (up by £109,920.00 since my last report in October) in phosphate income has been received. To date these actions have released planning permissions for 751 dwellings (an increase of 12 dwellings since October).

7: Hereford Business Improvement District Third Term Ballot

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work with our partners and businesses to facilitate growth across the county.

This year we will: Support the growth of the tourism industry across Herefordshire, working closely with the Herefordshire County Business Improvement District (BID) and other key stakeholders

In September, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth agreed to vote 'yes' to the third term of the Hereford Business Improvement District (HBID) at its ballot in October, 2024. The HBID will raise a five year budget of £1.769 m, via levy contributions, to deliver a programme of projects in Hereford city centre. These projects and improvements are additional to any services funded by the local authority.

There are over 335 BIDs in UK and they continue to grow in number each year. Herefordshire supports two BIDs, the Hereford Business Improvement District and Herefordshire Destination Business Improvement District, currently in its first, five year term. BIDs are managed by national legislation and this gives Herefordshire Council the right to challenge the BID at any time during its term if the BID does not deliver against the proposed Business Plan.

BIDs are an excellent way for businesses to invest in their own futures, by making an additional contribution (in the form of a levy) on top of business rates. The BID is proposing a 1.99% levy on rateable value and has identified 585 hereditaments within the BID boundary. This will result in a total levy income of £1.769m. In addition, the BID is looking to raise other

income from grant sources and voluntary contributions - this will provide an overall budget of £1.911m (2025-2030).

Proposals within the Business Plan have been developed in consultation with levy paying businesses and other stakeholders, including Herefordshire Council. The projects provide value added services and do not duplicate existing activity, they increase footfall and expand our cultural experience, and enhance the city's overall offer.

8: Hereford Public Art Strategy

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Support market towns and Hereford City to be vibrant hubs through working with residents, grassroots organisations and businesses.

The Hereford Public Art Programme – Art + People + Place is part of the £6 m Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI) project. The overall project aims to refurbish the historic core of Hereford through investment in the streetscape, landscaping and public realm and was funded jointly by the council and the now decommissioned Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

The project was the first formal large-scale public art programme developed by Herefordshire Council. It has presented a unique opportunity to explore public art in the city and understand the opportunities and challenges of developing projects of this kind. It was established to make clear recommendations for the development of the council's strategic approach to public art in the future.

Theme: Place - *We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire is a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place, and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers.*

9: The New Public Realm Services

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Develop Herefordshire as a place for growth, prosperity and communities to thrive.

This year we will: Deliver the Public Realm Services and agree the Public Realm Services operating model and commence the procurement for a new Public Realm contractor

On 28 November, Cabinet agreed to progress the council's vision to deliver Public Realm Services that are fit for the future. A service that embraces technology, automation, digital innovation and meets our carbon reduction ambitions, investment in people and a service that continually improves.

I am very grateful to the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee who formed a working group comprising of members and officers to review the model and the findings of the market engagement. It was very reassuring to note their confidence in the approach cabinet have taken in progressing with this significant decision. The model we are proposing is developed around the council's vision, delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do, while being attractive to the market to promote a competitive procurement.

Market engagement undertaken during Summer 2024 provided contractors early insight to the council's vision and requirements. Until the new model and new contracting arrangement

come into effect on 1 June 2026, both parties are committed to working together to support a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

Theme: Transformation - *We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money.*

10: Addition of Capital Budget to deliver IT Capital Programme

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Adopt the digital strategy to embed improved technology across the council

This year we will: Review and upgrade our key software systems to be more efficient and fit for the future in order to support our statutory services

The Cabinet are proposing that Council approve the addition of £368,000 in this year's capital programme to deliver the Wide Area Network (WAN) replacement and the Telephony Contact Centre projects, funded from underspends in the capital programme. The 2024/25 Information Technology (IT) capital programme is on track to deliver a projected underspend in the region of £260,000. This underspend, we propose, could be utilised to fund these other IT projects.

Funding for the Wide Area Network Replacement and Telephony Contact Centre projects have been requested in the 2025/26 capital programme to ensure we can move to a new solution which will enable a revenue saving of £18,000 per annum in 2025/26, then £32,000 in subsequent years.

Renewing the contract with the current provider presents a risk of a significant price increase of 23% (approximately £39,500). By supporting our proposed addition to the 2024/25 capital programme it enables the council to implement a new solution prior to the existing contract end date. The existing contract for the Telephony Contact Centre ends on 31 March 2025. By bringing this decision forward it will enable the council to transfer to a new provider and be live with like-for-like functionality before 31 March 2025. This will save £32,000 in licence fees and realise transformation opportunities to support customer service delivery.

