

Agenda

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 27 May 2025**

Time: **2.00 pm**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01432 260667

Email: simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260667 or e-mail simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor Toni Fagan**
Vice-chairperson **Councillor Liz Harvey**

Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Councillor Clare Davies
Councillor Dave Davies
Councillor Robert Highfield
Councillor Ben Proctor

Co-opted **Jan Frances (Families' Representative)**
members **Stuart Mitchell (Parent Governor Secondary)**

Agenda

Pages

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.

4. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025.

9 - 18

HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS

The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Tuesday 20 May 2025 .

Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.

Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive any written questions from members of the public.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

To receive any written questions from members of the council.

7. CHILD EXPLOITATION

For the committee to understand the different ways children are at risk of exploitation and to scrutinise how the different agencies work together to tackle the issue.

[Papers to follow].

8. WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme for the committee.

19 - 42

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24 June 2025, 2pm.

The public's rights to information and attendance at meetings

In view of the continued prevalence of Covid, we have introduced changes to our usual procedures for accessing public meetings. These will help to keep our councillors, staff and members of the public safe.

Please take time to read the latest guidance on the council website by following the link at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings and support us in promoting a safe environment for everyone. If you have any queries please contact the governance support team on 01432 261699 or at governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

Thank you for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings safe.

You have a right to:

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

Recording of meetings

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

Members of the public are advised that if you do not wish to be filmed or photographed you should let the governance 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 a recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such recordings are made available for members of the public via the council's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/HerefordshireCouncil/videos

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:
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 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor Toni Fagan (chairperson)
Councillor Liz Harvey (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Frank Cornthwaite, David Davies, Robert Highfield and Ben Proctor

In attendance: Jade Brooks (Director of Operations and Delivery - Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board), (Debbie Hobbs (Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire), Susan Moody (Associate Chief AHP) Councillor Ivan Powell (Cabinet Member Children and Young People).

Officers: Simon Cann (Committee Clerk), Jessica Davies (Service Manager Children with Disabilities), Liz Farr (Service Director Education, Learning and Skills), Hilary Jones (Head of Additional Needs), Zoe Richards (Head of Service Starting Well), Tina Russell (Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People), Donna Thornton (Governance Support Assistant), Danial Webb (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Clare Davies, and from Jan Frances (Co-opted representative for families).

54. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There had been no named substitutes.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

56. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

57. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There had been one question received from a member of the public, which had been published, along with a response, as a supplement to the meeting agenda on the Herefordshire Council website.

58. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There had been no questions received from members of the council.

59. FINDINGS OF THE OFSTED AND CARE QUALITY COMMISSION AREA SEND INSPECTION

The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills introduced and gave an overview of the report.

A joint Ofsted and CQC inspection of SEND services had been conducted in Herefordshire during December 2024.

The inspection process had been spread over three weeks and included two weeks of onsite activity, involving case tracking of individual children and the services wrapped around their families.

The outcome had been the middle of three possible ratings and reflected the variable experiences of children and families across Herefordshire.

Strengths identified within the service and partnership included:

- Strong leadership across the partnership.
- An adaptable workforce that was able to swiftly respond to growing demand for services.
- Positive relationships between children and their workers.
- Co-production across the partnership such as the recently opened Youth Employment Hub, which had been developed with input from local young people.
- The SENCO Network, Early Help Services and the Children with Disabilities Team had been praised for working in a collaborative, innovative and effective manner.

Four priority areas requiring improvement had been identified:

- Reducing the length of waiting times for young people to access health services, especially in relation to neurodivergence assessment and diagnosis
- The local area partnership needed to ensure sufficient capacity, stability and improved quality across all health services to improve service consistency, development and delivery.
- Young people who had recently been diagnosed with or were waiting for treatment for a neurodivergent condition needed to be well-informed about accessing available support.
- The local area partnership needed to ensure that high-quality and accurate information regarding the range of services available to children and young people with SEND, their families, and professionals was promoted and communicated in an accessible form.
-

The Director of Operations and Delivery Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board pointed out that work was already underway to change the model of neurodivergent support through the introduction of workshops and improvements to the Local Offer.