Budget and Performance reporting

Quarter 2 2024/2025 Budget Report. Cabinet at our last meeting reviewed the Quarter 2 budget report. The key headline areas are as follows:

- I. **Revenue Outturn** - The council's approved net revenue budget for 2024/25 is £212.8 m. This includes planned savings of £19.5 m comprising £11.6 m of Directorate Savings and £7.9 m of Council wide budget savings. The mid-year forecast outturn position, for 2024/25, highlights continuing in-year cost pressures relating to demand across social care budgets, temporary accommodation and Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport services.

This variance represents cost pressures of £11.6 m, reduced by £1.4 m of delivered Children & Young People 2024/25 Savings Targets, consisting of:

- I. +£3.9 m in-year net cost pressures;
- II. +£5.0 m 2024/25 Savings Targets assessed 'at risk';
- III. +£0.4 m 2023/24 Savings Targets assessed 'at risk'; and

- IV. **+£2.3 m Council wide Savings** pending completion of Directorate restructures and vacancy reviews

- II. **Management Activity and Recovery Actions** - Initial activity already underway is expected to reduce this forecast overspend to £2.0 m. Each Directorate will continue to identify further recovery action and options to mitigate at risk savings targets and ensure recurrent spending is sustainable within the resources available. Corporate Directors continue to develop Directorate recovery plans to manage in year delivery of services within the approved budget.

Additional expenditure controls implemented during the last financial year remain in place to support recovery activity in 2024/25.

- III. **Delivery of Savings** - A review of the delivery and status of the 2024/25 approved savings at Quarter 2 has been undertaken; informed by planned and actual activity in the year to date to determine savings targets at risk of in-year delivery. This review confirms £8.9 m (46%) of the total savings target for the year has been delivered. With a further £5.6 m (28%) assessed as 'on target/in progress' for the year. Savings of £5.0 m (26%) are assessed as 'at risk' with work underway to identify mitigations as a priority.

The budget amendment, approved in February 2024, removed savings of £2.3 m from the Children & Young People Directorate budget. As at September 2024, saving targets S2 (Reduction in Social Worker establishment) and S3 (Reduction in number of agency social workers) totalling £1.4 m are confirmed as delivered in full. Activity to deliver saving target S1 (Reduction in High Cost Placements) of £0.9 m is assessed as 'in progress' but not reflected in the outturn position at Quarter 2.

- IV. **Earmarked Reserves** - The council's earmarked reserves represent amounts set aside for future expenditure to support specific corporate priorities or for general contingencies and cash flow management. The overall level of reserves is reported to Cabinet at least annually; the last report to Cabinet in May 2024 noted total audited balances of £82.8 m comprising the general fund balance of £9.6 m and earmarked reserve balances of £73.2 m.

- V. **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)** - The cumulative DSG deficit is accounted for as an unusable reserve on the council's Balance Sheet, as permitted via statutory instrument, which will remain in place until 31 March 2026. The deficit will have an impact on the council's overall financial position once the override period ends and this risk is being managed alongside the assessment of the adequacy of the council's reserves, as part of the council's medium term financial strategy.

At 1 April 2024, the cumulative deficit brought forward totals £6.1 m. The current in-year forecast is an overspend of £7.6 m within the High Needs block of the DSG; this will increase the cumulative deficit to £13.7 m by 31 March 2025. A focused review to quantify the impact of emerging demand in 2025/26 and future years is underway to inform the council's DSG Deficit Management Plan. Herefordshire, like many other local authorities, continues to experience increases in demand which are not met by corresponding increases in funding.

- VI. **Capital Outturn** - The 2024/25 approved capital budget of £160.0 m has been revised to £96.4 m. The revised capital budget includes £15.3 m of unspent project budgets

brought forward from 2023/24, approved movements of £2.8 m, removal of a project £2.6 m and £3.7 m additional grants. In line with external audit advice the capital budgets have been re-profiled at Quarter 2 in line with expected delivery. Therefore £82.8m budget has been re-profiled from 2024/25 to future years. The forecast spend position is £88.8 m which represents an underspend of £7.6 m against a budget of £96.4 m.

Q2 Performance Report

Performance against the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the associated annual Delivery Plan for 2024/25 financial year was presented to Cabinet in November. 152 out of 174 milestones (87%) that were due to be in progress by Q2 under the new Delivery Plan for 2024/25 were completed or are on track to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

Some key highlights:

- I. Schools Capital Maintenance across the County £4.9m. The 2023-26 schools maintenance programme continues at pace, with 19 work packages complete, 2 currently in delivery and a further 22 planned for Easter/ Summer 2025. The forecast expenditure for 2024/25 is £3.3m.
- II. Brookfield School £4.8m Improvements are being made with a new build extension to provide a sports hall, 2 teaching blocks, and internal improvement programme to existing secondary school. Contractors are on site and work is in underway. Due for completion in the Autumn term 2025.
- III. School Improvement Projects across the County £2.2m 18 schemes completed across the County, making significant improvements across our education assets.