The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills stated that the inspection outcome was partly good news and that the next full inspection would take place in three years.

The Chair invited comments and discussion from the committee in relation to the report. The key points of the discussion are detailed below:

1. The committee enquired about how the SEND financial deficit was being managed.
 - The Director of Finance, confirmed that the £11.1 million deficit in Herefordshire's High Needs Block (HNB) was relatively low compared to other councils. The local authority was not yet eligible for intervention programs like Safety Valve due to its smaller overspend. The council was using its reserve balances under statutory override, but recognised the urgency to manage and contain future overspends. A Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit management plan was in place, and capital investment was being targeted to create more in-county specialist provision to reduce reliance on costly external placements.
2. The committee raised concerns about open-ended spending and asked how value for money was measured in relation to SEND services.
 - The Director of Operations and Delivery Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board emphasized the need to balance high-quality provision with cost-efficiency. It was noted that investment in early support and technology-enabled care could lead to long-term savings. It was pointed out that there were moral and statutory obligations to support all children and the complexities of individual SEND needs made financial decisions more nuanced.
3. The committee enquired as to whether there was coordination between NHS and council funding.
 - The Director of Operations and Delivery Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board explained that children with complex needs often required both NHS and council services. Joint planning was key to removing duplication and ensuring cost-effective streamlined support. The most complex cases could cost the NHS up to £500,000 annually. Strategic investment in early care reduced long-term costs by improving children's ability to self-manage their care into adulthood.
4. The committee raised concerns about rising demand for SEND services and asked what was driving the increase.
 - The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills highlighted several contributing factors including: COVID-19's impact on early development, increased screen time, and broader diagnostic pathways, particularly around neurodivergence. The rise in mental health needs and greater awareness of SEND had also contributed to the rise. It was noted that growth in demand had slowed slightly, but high levels of need persisted.
5. The committee asked if the increase in SEND demand was a temporary spike or a long-term trend.
 - The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills explained that monitoring suggested the trend would likely continue, with early years children showing significant needs. Some leveling off had been observed, but structural challenges in the system and national funding gaps meant that high demand was expected to remain.

6. The committee enquired as to whether short breaks were adequately meeting family needs.
 - The Service Manager Children with Disabilities stated that short breaks had been praised in the inspection. Children with complex needs received swift access to breaks post-assessment and there was currently no waiting list. The number of providers and types of break available had broadened, and communication with families relating to services and support had improved.
7. The committee considered why there had been a discrepancy between the Ofsted and Parent Carer Voice (PCV) survey responses.
 - The representative from Parent Carer Voice pointed out that parents tended to respond more readily to Ofsted surveys due to a perceived belief that they had greater impact. Local surveys were ongoing, with PCV using regular forums to gather consistent feedback and encourage trust and engagement.
8. The committee asked how the Local Offer was publicized and understood.
 - The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills explained that the Local Offer was shared via websites, newsletters, events, QR codes, SENCO networks, and family sessions. There were concerns about the term 'Local Offer' being unclear to families. Rebranding it as a support directory was under consideration and efforts were ongoing to make its function clearer and more accessible.
9. The committee enquired about the current status of specialist school capacity.
 - The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills stated that Herefordshire's special schools were full, with limited space to expand. A new free special school had been approved, but had been delayed due to slow central government processes. Capital grants were small and had been used creatively to add classrooms, but most schools were now at capacity. Business cases for new provision were being developed.
10. The committee requested details regarding how mainstream schools were supported to deliver SEND provision.
 - The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills pointed out that over 900 children with EHCPs were currently in mainstream settings within the county. A dedicated school improvement advisor focused on inclusion, and resource bases in mainstream schools had been expanded. Staff training, networking events, and advisory services were being provided to encourage inclusive practices and boost confidence and capability within mainstream settings.
11. The committee requested details regarding how SEND service outcomes were measured.
 - The Head of Additional Needs explained that annual EHCP reviews traced individual progress. Broader metrics like education participation, independence, and employment readiness were also monitored. The council used a SEND dashboard with over 400 metrics to monitor system-wide performance and guide strategic decisions.

12. The committee enquired as to if and how voluntary and community sector organisations were being engaged.

- The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills stated that groups like Marches Family Network were crucial and played a vital role. The council supported them through referrals, joint working, and exploring funding options to help them expand their reach and scale-up their services. However, demand exceeded capacity.

13. The committee asked if Ofsted's findings matched local expectations.

- The Service Director Education, Learning and Skills stated that the findings aligned with the council's self-assessment and no surprises were noted. The four improvement areas had already been identified locally and were being followed up on.

At the conclusion of the debate the committee discussed potential recommendations and the following resolutions were agreed.

Resolved:

1. That the committee note the report.

60. SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The Head of Service Starting Well introduced and gave an overview of the report, which showed progress in relation to the sufficiency of short breaks available to children, young people and their families within Herefordshire. The report identified opportunities for further development and confirmed how the service was moving forward to co-produce the Local Offer.

It was explained that following the SEND inspection the service had challenged itself to answer the following four questions:

- How do we publicise information re short break services at a universal, targeted and specialist level and how effective are we in doing so?
- Are we assured that there is transparency and equity across the system giving opportunity to children of all ages, disability and level of need?
- Are we using the services that we have in place efficiently and do they offer safe, flexible and cost-effective choice to families?
- How are we going to develop increased sufficiency that delivers flexibility and choice for families ensuring that they can access a short break safely and easily?

The Head of Service Starting Well provided an overview of the response from the service to the questions.

The Chair invited comments and discussion from the committee in relation to the report. The key points of the discussion are detailed below:

1. The committee asked for an outline of the main issues around recruitment in short breaks and foster care placements.

- The Head of Service Starting Well explained that recruitment remained a key challenge, particularly for complex needs and overnight care, it was pointed out that a dedicated fostering post was currently vacant due to staff illness. Task-and-finish groups and marketing initiatives were underway and a collaboration with 'Shared Lives' was being explored to extend support for young people
2. The committee enquired about feedback provided by families regarding short breaks.
- The representative from Parent Carer Voice (PCV) explained that parents had welcomed improvements relating to prepaid card usage and spending guidance. Families especially appreciated broader and clearer guidance on how and where to spend allowances, and a direct debit function - added via a new provider - had been well received.
3. The committee asked whether supply for short breaks was currently meeting demand
- The Service Manager Children with Disabilities stated that regarding group-based short breaks there was enough capacity in numbers, but not always in fit, such as location and appropriateness for child.
 - Families in areas such as Ross-on-Wye and Leominster were underserved due to the centralisation of provision in Hereford.
 - It was explained that regarding overnight provision there was a clear gap due to staffing issues at the NHS-run Osborne Court, which had paused service. The local authority and Integrated Care Board were urgently reviewing options for children with complex health needs.
4. The committee asked if the council was able to work with economic development colleagues to grow a local provider market?
- The Head of Service Starting Well stated that a market engagement strategy was launching in April/May and open-ended questions would be sent out to local and regional providers about appetite and feasibility.
 - The council was part of a 14-strong local authority regional partnership sharing provider innovations.
 - Procurement rules were being simplified to support small and informal providers, such as those run by parents or in community halls.
5. The committee asked how the council was supporting personal assistant (PA) development, and how it was listening to their needs?
- The Head of Service Starting Well explained that the hourly rate had been raised from £13.80 to £14.31 and new training and continuing professional development offers were in place for PAs.
 - There had been a collaboration with schools to grow the PA pool. For families hiring PAs privately, the council had limited structured engagement, but recognized the need to develop this while respecting family autonomy. The service was looking to create a pool of trained, available PAs with shared information on availability and skillsets.

6. The committee asked whether services were quality assured and equitably accessed?
 - The Head of Service Starting Well pointed out that work was ongoing to gather qualitative and geographic data such as the child's age, needs and where they lived.
 - The QA team was embedded in commissioning to work directly with providers beyond current requirements, and transparency in decision-making and data monitoring was improving.
7. The committee asked whether families were breaking down due to a lack of short breaks, and whether there was any data relevant to that.
 - The Service Manager Children with Disabilities confirmed that there had been no recent cases where families had broken down solely due to a lack of short breaks.
 - When crises emerged, multi-agency support packages were put in place in relation to mental health, education and social care.
 - Short-term breaks were used tactically to alleviate crisis risk. Family breakdowns were typically multi-factorial and not attributed only to short-break availability.
8. In relation to social needs and peer relationships for teens with SEND, the committee enquired how the council was replicating the social environment lost with Old Ledbury Road, especially in regarding teenagers.
 - The Head of Service Starting Well explained that this had been recognised as a gap and that current short breaks did not always foster social interaction or friendships.
 - The aim was to create peer-based group activities and overnight options, but providers preferred block-booked arrangements and families preferred flexible, personalised care. Trying to strike a balance between provider viability and family choice was ongoing.
9. The committee considered whether it would be possible to explore a last minute-style booking model to utilize spare care capacity?
 - The Service Manager Children with Disabilities stated that there was not currently such a system in place, but acknowledged it was an innovative idea and the council would be willing to explore tech-based, flexible booking systems in future market development work.
10. The committee enquired about family involvement in service design and whether families could be more involved in trade-off decisions around block bookings and flexible services.
 - The Head of Service Starting Well pointed out that this was already being discussed with Parent Carer Voice and other stakeholders.
 - It was acknowledged that other local authorities had successfully used collaborative funding discussions and that informed co-design was essential when making decisions about how to spend limited funding.

11. The committee asked whether community groups were better positioned than formal providers to respond flexibly?
- The Head of Service Starting Well suggested this was possibly the case in relation to targeted or universal support, but less so for complex health needs.
 - Safer Communities grants had received an unprecedented level of interest and the council was following up with grantees to explore conversion into longer-term short break provision.
12. The committee asked if the council was tracking long-term outcomes from changes in short breaks provision?
- The Service Manager Children with Disabilities stated outcome tracking was not explicitly longitudinal yet, but the service was starting to build better data to track impact in relation to service use, PA employment and parent satisfaction.
 - It was pointed out that the 'Visible and Valued Week' in May would serve as a community benchmark to build awareness and confidence.
13. The committee acknowledged the substantial work and progress in developing and improving the short breaks offer for children and families, and thanked all contributors for their feedback and involvement.

At the conclusion of the debate the committee discussed potential recommendations and the following resolution was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1. That the committee note the report.**

61. RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer gave an overview of the responses received in relation to recommendations made in 2024 and advised that the committee would need to decide what it wished to do with the responses in a future meeting.

The committee suggested that it might be helpful to arrange a workshop to help committee/council members to better understand - through officer feedback - how to make recommendations that would help improve the work of the executive.

Action: A workshop to be arranged with committee members and officers to discuss crafting effective recommendations.

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer read out a recommendation that had been made by the Herefordshire Council Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 12 March 2025 and the Chair proposed that this be approved by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:

Resolved:

That Herefordshire Council:

- 1. Ensures that the statutory scrutiny officer drafts a cross-scrutiny committee protocol, to ensure timely responses with faster escalation as required to outstanding recommendations.**

62. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme included at item 10 of the agenda and unanimously approved the following recommendation:

Resolved That:

- 1. The committee agree the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as Appendix 1.**

63. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 27 May 2025, 2pm

The meeting ended at 17:09

Chairperson



Title of report: Work programme 2025-26

Meeting: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 27 May 2025

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

To consider the draft work programme for Herefordshire Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2025-26.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee agree the draft work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as appendix 1, which will be subject to monthly review, as the basis of their primary focus for the remainder of the municipal year.**

Alternative options

1. The committee could decline to agree a work programme for its future committee meetings. This would likely result in unstructured and purposeless meetings.
2. The committee could also decline to identify areas of potential collaboration or alignment of work with other committees. This could result in duplication or overlap of work.

Key considerations

3. A fundamental part of good scrutiny is planning and agreeing a programme of work for the committee to undertake. A well-considered work programme:

- a. identifies priorities for the committee's work that align with corporate and partnership priorities, as well as reflecting community concern;
 - b. ensures that each identified topic has clear objectives that focus the committee's work;
 - c. creates a timetable for the committee's programme of work so that the committee carry out its work at the optimal time; and
 - d. provides officers and partners with requirements for evidence that will support the committee in providing evidence-based scrutiny
4. Herefordshire Council has recently concluded a review of its scrutiny function. Although the recommendations from this review had not yet been formally endorsed by Council at the time of publication, work is underway to implement some of the review's findings. Central to the review was a recommendation for the council's scrutiny's committees to reorient their programmes of work towards more informal ways of working.
 5. Accordingly, the committee's current programme is agreed to September 2025 and attached as Appendix 1. Within this programme is a proposal to carry out a task and finish group to look at all form of pastoral, community and social care support (otherwise known as early help) for children, young people, and families in Herefordshire. The committee will consider a terms of reference for this work at its meeting in June. Whether or not it agrees to carry out this work will determine much of the committee's work programme after September 2025. Accordingly it is proposed to table a revised work programme for this committee at its next meeting in June 2025.
 6. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is the council's most recently published forward plan of key decisions.

Community impact

7. Effective scrutiny enables the committee to reflect community concern, one of the four purposes of scrutiny as outlined by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

Environmental impact

8. This report contains no direct environmental impacts. However the work that the committee will undertake resulting from agreeing this work programme may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline their potential environmental impact.

Equality duty

9. 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. This report contains no direct equality impacts. However the reports and issues that the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline the any associated equality impacts for committee consideration.

Resource implications

10. This report constitutes part of the typical function of this committee. Similarly, a programme of work undertaken by committee is an integral part of the council's 'business as usual'. There is no resource implication in setting or agreeing a work programme. However agreed topics in the work programme, in particular any requests for bespoke research or the involvement of outside

experts or community groups, may incur resource costs. These will be contained in any reporting or planning of agreed topics within this work programme.

Legal implications

11. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
12. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

Risk management

13. There are no risks identified in the committee agreeing an effective and timely programme of work. However there is a risk to the council's reputation if committees fail to set a work programme, or set a programme of work that does not address local authority, partnership or community priorities.

Consultees

14. In drafting this work programme, consideration has been given to:
 - a. The previous work of scrutiny committees;
 - b. Priorities suggested by members of the committee; and
 - c. Work with Herefordshire Council officers to develop topics and agree optimum timings to bring items for consideration.
15. This work programme is subject to ongoing review, which may involve additional consultees.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee work programme 2025-26
 Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan 16 May 2025

Background papers

None



Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Committee Meeting

27 May 2025 **report deadline 15 May 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Child exploitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand different ways children are at risk of exploitation and the factors that contribute to that risk, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal exploitation Sexual exploitation Unaccompanied asylum seekers Scrutinise how the different agencies work together to tackle exploitation, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of intelligence Online safety training in schools and the wider community Appraise the multi-agency response to children who go missing Scrutinise the role of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership in tackling exploitation. Other objectives to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member briefing on child exploitation Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults - county lines Childrens-society-Criminal-Exploitation-Stages-of-Recruitment Exploitation Safety Plan Practice Guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachel Gillott, Service Director, Safeguarding West Mercia Police Lorna Tilley, West Mercia Youth Justice Service Wye Valley NHS Trust Christine Wellington, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership exploitation lead
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Exploitation Safety Plan Practice Guidance

Committee Meeting

24 June 2025 **report deadline 12 June 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Early help for children and families task and finish group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree terms of reference for a task and finish group to consider all forms of early help for children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Improvement Plan and Quality Assurance Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on phase three of the improvement plan and end of year performance Update on complaints to Children and Young People Directorate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tina Russell, Director of Children's Services Dylan Harrison, Head of Service, Safeguarding and Review Suzanne Simms, Service Manager Quality Assurance Tilly Page – Complaints and Compliments
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

16 September 2025 **report deadline 4 September 2025** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Youth Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorna Tilley, West Mercia Police Gareth Boulton, Chief Executive West Mercia Police and Crime Commission

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Justice Board team manager - Herefordshire
Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tina Russell - Director of Children's Services Kayte Dixon-Thompson – Community Resilience Manager Vicky Leader Service Manager Early Help and Prevention Holly Powell – Team Manager, Get Safe Niall Crawford – Lead Officer for Education Safeguarding Social Inclusion and Elective Home Education Christine Wellington – Head of Service, Children in Need of Support and Assessment

Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual review of effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutinise the partnership's work for 2023-2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kevin Crompton – Independent Scrutineer, Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Angela Wilson – Safeguarding Partnerships Business Manager Board Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tina Russell, Director of Children's Services Leanne Lowe Natalie Solomon Sub Group Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heather Manning Dylan Harrison Christine Wellington Liz Farr
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Children and Young People and Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People, both have a standing invitation to each committee meeting. It is assumed that the portfolio holder will attend each meeting.

Committee Briefings

The committee will carry out a number of briefings, dates to be agreed

Topic	Objectives
Fostering	Update to the committee following its scrutiny in late 2025

Complaints	Update to committee following its scrutiny in July 2024
School Capital Programme	Overview on the current programme and its priorities
Families First Programme	Overview of funding origins, purpose and delivery

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



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

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

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

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

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

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

FORWARD PLAN FOR 1 June 2025 ONWARDS

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

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

30

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

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

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

Q4 2024/25 Budget Report To report the provisional financial outturn position for 2024/25 for revenue and capital budgets, subject to external audit.	Cabinet 5 June 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance <small>Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383775</small>	Corporate Support Centre	9 May 2025	Non Key Open
Q4 Performance Report Review performance for Q4 2024/25; and agree any outstanding key milestones in Appendix A to be carried forward to the Delivery Plan 2025/26.	Cabinet 5 June 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence <small>jessica.karia@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976</small>	Corporate Support Centre	9 May 2025	Non Key Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Risk Management Strategy To approve the Risk Management Strategy.	Cabinet 5 June 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance <small>Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383775</small>	Corporate Support Centre	9 May 2025	Non Key Open
Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2025 to 2028 To approve the new strategy for reducing the prevalence of and preventing domestic abuse throughout the county.	Cabinet 17 July 2025	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Kayte Thompson-Dixon, Contracts officer <small>Kayte.Thompson-Dixon@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260727</small>	Community Wellbeing	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
New care facility To consider and agree the business case to invest in and develop the council's own care facility in Herefordshire to meet future demand	Cabinet 25 September 2025	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Hilary Hall, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Hayley Doyle, Service Director - All Age Commissioning <small>Hilary.Hall@herefordshire.gov.uk, Hayley.Doyle@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260832</small>	Community Wellbeing	9 May 2025	KEY
Cabinet Member Decisions (Key decisions only)					
Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing					
Portfolio: children and young people					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Housing related support for children in care and care leavers aged 16-25 To seek approval to commission, by means of a competitive tender process in line with the council's contract procedure rules, a housing related support service for 16–25-year-old children in care and care leavers	Cabinet member children and young people 4 July 2025	Cabinet member children and young people Wendy Dyer, Commissioning Officer Communities <small>Wendy.Dyer@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 261673</small>	Community Wellbeing	9 May 2025	KEY Open
Portfolio: community services and assets					
Play Area Investment The purpose of this report is to set out how the £1 million for Play Area Investment is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member community services and assets 23 May 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets Leigh Whitehouse, Group Manager-Streetscene, Public Rights of Way and Traffic Management <small>leigh.whitehouse@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Bromyard Employment Land and Leominster Business Hub Development To seek approval to allocate and spend the Employment Land capital budget to bring forward detailed designs and accompanying business case for the development of business space on the former Bromyard Depot site, and to establish a business hub facility on the ground floor of the Buttercross Building in Leominster.	Cabinet member community services and assets 30 May 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth David Wright, Head of Economy and Regeneration <small>David.Wright3@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383039</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open
Property Services Estate Capital Building Improvement Programme 2025/28 To agree the proposed programme of works as set out in appendices incorporating a series of planned project works to enable Council to deliver on its obligations to maintain buildings fit for purpose.	Cabinet member community services and assets 30 May 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets Michael Griffin, Head of Major Projects, Anthony Oliver, Interim Director of Commercial Services <small>Michael.Griffin2@herefordshire.gov.uk, anthony.oliver@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383519</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Retaining of the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School To approve the retention of and structural improvements to the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School	Cabinet member community services and assets 20 June 2025	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development <small>Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Children and Young People	9 May 2025	Non Key Open
Portfolio: economy and growth					
Hereford Enterprise Zone Retained Business Rates – Herefordshire Growth Programme To approve the expenditure of the retained business rates from the Hereford Enterprise Zone, to deliver a county wide business growth, skills and inward investment programme	Cabinet member economy and growth 30 May 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth <small>Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 260330</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Merton Meadows Flood Alleviation - delivery of construction works To seek approval to spend the remaining £1.2 million of the £2 million Brownfield Land Release Fund grant awarded by the government for a flood alleviation scheme on the Merton Meadow sites in Hereford to enable them to be released for development. The grant funding will be utilised to deliver the physical flood alleviation works.	Cabinet member economy and growth 27 June 2025	Cabinet member economy and growth Stephen Holland, Interim Head of Housing Development <small>stephen.holland@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	NEW ITEM	KEY Open
Portfolio: environment					
Wye Valley National Landscapes - acceptance of grant funding This report seeks approval to accept a number of confirmed and indicative funding awards, allocations and bids from National Grid, DEFRA, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales for the future management and duties of the Wye Valley National Landscape, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This report also seeks approval to delegate the review of the AONB Management Plan and the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding between the 4 constituent local authorities, on account of the complex nature of the cross-border designation.	Cabinet member environment 23 May 2025	Cabinet member environment Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services <small>bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 261930</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan To consider and adopt the new management plan for the Malvern Hills National Landscape.	Cabinet member environment 27 May 2025	Cabinet member environment James Bisset, Principal Countryside Officer, Ben Boswell, Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste Services bboswell@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 261930	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open
Portfolio: finance and corporate services					
Debt Enforcement Contract Award (amended to non key due to monetary amount) To award the debt enforcement contract	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 30 May 2025	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	9 May 2025	Non Key Open
Portfolio: roads and regulatory services					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Portfolio: transport and infrastructure					
Road Safety Schemes The purpose of this report is to set out how the £3.0 million for Road Safety Schemes is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 23 May 2025	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open
Herefordshire Flood Risk Mitigation The purpose of this report is to set out how the £2.055 million for Herefordshire Flood Risk Mitigation is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 23 May 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Steve Hodges, Directorate services team leader sthodes@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 261923	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Local Transport Grant allocation To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Economy and Environment to spend the Local Transport Grant, Local Transport Resource Fund and Integrated Transport Block funding from the Department for Transport	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 23 May 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure <small>scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open Urgent
Bus Service Improvement Plan capital funding The purpose of this report is to set out how the £1.1 million of Bus Service Improvement Plan capital spend is proposed to be spent and to seek the necessary approvals to do so.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 30 May 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure David Land, Head of Transport and Access Services <small>david.land@herefordshire.gov.uk</small> <small>Tel: 01432 383484</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	KEY Open

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Capability and Ambition Fund 2025/26 allocation The purpose of the report is to confirm what Herefordshire Council will deliver with the Capability and Ambition Fund grant	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 30 May 2025	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager, Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability & Climate Change Manager <small>ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk, scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192</small>	Economy and Environment	9 May 2025	Non Key Open