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 4 October and 28 November 2024		Date Taken	Effective From
Cabinet Decisions			
Q2 2024/25 Budget Report		28/11/2024	5/12/2024 (if not called in)
Q2 Performance Report		28/11/2024	5/12/2024 (if not called in)
Public Realm Services contract – procurement		28/11/2024	5/12/2024 (if not called in)
Addition of Capital Budget to deliver IT Capital Programme		28/11/2024	6/12/2024 (if agreed by full Council)
Cabinet Member Decisions			
Cabinet Member: Adult Health and Wellbeing			
Community Spaces Capital Grant Scheme		13/11/2024	22/11/2024
Cabinet Member: Children and Young people			
Accommodation based support for children in care and care leavers aged 16-25		11/11/2024	16/11/2024
Cabinet Member: Community Services and Assets			
High Needs Provision Capital Grant spend		08/11/2024	15/11/2024
Cabinet Member: Transport and Infrastructure			
Hereford Public Art Strategy		17/11/2024	24/11/2024
Cabinet Member: finance and corporate services			
Household Support Fund 6		07/11/2024	14/11/2024
Cabinet Member: Economy and Growth			
Acquisition Fund for Housing Provision (previously Acquisition Fund For Housing Development)		01/11/2024	08/11/2024
Hereford Business Improvement District Third Term Ballot Decision		04/11/2024	11/10/2024

Section1 - Cabinet member portfolios

Leader (corporate strategy and budget): Councillor Jonathan Lester

Cabinet Support Members: Councillors Dan Hurcomb and Nick Mason

- Corporate policy and strategy
- Corporate budget
- Represent the Council on various business and economy organisations including the Marches LEP, Herefordshire Business Board and the Enterprise Zone Board. Working with the Portfolio holder for the Economy.
- Governance of external arrangements with companies, outside bodies and partnerships
- Member of the Council's Shareholder Committee
- External liaison and relationships
 - Local Government Association (LGA)/County Councils' Network (CCN)
 - European and national matters
 - Regional matters
 - Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any initiative not specifically allocated to any other portfolio

Environment (Deputy Leader): Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst

Cabinet Support Members: Councillors Dan Hurcomb and Nick Mason

- Deputise for the Leader in their absence.
- Waste Management Strategy
- Waste collection and disposal
- Cabinet Commission on Phosphates
- Planning services, land use strategies including Core Strategy
- Environmental and conservation promotion, protection and sustainability including response to climate emergency.
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Community Services and Assets: Councillor Harry Bramer

- Council asset, investment property strategies and property strategies
- Council property services including facilities management
- Major Contracts
- Commissioning and procurement strategy and policy
- Community services:
 - Parks and countryside
 - Leisure Services
 - Cultural services
 - Libraries
 - Heritage Services
 - Archives
 - Public conveniences
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Children and Young People : Councillor Ivan Powell

- To provide leadership and ensure coordination across the range of council children's services, and through engagement with partners, with a particular focus on children and young people's health & wellbeing and safeguarding
- Services for vulnerable young people/children/families
- Lead member for children's services in accordance with the Children's Act 2004
- Corporate parenting
- Children and young people's education and attainment
- Post 16 education, training and skills development, including NMiTE
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Finance and Corporate Services: Councillor Pete Stoddart

- Agreeing and leading the process for developing revenue and capital budgets, medium term financial strategy, council tax and NNDR
- Financial policy, fees and charging policy, financial control and reporting
- Council tax benefits
- Council ICT services and digital strategy
- Human Resources
- Health and safety
- Performance, improvement, risk management, research and intelligence
- Services under Governance and Legal Services
- Registrars and Coroner Services
- Communications, and social media including website
- Digital Connectivity
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Adults, Health and Wellbeing: Councillor Carole Gandy

- Provide leadership and ensure coordination across the range of council adult social care services, and through engagement with partners
- Services for vulnerable adults
- Adult safeguarding
- Homelessness, housing allocation and condition
- Leadership of Health and Wellbeing Board and partnership working with health
- Co-chair of the Integrated Care Partnership Assembly
- Member of the Council's Shareholder Committee for Hoople
- Public Health Strategy
- Emergency planning and business continuity
- Community engagement and development, encompassing Talk Community, Talk Parish Summits and Parish Shared Services
- Customer services
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Community Safety including the Community Safety Partnership
- Bereavement services
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Economy and Growth: Councillor Graham Biggs

- Economic development and regeneration
- Strategic Housing
- Tourism strategy
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader.

Roads and Regulatory Services: Cllr Barry Durkin

- Animal health and welfare
- Environmental health and trading standards
- Markets and fairs
- Licensing
- Car parking policy and services
- Public realm contract management
- Gypsy and traveller services
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Transport and Infrastructure: Councillor Philip Price

- Transport and highways policy and strategy
- Public Transport and active travel measures
- Land drainage, flood alleviation, rivers and waterways
- Public Rights of Way
- Street scene design, policy and delivery
- Traffic Management
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader