

Corporate Support Centre
Paul Walker - Chief Executive

To: All members of the Council

our ref: Council - 25 July 2025
contact: Matthew Evans, Democratic Services
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17 July 2025

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 25 July 2025** 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 25 July 2025**

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

Email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

	Pages
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 23 May 2025.	11 - 16
4. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements.	17 - 22
How to submit questions <i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i> <i>5:00 p.m. on Monday 21 July 2025.</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. LEADER'S REPORT To receive a report from the leader on the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council in March 2025.	23 - 50
8. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS To consider Notices of Motion.	51 - 56

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 23 May 2025 at 10.30 am

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

Councillors: Polly Andrews, Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Graham Biggs, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Pauline Crockett, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Barry Durkin, Matthew Engel, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, Catherine Gennard, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Helen Heathfield, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Dan Hurcomb, Terry James, Jim Kenyon, 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, Charlotte Taylor, Richard Thomas, Kevin Tillet, Diana Toynbee, Rebecca Tully, Allan Williams, Rob Williams and Mark Woodall

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

*denotes virtual attendance

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

(The Vice-Chairperson of the Council assumed the Chair during the election of the Chairperson of the Council)

Councillor Dan Hurcomb proposed and Councillor David Hitchiner seconded the nomination of Councillor Roger Phillips as Chairperson of the Council.

A vote was taken and Councillor Phillips was elected Chairperson of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Roger Phillips is elected Chairperson of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year.

Councillor Phillips made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

(Councillor Phillips assumed the Chair of the meeting as the Chairperson of the Council)

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

Councillor Roger Phillips proposed and Councillor Justine Peberdy seconded the nomination of Councillor Stef Simmons as Vice-Chairperson of the Council.

A vote was taken and Councillor Simmons was appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Stef Simmons is appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year.

Councillor Simmons made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dave Boulter and Mark Dykes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

7. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst proposed and Councillor Barry Durkin seconded the nomination of Councillor Jonathan Lester as Leader of the Council.

A vote was taken and Councillor Lester was elected as Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jonathan Lester is elected Leader of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS - SCRUTINY REVIEW

Council considered a report by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer which provided the outcomes of the scrutiny review and recommended changes to the council's constitution.

Councillor Roger Phillips moved the report and proposed the recommendations and Councillor Jonathan Lester seconded the recommendations.

There was an adjournment at 11:19 a.m.; the meeting reconvened at 11:28 a.m.

Councillor Liz Harvey proposed and Councillor Pauline Crockett seconded an amendment to the proposed recommendations as below:

That Council:

- 1. Receives and notes the contents of the Scrutiny Review (in appendix 1) and agrees the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's recommendations except:
 - Council proposes a reduction in the number of scrutiny committees from five to four, and*
- 2. That public questions are focussed on agenda items under consideration by the committee meeting to which they are submitted.*

Council debated the amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and was lost by a simple majority.

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

RESOLVED – That:

Council:

- a. **Agrees with the contents of the Scrutiny Review (in appendix 1) and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's recommendations;**
- b. **Agrees that the number of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should remain as current (as set out in 9 J, below); and**
- c. **Authority is given to the Monitoring Officer to make any requisite changes and amendments to the council's constitution as a result of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's recommendations (as set out in 9 M-O, below).**

There was an adjournment at 11:33 a.m.; the meeting reconvened at 11:55 a.m.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council considered a report by the solicitor to the Council relating to appointments to committees of the Council and outside bodies in line with the rules of political proportionality. The Chairman outlined the tabled supplement, published on 23 May, which contained: an updated table under paragraph 11 of the report with two proposals for the allocation of a Conservative seat on the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee; and an updated appendix 2 with details of the number of seats on the scrutiny management board and the allocation of seats to political groups.

Recommendation (a)

Councillor Roger Phillips proposed and Councillor Dave Davies seconded recommendation (a) which was carried.

RESOLVED: That the list of ordinary committees listed at paragraph 10 are confirmed with their terms of reference as set out in the council's constitution.

Recommendation (b)

Councillor Jonathan Lester proposed and Councillor Dan Hurcomb seconded proposal 1 – as contained in the tabled supplement published on 23 May 2025 – to allocate a Conservative seat on the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee to the Not Aligned members.

Councillor Diana Toynbee proposed and Councillor Mark Woodall seconded proposal 2 – as contained in the tabled supplement published on 23 May 2025 – to allocate a Conservative seat on Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee to the Independents for Herefordshire group.

Council voted on the two proposals above and proposal 1 was carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED: That the number of seats on each committee as set out in the table below is approved:

Committee	Con	IfH	Lib Dem	Green	T Ind	NA	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	2	0	2	2	0	1	7
Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny	3	1	2	1	0	0	7
Planning and Regulatory	6	2	3	3	1	0	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>56</i>

Council raised a query related to the substitution of not aligned members on committees and it was explained that information would be provided following the meeting.

Recommendation (c)

Recommendation (c) was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED: That the allocation of seats on outside bodies to political groups as set out in paragraph 13 is approved.

Recommendation (d)

Recommendation (d) was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of five co-opted members of children and young people scrutiny committee is approved as follows:

- i. one representative as nominated by the diocese of Hereford
- ii. one representative as nominated by the archdiocese of Cardiff
- iii. three parent governors as elected from the school sector

Recommendation (e)

Recommendation (e) was put to the vote and was carried with no votes against.

RESOLVED: That the suspension of the rules of proportionality in respect of the standards panel, the River Lugg Drainage Board, and the Wye Valley National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee is approved.

Recommendation (f)

Council noted the table of committee membership (in appendix 1 to the report) which outlined the current chairpersons and vice chairpersons of Council committees. The Chairman updated the table listed in appendix 1 with the following changes:

- Councillor Ben Proctor as Vice Chairperson of the Children and Young Person Scrutiny Committee; and
- Councillor Kevin Tillett as Vice Chairperson of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

The table in appendix 1, as amended, was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of committee chairpersons and vice chairpersons for the forthcoming municipal year is approved as follows:

Committee	Position	Councillor
Audit and governance committee	Chairperson	Councillor David Hitchiner
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Mark Woodall
Children and young people scrutiny committee	Chairperson	Councillor Toni Fagan
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Ben Proctor
Connected communities scrutiny committee	Chairperson	Councillor Ed O'Driscoll
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Employment panel	Chairperson	Councillor Jonathan Lester
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Diana Toynbee
Environment and sustainability scrutiny committee	Chairperson	Councillor Louis Stark
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Justine Peberdy
Health, care and wellbeing scrutiny committee	Chairperson	Councillor Pauline Crockett
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Kevin Tillett
Planning and regulatory committee	Chairperson	Councillor Terry James
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Clare Davies
Licensing sub-committee	Chairperson	Councillor Polly Andrews
Scrutiny management board	Chairperson	Councillor Ben Proctor
	Vice Chairperson	Councillor Louis Stark

Recommendation (g)

Council noted the updated table in appendix 2, as contained in the tabled supplement of 23 May, which was put to the vote and was carried.

RESOLVED: That the size and political allocation of seats of the scrutiny management board is agreed as below:

	Con	IfH	Lib Dem	Green	Tind	NA	Total
Scrutiny Management Board	5	2	3	2	0	0	12

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm

Chairperson

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting
25 July 2025

Thank you to those councillors who joined me on our visit to St Micheal's hospice at Bartestree to see and hear first hand of the excellent work they are achieving. This facility is so valued in our communities and so reliant on voluntary contributions to support important care to patients and families both at the hospice and in their homes.



Last month we marked Armed Forces week, and I had the honour of speaking at the raising of the flag ceremony in Hereford Hightown together with civic dignitaries. It is estimated that nearly a quarter of all households in the county have military connections and Herefordshire schools and colleges educate several thousands of “military children”.

We have of course an important active regiment in the county and are

home to many thousands of veterans. The Council particularly promotes the Herefordshire Veterans Support centre in Widemarsh Street to support veterans and their families, and promote Employers, Charities, and Businesses to become members of the Armed Forces Covenant, again to support veterans in employment.

Several councillors joined the Vice Chair and I at a briefing on our teenage cadet teams across the County and heard first hand from several Cadets who shared their experience of the military cadets and the personal development they had gained from being members.

Armed Forces Day this year was held at the Old Market development in Hereford and was an opportunity for interaction between the public and many military organisations.

I was pleased to attend the opening of the Megan Baker house in Ledbury and witness how successfully this charity has grown in recent years. The charity

runs sessional services for adults and children with neurological motor disorders using methods of conductive education. The new centre based at the Shaw Home offers facilities and an operational hub for the charity which also outreaches throughout our own and adjoining countries operating out of village halls. Reliant on donations and grants it supports patients with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, developmental coordination disorder, brain injury, Parkinson's and strokes.

The High Sheriff joined me and some Herefordshire members of the Fire Authority to inspect the temporary Hereford Fire Station in Mortimer road in Holmer. This will be the base of the crews and appliances for the next 18 months as the old station is demolished and a new station built on the site. It is good to see the 16-million-pound project underway after over 20 years of attempting to identify a site.

The sunshine and crowds turned out for the Royal Three Counties Show in Herefordshire's year and good to see promotion of our county exhibitors and businesses. On the 26th July the 297th Three Choir Festival will begin in Hereford which will be another opportunity to showcase our county.

Cllr Roger Phillips JP



Chief Executive's report to Full Council, Herefordshire Council – July 2025

The recent **Corporate Peer Challenge**, delivered by the Local Government Association, was a positive experience for those involved. It examined five core areas - local priorities and outcomes; organisational and place leadership; governance and culture; financial planning and management; capacity for improvement – as well as (at our request) risk management, data use, and service transformation. The review team of experienced councillors and officers from other councils spent four days meeting members, staff, partners and community representatives. We gave a good account of ourselves in how we work together and with our partners. I am pleased to report that, overall, the outcome of the peer review was positive and our partnership working was particularly noted. The LGA's full report publishes in September, with our action plan to address the findings by November.

Ofsted visited on 17-18 June for the seventh monitoring visit to our children's services. The focus of the inspection centred around the quality of matching, placement and decision-making for children in care and the experiences and progress of children in care. Their formal letter of response was published on 17 July, which recognises the good progress that has been made with our improvement programme, the significantly improved quality of practice and the positive impact this is having on our care experienced children.

The next report from the Department for Education Children's Commissioner Deborah McMillan, which is an annual review of progress against our phase 2 improvement plan, is expected to be published in August. We appreciate the input we've received from Deborah since she took over this role from Eleanor Brazil in January.

I'm extremely pleased to announce that we've **appointed Tina Russell to the permanent role of Corporate Director of Children and Young People** services. Tina has worked tirelessly since joining us to successfully drive forward our children's services improvement programme at pace.

The next phase of our **children's services improvement plan** was presented to Cabinet earlier this month. The phase 3 plan continues to recognise the importance of working with children, young people and their families, and hearing their views. The new plan also includes the development and implementation of the government's Families First programme, as children's services staff transition to working with partners within local communities providing family help.

The improvement measures taken so far have led to a **reduction in the number of children and young people in council care**. There has also been a reduction in children subject to child protection processes, as the service and its partners have worked to support families experiencing challenge and crisis. The service has also seen an increase in permanent children's services staff that has enabled more stability of workers for children, and managers taking a clear and consistent leadership role.

We held our first ‘Visible and Valued’ **SEND Celebration Week** in June for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. More than 100 people took part in activities like outings, leisure, and sensory sessions - many free or discounted. It was a success, and we plan to make it annual.

A special event celebrated **Shared Lives** carers and those they support. These carers provide home-based support—from day care to full-time—for young adults leaving care, people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, or dementia. More details, including a new video, are on our [website](#).

The council has been pleased to fund new side-by-side bikes for Halo leisure centre's cycle track in Hereford. This facility **promotes cycling** for all abilities, benefiting health and wellbeing. The bikes enable people who are blind or visually impaired, and people with limited mobility to cycle safely with a driver, adding to the range of special needs bikes. The track offers a perfect setting for safe, fun and enjoyable cycling.

The council’s **draft accounts for 2024/25** were published at the end of May, a month in advance of the statutory deadline. I would like to thank Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance and her team for the tremendous efforts which made this possible. The timely completion of the accounts provides valuable assurance over the council’s financial management, and this is a huge achievement. The accounts are available to view on our website - [Draft Financial Statements 2024-25](#), alongside a set of Summary Financial Statements which provide a snapshot of the council’s financial position and performance for the year.

The Government’s **Spending Review 2025**, announced 11 June, outlines departmental revenue funding for 2026/27–2028/29, plus a fourth year for capital. It's the first multi-year review since 2021. Local council allocations await the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Reset, and Settlement process, with provisional details expected in November 2025.

In her LGA conference speech, on Thursday 3 July, the Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, announced a further step in resetting how government works with local government, by launching the [Local Government Outcomes Framework](#) (LGOF). The Framework sets 15 outcomes that Government expects to work with local authorities on to deliver key national priorities for local people and communities. Councils are being asked for their feedback by September, and the final framework is due to be published later in 2025.

On Thursday 10 July, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon OBE MP, introduced the [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill](#). The Bill builds on the government’s English Devolution White Paper, which was published in December 2024, and sets out the upcoming reorganisation of local government. It includes an outline of the devolution structures, how strategic authorities will operate and the role of Mayors.

Careful consideration is being given to what devolution will mean for Herefordshire, and we will update elected members when we are able.

Our sustainability team and Herefordshire Means Business hosted a **Big Green Business Breakfast** last month, where companies from across the county learned about better ways to build sustainability strategies into their businesses. Thanks to Elite Plastics, Ledbury Real Ale, and Allpay for sharing their experiences.

We were proud to support the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Awards with Worcestershire County Council, which took place in June. The event **celebrated local businesses** and their achievements. It's good to hear how their successes are built on county business strengths and helping to grow the local economy.

In June we held a **bus summit** with staff, members, operators, and user representatives to discuss the future of bus travel and address challenges like rural service viability, funding and infrastructure. Our aim is for better bus connectivity between Hereford and our market towns so that bus travel becomes a viable option and additional choice for getting around. Actions from the summit are progressing.

Ross Cook, Director of Economy and Environment, will be leaving the council in September. Ross has been with us for three years and has overseen progress on a large number of major projects, schemes and developments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his valued contribution, and we wish him well in his new role as Executive Director for Place with Telford and Wrekin Council. We have started the process of finding Ross' replacement and elected members will be involved in the candidate selection process.

The **Marches Forward Partnership (MFP)** Board's inaugural meeting was held on 16 July, including leaders and chief executives from Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Powys, Shropshire, plus stakeholders like health, housing, transport, and government representatives. The Board will meet quarterly to shape strategic focus and guide the work to foster more cross-border collaboration and development.

Work is continuing behind the scenes to prepare for the Local Government **Boundary Commission's electoral review** of Herefordshire Council. The electoral review is to consider the number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward. A first consultation phase is currently expected to take place from November 2025. The final recommendations will be laid in Parliament, with the new ward boundaries implemented for elections in May 2027.

I'd like to express my thanks to council staff for their preparation and response to the **recent hot weather spells**, supporting vulnerable residents, including distributing hot weather packs (bottled water, sunscreen, caps) to street homeless clients. To support residents more broadly, we've been sharing our Summer wellness tips via our various communications channels.

I was delighted to see two Herefordshire residents recognised in the **King's Birthday Honours** in June: Noel Manns with an OBE for Political and Public Service, and John Escott with the British Empire Medal for Services to Sporting Education. Congratulations to both.

At the time of writing we have not yet received a date from the **Care Quality Commission** (CQC) for their site visit to our services as part of their assessment of our adult social care services. The assessment is a new requirement as part of the Health and Care Act 2022 which places a duty on the CQC to measure how well the council is performing against its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014. The assessment framework comprises four themes: working with people; providing support, ensuring safety and leadership. We have completed the first part of the assessment which is an 'information return'. The site visit, which is anticipated to take place before the end of the year, will involve speaking with staff, managers and partners, and will be where we can demonstrate the great work we are doing. We have a positive story to tell.

As this is the last Full Council before autumn, I wish everyone a restful summer break.

Paul Walker, Chief Executive



Title of report: Leader's report to Council

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 25 July, 2025

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 7 March, 2025.

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 appendices linked to the recent Cabinet decision on the [Procurement Strategy for the Hereford Western Bypass - Phase 1 on 17 July, 2025](#). These reports were restricted under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, in Schedule 12(A) of the Act. All councillors and members of

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
John Coleman, Tel: 01432 260382, email: John.Coleman@herefordshire.gov.uk

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 2025-2026](#) 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, 25 July 2025

Appendix 2: Executive decisions taken since 7 March 2025 to 18 July 2025

Appendix 3: Cabinet member portfolios

Background papers:

None Identified

Since my last report in March, Cabinet has been working with renewed energy and focus on the 2025–2026 Delivery Plan. This detailed set of actionable milestones will help us realise the ambitions set out in the four-year Council Plan.

It ensures the council is continuing to work closely with our communities, businesses and partners, focusing on people, place, growth, and transformation, so we can continue to deliver good services, protect the most vulnerable, unlock economic growth and preserve the beauty and vibrancy of our county.

Internally, the plan is continuing our strong financial management, leadership in sustainability, and important transformation work - all guided by our values of trust, honesty, responsibility, inclusivity, value and empathy.

As you will see in the main body of my update, there is clear evidence of progress in many areas: from children's services to roads improvements. We are continuing to invest in Herefordshire, including continued progress in major projects such as the Western Growth Corridor, employment land, growth hubs, rewilding spaces and new cultural offerings.

Our valued partnerships with Town and Parish Councils remain central to our progress. The quarterly Parish Summit, in May, was a vibrant demonstration of collaboration, with officers and councillors engaging in meaningful dialogue and getting the chance to showcase services that directly benefit our communities.

The Herefordshire Councils Charter continues to receive positive feedback, and I am grateful to those who have contributed to its ongoing development. I am confident this charter will strengthen local connections, shared interests and local working, and a newly formed Parish Charter Reference Group playing a pivotal role in shaping this collaborative future.

Recent national developments in devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR) present opportunities for Herefordshire to explore regional arrangements that best serve our county's interests. Communications from the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, offers important insight into what new legislation for devolution is likely to bring forward. I welcome its emphasis on enhanced local governance and greater opportunities for regional development, as well as empowering local communities and giving them a stronger say in how devolution is determined and delivered.

The devolution framework requires us, as a council, to consider new strategic local government partnership arrangements. As you will know, the government's ambition is for all areas in England to be within a Strategic Authority and its respective constituent parts. This demands councils – neighbours - working together to consider the best options for regional government. Ultimately, it is the interests of the people of Herefordshire that will inspire and drive our approach to devolution.

Despite our request to postpone the process, so as to provide the most up to date population predictions, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England are pressing ahead with their review of the 53 wards in Herefordshire. It is really important to ensure that the boundaries continue to reflect the evolving needs of our communities and support effective representation. The Boundary Commission are likely to conclude their review within a year with any subsequent recommended changes being brought into force after our local elections in May 2027. A local member working group will be established later this year to help feed into the process.

Paul Walker and I attended a meeting of the Marches Forward Partnership, where we discussed with our colleagues in Monmouthshire, Powys and Shropshire how we are working

together to achieve regional collaboration. From food resilience to environmental investment and transport connectivity, this partnership is a positive way in which to engage with our neighbours.

Finally, I am very proud to see the findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge by the Local Government Association. Their initial feedback highlighted our strengths and offers constructive guidance as we continue to improve. They describe Herefordshire as “a good council which is striving hard to improve further.” They report us having a “good level of political maturity” and we have “developed an identity that is respected by partners”. They further recognise the improvements in children’s services and the good state of the council’s finances.

Whilst we were in Shrewsbury we were interviewed by colleagues from the Corporate Peer Challenge, who were there to review Shropshire Council. Having recently gone through the process it was important to contribute to the review and I hope that Shropshire gets as positive an outcome as we did.

I’m very pleased to present my report to you and hope you agree its contents underline our commitment to delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do.

My formal 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 2025 to 2026 – turning the strategic vision in to delivery

In my report below, I have outlined where the cabinet and cabinet members 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: Recommissioning of the stop smoking strategy

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Support all residents to live healthy lives within their communities.
This year we will:	Increase capacity and capability of addiction programmes to reduce harm from smoking, alcohol and drugs. We will increase capacity of the Herefordshire Stop Smoking Service by recruiting additional Stop Smoking Advisors and increase smoking quit rates amongst smokers by 25% aligned to the Smoke Free Generation Funding targets.

In May, the cabinet recommissioned the Pharmacotherapy function of the Herefordshire Stop Smoking Service. Despite there being a steady and consistent decline in the overall population in smoking rates, there are still an increasing proportion of ill health in our more disadvantaged communities in connection with smoking.

Smoking is one of the most significant risk factors across England contributing to premature deaths and it remains the leading risk factor for mortality, with 15% of all deaths attributable to it, which is down from 18% in 2018 (NHS Digital 2023). The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), states that 41% of premature deaths in Herefordshire are from coronary heart disease, where smoking is a contributory factor (Herefordshire Council 2025).

Stop smoking services are public health services for early identification, treatment, and interventions to prevent the onset of avoidable disease and development of long-term conditions. These diseases and other long-term conditions would otherwise take up a high level of health and social care resources. These are services mandated by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, to be funded from the ring-fenced public health grant, for which responsibility transferred from the NHS to local authorities in 2013.

This decision builds upon the evidence base, lessons learnt following a review of current services, and available resources to ensure cost effective delivery as well as better health outcomes.

2: Housing related support for children in care and care leavers aged 16-25

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	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.
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In July, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approved the commissioning of a housing related support service for 16–25-year-old children in care and care leavers. The existing service is due to expire on 28 February 2026.

The current service offers homes for 16 young people. The service currently operates from a block of properties consisting of five 2 bedroomed and six 1 bedroomed flats including one that is reserved for use as emergency access accommodation. A further 2 bedroomed property is being used as the onsite staff base/office. Currently 10 accommodation spaces are reserved for use by children's service with 6 accommodation spaces reserved for homeless young people referred by the Housing Solutions Team. The current contract is due to expire on 28 February 2026.

The council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People 2023-2028 highlighted the need to take multiple approaches to build capacity across all placements. In addition, the Ofsted inspection report on Herefordshire Children's Services published 21 September 2022 included information on the lack of support to 16/17-year old young people experiencing homelessness. Considering this information the service is being redesigned to focus on accommodation solely for use by children in care and care leavers. It will deliver a further 6 homes with additional emergency access accommodation for those 16- and 17-year-olds who require a joint assessment.

3: Sixth Ofsted Monitoring Visit - Feedback.

Contributes to Delivery Plan Objective: Support all children to have the best start in life.

In March, Cabinet received feedback from Herefordshire's sixth Ofsted monitoring visit which took place 18th and 19th February 2025. The focus of this visit was on Social Work Assessments. The focus of the inspection centred around the quality and timeliness of social work assessments. This included referrals into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub; children who require assessment to determine their needs and level of support and child protection (under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989¹). Inspectors followed through to the outcome of assessments; those that step down to Early Help or closure, those that stepped into Child in Need planning and those that stepped up to child protection planning.

The headline findings showed that the *"timely completion of assessment and support provided by social workers and family support workers has a positive impact which enables the majority of children and their families to have their needs met"* and *"leaders are now making some tangible progress to improve the quality and consistency of practice within the assessment teams"*

Other points worthy of note - Ofsted found good quality and timeliness in our social work, highlighting that:

- I. Most assessments are comprehensive and provide an evaluation of children's needs.
- II. Assessments were completed in a timely way.
- III. Social workers understand the model of practice.
- IV. Social Workers are cognisant of issues such as disguised compliance.
- V. Safeguarding concerns that emerged during assessment were responded to, with
- VI. timely strategy meetings being held to consider the risk of harm to children.
- VII. Section 47 enquiries were thorough, and risks fully understood.
- VIII. Safety plans were recorded and shared in a timely way.
- IX. Children's ethnicity considered to help understand their lived experience.

Ofsted did note, however, that our social work assessments are not usually written in a way that they are addressed directly to the child, which is recommended good practice. Some of our assessments being described as unnecessarily lengthy and repetitive. The service accepted these findings and will be ensuring training around development practice guidelines will be undertaken.

¹ Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 outlines a local authority's duty to investigate situations where a child might be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Ofsted found that there was a stronger management leadership and grip across the council to children who need the support of children's social care and that this was reflected in its corporate plans, priorities and the commitment to developing a "Child Friendly Herefordshire"

The seventh monitoring visit will likely be our last before our full re-inspection, expected at the end of 2025.

4: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Inspection Update

Contributes to Delivery Plan Objective: Support all children to have the best start in life.

Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND. Herefordshire's local area partnership SEND inspection took place on 2 to 6 December 2024.

Ofsted and CQC found that, *'Families of children and young people with SEND have varying opinions about their experiences in Herefordshire...and that ... Key leaders across the partnership know the variable experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND across Herefordshire.'*

Four areas of improvement were identified to focus on:

- I. Reducing waiting times across health services
- II. Keeping families well informed about support while waiting for assessment and diagnosis of neurodevelopment conditions
- III. Ensuring that sufficient staffing capacity and stability across health services, and
- IV. Promoting more widely the Local Offer to families.

This feedback will inform the work of the area partnership to improve the experiences and outcomes for all children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Herefordshire. The local area partnership will receive its next full inspection within the next three years.

5: Education Strategy

Contributes to Delivery Plan Objective: Support all children to have the best start in life.

In March, Cabinet agreed the Education Strategy. The education landscape within Herefordshire is both varied and diverse. The county is host to some 100 schools ranging from those that are maintained, selective, stand-alone academy trust, or those that are part of a multi-academy trust. Accountability for these settings is complex, with our Council retaining the responsibility for maintained schools. Academy Trusts are accountable to the Department for Education (DfE).

Herefordshire has good performing schools and educational settings. Most are rated positively by the inspectorate Ofsted. Performance data shows that in the majority of measures Herefordshire performs well against statistical neighbours and national averages. Our Herefordshire Education Strategy 2024/29 will provide the primary strategic driver for the Council's education team over the next five years, providing a foundation for current and future work.

The implementation of the Strategy will be supported by a service delivery plan which will be monitored regularly and updated annually. The success of the Strategy will be measured via a range of performance indicators which complement the Council Plan 2024/28.

The strategy has been informed, co-produced and developed by wide stakeholder engagement. This has included insight from children, young people, schools, early years settings and Post 16 providers. It cements the Council's position as a strong, influential leader within the wider Herefordshire Education system.

6: High Needs Budget

Contributes to Delivery Plan Objective: Support all children to have the best start in life.

In April, following recommendations made by the Schools Forum the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approved the High Needs Budget of £45.7 million for 2025/26.

The council receives funding for schools and designated central services via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is ring-fenced grant funding allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) in 4 blocks: Schools, Central School Services, High Needs and Early Years.

The High Needs Budget Outturn 2024/25 is forecast to overspend by £11.1 million in 2024/25 as at Q3. This will increase the council's total DSG deficit of £6.1 million as at 31 March 2024 to £17.2 million at 31 March 2025. The increase in forecast expenditure is largely attributable to an increase in independent school placements, with a 68% increase in places in the 12 month period from January to December 2024. A lack of sufficiency in Local Authority special school places means the Council is reliant on the independent school sector to meet the specialist education needs of children in the county. The increase in Top Up costs, driven by the national increases in Education Care & Health Plans (ECHPs), represents an additional cost pressure in 2024/25.

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020, stipulates that a deficit on the DSG must be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general resources. The 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 up to March 2026. This enables all local authorities to ring-fence the DSG deficit from the overall financial position in the statutory accounts.

Central government announced the High Needs Block funding allocation for 2025/26 on 18th December 2024. The basic structure of the high needs National Funding Formula for 2025/26 is not changing. Government is taking time to carefully consider what a fair education funding system looks like. A system that directs funding to where it is needed, and to support the Special Education Needs and Disability reforms that will be taken forward.

Of the £2.3 billion increase in national schools funding, almost £1 billion will be added to the overall high needs budget, bringing the total level of high needs funding in 2025/26 to £11.9 billion.

7: Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2025 to 2026

Delivery Plan Objective: Deliver schemes to tackle inequality that support our most vulnerable residents

This year we will: Deliver the Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF) targeted at children in receipt of free school meals.

In March, Herefordshire Council accepted the Department for Education grant for the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food programme. This programme is provided to 4,264 school aged children in Herefordshire who are eligible for Free School Meals. Children are provided with a nutritious meal and a broad range of activities preferably in a face-to-face setting during the school holidays. An overarching aim being that children become healthier, gain knowledge of nutrition, participate in a range of activities including physical activities, cooking, crafts, etc and enriching their lives whilst supporting them in development.

The programme helps ensure children do not become socially isolated over the holidays and over the summer where it is commonly known that the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers widen. The proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in Herefordshire is lower than the national average of 24.6%. However, over the past three years, the percentage of FSM eligible children has risen significantly, from 16.5% to 18.9%. The rising cost of living and increasing financial pressures on families being principal drivers of this increase. Children receiving FSM are likely to have reduced access to a wide range of extracurricular activities, making programmes like HAF even more essential.

Theme 2: 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.

8: Bromyard Employment Land and Leominster Business Hub Development

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Develop an outline business case for the potential development of business units on the Bromyard Depot site
This year we will:	Develop outline business case, develop full business case and appoint Design team

In July, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets approved up to £3.5 million (capital) spend of the Employment Land capital budget. This will bring forward detailed designs and an accompanying business case for the development of business workspace units on the former Bromyard Depot site. This decision is designed to support the development of local co-working business hubs in Leominster and the other remaining market towns.

The Herefordshire Economic Plan identifies a critical need for employment land and business space in strategic locations to support the growth of higher value jobs in the county. As part of the 2024/25 Capital Budget, the council allocated £12 million to support the development of employment land across the county. £8million of this was allocated towards the development of Ross Enterprise Park, the remaining £4 million was identified for initiatives to support the development of employment land and business incubation space within market towns.

Investment is designed to be placed in areas where there is clearly a market failure, and where council investment could help bring forward opportunities for business growth within a relatively short timescale (1 to 2 years). This decision approved spend of up to £3.5 million to develop 25 business units on the site of the former Bromyard Depot, including the procurement and award of contract to a design team and a contractor thereafter. The council is continuing to work with the private sector, looking to identify viable sites for possible council development.

9: United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation 2025/2026

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Attract external funding to help address skills gaps and business needs
This year we will:	Seek Cabinet Member approval to implement the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) for 25-26

Each 'Lead Local Authority' was allocated a three-year funding commitment, under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, subject to the development, submission and approval of a suitable Investment Plan. Herefordshire was allocated £7,545,330 between 2022/23 and 2024/25, of which £903,194 was for 'Multiply' adult numeracy support. Herefordshire was also awarded £1,705,669 REPF funding from DEFRA. These programmes are nearing the deadline of 31 March 2025, and the Government has announced that no funds can be rolled into next year.

On 13 December 2024, Herefordshire Council received correspondence from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Growth and Building Safety, detailing 2025/26 national UKSPF allocations. Herefordshire has been allocated £2,172,966, made up of £401,198 capital and £1,771,768 revenue. The letter further confirmed that by extending the Fund for a transition year, government is providing certainty of funding to places in advance of wider local growth funding reforms. The government will also set out more detail on the Regional Growth Strategy alongside, and integrated with, plans for infrastructure, investment and the industrial strategy.'

Theme 3: 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.

10: Phosphate income/credits

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Value nature and uphold environmental standards to minimise pollution and maximise biodiversity.

At the point of drafting, £1,363,434.52 (up by £12,236.00 since my last report in March) in phosphate income has been received. To date these actions have released planning permissions for 811 dwellings (an increase of 17 dwellings since March). The Council will receive a further £366,480.00 on commencement of development on these sites.

11: River Restoration

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Support and facilitate the partnership approach to address river pollution

This year we will: Work with partners to support in bringing forward river restoration projects

On 28 July 2022 Cabinet resolved to establish a Cabinet Phosphates Commission. Its purpose is to consider how the Council and its partners can progress the wider strategic issues needed to address Phosphate pollution in the River Wye. This decision was taken on the basis of the strong resident support for taking further action to address the significant social, economic and environmental impact to the county. The Commission increases the capacity available to address the issue beyond the work of the Nutrient Management Board.

In February, the Cabinet Member for Environment drew down funding from the Cabinet Commission to assist with our ongoing efforts in the delivery of river restoration projects. The remaining £230,000, within the capital programme, allocated to the Phosphate Commission alongside grant funding for the continued work on river restoration of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of £100,000 from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, totalling £330,000.

The Council continues to work with cross-border partners securing Welsh Government funding of £81,000 for the development of the river catchment evidence base for the Nutrient Management Plan. Natural Resources Wales along with Powys and Monmouthshire are collaborating with the Environment Agency (EA) – taking the lead on the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan.

This funding will ensure field trials can take place within our own catchment to assess the efficacy of new measures to reduce phosphates within our soils and waterways. I am very proud that Herefordshire Council continues to show leadership and example at the forefront of bringing forward solutions in respect of this complex problem.

12: Shire Hall Phase 2 Refurbishment Work

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Finalise the design proposals and start construction of the Shire Hall Library and Learning Centre
This year we will:	Procure contractors for the build refurbishment • Commence refurbishment of the Shire Hall building

Since opening in 1817, the Shire Hall has been, and remains an iconic building situated in St Peter's Square in the heart of Hereford city centre. Its use has long been associated with the courts of justice in Hereford. The Shire Hall itself has been identified as a key strategic site, needing investment to bring it back into use, this following a significant ceiling collapse in Courtroom 1 in June 2020. Since then, the Shire Hall has remained out of use due to ongoing safety concerns.

In October 2023 a decision was taken to allocate capital funding for a new Library and Learning Centre to be located in the Shire Hall. This investment will enable the building to undergo wider restoration to make the Shire Hall not just safe and useable, but to be able to host additional services. A combination of existing and new capital funding was allocated in the 2024 capital programme to this end.

The initial allocation was to deliver the first of multiple phases which would make up the intended longterm strategy to fully restore the building. The continued restoration beyond phase 1 brings a number of ongoing benefits:

- Further progresses the return of a key council owned asset to productive use and appearance.
- Fulfil the responsibilities of the council as keeper and custodian of a key heritage asset and maintains the previously stated commitment towards full restoration of the building.
- Introduction of additional features to reduce carbon impact and future running costs, including solar photovoltaic renewable energy, Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting and improved window efficiency
- Continued improvement in the quality of the built environment surrounding the new library, and
- The implementation of phase 2 funding at this stage allows phases 1 and 2 to be procured and delivered together, increasing economies as compared to delivering both phases in isolation.

In line with the above, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets approved the drawdown and spend of £1.0m for the purpose of bringing forward phase 2 of the refurbishment works.

13: Highways Infrastructure Investment - Additional Funding

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Deliver the highways maintenance investment programme across the county.
This year we will:	Deliver £10m of investment in the resurfacing of the County's highway network through the Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways 1 and 2 programmes

In April, the Cabinet Member for Roads and Regulatory Services approved additional investment in road infrastructure following the Council's decision to approve the 2025/26 Capital Investment Budget.

In February the Council approved a Capital Programme Review and Update report which allocated £5.0 million additional budget for investment in Highway Infrastructure. This is enabling investment in a surface dressing programme which will be carried out across 2025/26 and 2026/27. As the Council is not permitted to use Corporate Funded Borrowing for preventative maintenance type works (surface dressing), the £5.0 million additional budget for Highway Infrastructure will replace the equivalent amount that is allocated for capital works.

The £5.0 million additional budget for Highway Infrastructure Investment will be invested in works across highway asset types including carriageways, footways, structures, vehicle restraint systems, street lighting and traffic signals and drainage and flood risk. The highway forward programme will be used to identify sites that satisfy this condition and would be taken forward for delivery, with roads requiring work being agreed over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 investment period.

14: Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways - Additional Funding

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Deliver the highways maintenance investment programme across the county.
This year we will:	Deliver £10m of investment in the resurfacing of the County's highway network through the Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways 1 and 2 programmes

Also, in April, the Cabinet Member for Roads and Regulatory Services approved additional investment in road resurfacing of £5 million. This investment will look to improve the A and B road network in the county through a programme of resurfacing Herefordshire Highways, with an expected spend profile across 2025/26. The funding has been made available through Council funded prudential borrowing. The resurfacing works will have a forty-year useful economic life on roads that require resurfacing, with the existing layers removed and a new surface laid.

As part of its duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the public highway, the Council uses various data collection and survey methods to capture the condition of the network. On an annual basis, data collected from these surveys is used to classify roads into condition bands that range from 1 (Very Poor Condition) to 5 (Good Condition). The data collected is then used to update the forward programme of works held by the highways team, from which the annual plan of work is selected. Investment in the right road and at the right time is critical, given that the average treatment cost associated with preventing a road from slipping down the condition bands is less than the average treatment.

15: Local Transport Grant Allocation

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure network in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county
This year we will:	Complete construction of the Transport Hub Progress the delivery of the Holme Lacy safe pedestrian corridor improvements and complete the design work and start

construction on the Aylestone Hill safe pedestrian corridor improvements

In July, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure approved the draw down of £4,760,000 Local Transport Grant, £1,077,000 Integrated Transport Block (capital funding) and £242,000 Local Transport Resource Fund (revenue),

The Department for Transport (DfT) advised the council in late April that this additional funding was being made available. This money must be spent in 2025/26. If it is not spent within this timeframe the DfT will instigate a clawback process. DfT have accepted that the time frames required to develop and deliver new infrastructure schemes are tight. In this regard they have agreed that this funding can be used means to top up funding on schemes being delivered in the current programme.

The Council will use the capital Local Transport Grant and Integrated Transport Block grant funding to support the delivery of infrastructure schemes. Priority spend will seek to top up the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and Active Travel Programme works already planned for delivery in 2025/26. This includes the Transport Hub, Holme Lacy Road, Aylestone Hill, Safer School Streets, Quiet Lanes and Great Western Way active travel improvement schemes. The Local Transport Resource Fund will be used to support the development of the Local Transport Plan as well as provide further capacity of the public transport team.

To ensure that all of the funding is spent in-year, some of the funding may be used to bring forward highways maintenance works planned for 2026/27 in to 2025/26.

16: Allocate and spend Active Travel Measures funding on delivery of Transport Hub

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure network in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county
This year we will:	Complete the Transport Hub

In March, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure agreed to draw down and re-allocate spend of £1,000,000 on Active Travel Measures. This funding was previously allocated to Hereford Enterprise Zone Quiet Routes on delivery of the Transport Hub

The Transport Hub is designed to act as a gateway to Hereford City. It meets the technical requirements of Network Rail, Transport for Wales, bus companies, and taxi operators while at the same time providing a fully integrated hub for vehicle and pedestrian movements. User welfare and safety have underpinned the design, orientation, lighting, and reductions of carbon in the construction process.

This project is co-ordinated with other City Link Road activities with the overall aim of removing barriers to public transport, pedestrian, and cycle movements and to help meet the Council's overall stated ambition of "Greening the City". A key objective of the Transport Hub is to also support economic growth, improve accessibility and encourage active travel in line with the adopted policies of Herefordshire Council, and Central Government. Design work for the Transport Hub commenced in April 2022 and has now reached RIBA Stage 4. Planning permission was approved in May 2024.

17: The new Food Waste Collection Service

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Reduce waste, increase reuse and increase recycling
This year we will:	Develop a new food waste collection service

In May, Cabinet agreed the Food Waste Collection Service. The new food waste service will include the purchase of new food waste containers in the form of a small food waste caddy for

residents to use in the kitchen to dispose of food waste in. There will also be provision of compostable caddy liners to ensure that food waste can be disposed of hygienically. A larger outside caddy will be used for collection. Alongside this there will be a dedicated new food waste collection fleet and improvements to the Waste Collection depots. FCC, our appointed food waste contractor, require a 10 month mobilisation period of the new service, which will commence by 31 March 2026.

A dedicated communications and promotional campaign will be developed and launched prior to the start date to raise awareness of the new service. This will encourage participation, information for residents on the items that can be diverted from their general rubbish bin and recycled through the new service.

18: The new Garden Waste Collection Service

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Reduce waste, increase reuse and increase recycling
This year we will: Develop a new garden waste collection service

Informed by the outcome of the public consultation exercise the proposed service includes, a fortnightly service operating all year round (except over Christmas and New Year weeks). It will recover its own costs by charging an annual subscription fee. It will also introduce new brown bins, new garden waste collection fleet and improvement works at the Waste Collection depots.

The new garden waste service will achieve full cost recovery as soon as the customer base exceeds 16,000 households, equivalent to approximately 19.3% of households (excluding flats). Benchmark research showed that, for similar authorities, there was a 44% uptake of this type of service. Our own consultation indicated that 51.2% of residents would be willing to pay £55 for a seasonal 36 week service, but with a preference for a 50 week service.

The recommended charge of £60 is in line with benchmarking of other local authority schemes and is cheaper for residents than private sector schemes. It is proposed that the existing green garden sack collection service is discontinued with the introduction of the new service.

A dedicated communications and promotional campaign will be developed and launched prior to the start date to raise awareness of the new service ahead of it commencing in March, 2026. This will encourage participation, information for residents on the items that can be disposed of as part of this new service.

19: Student Accommodation Update and Recommended Course of Action (legacy work from the 2024 to 2025 Delivery Plan)

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Develop Herefordshire as a place for growth, prosperity and communities to thrive
This year we will: Work with an investment partner to develop student accommodation across the city and Cabinet to consider a business case to progress investment models to build student accommodation

The Cabinet Member Community Services and Assets made the decision on 29 February 2024 to procure and appoint a development partner to take Student Accommodation proposals up to and including RIBA stage 3 position. They were also asked to advise on future investment models and support in the creation of business cases for cabinet to gain authorisation to further advance the proposals on two sites in Hereford City – Edgar St Stadium (Blackfriars St) and College Road Campus which are both owned by the council and leased.

This feasibility study was commissioned to outline the viability of student accommodation in the city. The former Director of Resources and Assurance also awarded a pre-development agreement to Cityheart for the student accommodation feasibility study and approved expenditure of up to £253,679. The development partner's role was to:

- a. Assess existing site and feasibility outputs for completeness and suitability.
- b. Undertake to source/produce information to fill any gaps identified.
- c. Develop both sites to a coherent RIBA Stage 2 status.
- d. Progress identification of construction cost on the scheme.
- e. Progress planning matters.
- f. Undertake Scope and price any site surveys and investigations needed to inform the works.
- g. Provide technical project management, cost planning/estimating, risk management and design co-ordination throughout each stage, and
- h. Develop a business case to review development and financing options, to inform development, construction and the operating model for any future student accommodation on Edgar Street and College Road Campus.

The feasibility stage also included consideration of options around building a football stand for Hereford Football Club at the same end as the Student Accommodation. The feasibility study concluded that there is a very significant viability gap in the proposed development of student accommodation in these locations at this time. To develop the potential 400 student accommodation units across the two sites, as well as a new stand at the football club, would require an unrecoverable investment of over £18 million.

With this advice being issued, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets decided that the council not to proceed with RIBA3 and the project is not progressed further at this time.

20: Procurement of a professional services supplier to support Highways & Infrastructure

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure network in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county

In May, the Cabinet agreed the procurement of a professional services supplier to support Highways & Infrastructure. Across Environment and Economy teams there is a need for highways and transport professional services support. Currently, most of this support is procured through frameworks or through one-off open tender procurements. However, following the re-procurement of the Public Realm contract the Highways team has identified the need for regular access to top up design services as well as specialists' advice. This is currently provided through the Balfour Beatty Living Places contract.

A number of other service areas regularly have need of support services and it makes sense to combine these needs into one contract to ensure best value and to enable the authority to respond quickly to emerging issues and opportunities; but also to gain the benefits from having an established relationship with a professional services partner who has a vested interest in Herefordshire.

To assist with the delivery of highways, transport and infrastructure work the council requires the services of an external professional services partner possessing specialist technical skill to provide specialist design, project management and transport planning services to supplement and support Herefordshire's in-house teams.

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

21: Transformation Strategy

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Deliver the year one objectives of the council's Transformation Strategy and support implementation of the future council target operating model
This Year we will:	Deliver the Transformation Strategy - year one objectives

In April, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services approved the Council's Transformation Strategy. This strategy lays the ground for a framework to deliver a programme of significant organisational change to support Herefordshire Council Plan. The strategy seeks enable the council's to embrace best practice, deliver innovation through technology and demonstrate value for money. It outlines an ambitious programme of activity that will:

- a. Support a financially stable and sustainable Council delivering high-quality, value-for-money services.
- b. Develop a more commercial approach to service delivery, increasing income generation opportunities.
- c. Deliver modern, flexible, and outcomes-focused services designed around residents' needs.
- d. Become more creative and innovative through technology.
- e. Work in partnership with communities to design and deliver services and support.
- f. Develop an agile, flexible, knowledgeable, and empowered workforce, and
- g. Promote, share, and recognise good practice and transformational successes.

The Transformation Programme will facilitate organisational improvements in its capabilities and the way that it uses its resources to provide best value and benefits to our customers and residents. Its aim is to accelerate the process of modernisation across the council – both corporately and across Directorates – to enable the delivery of high quality, cost-effective services within the context of a challenging external environment. The transformational activity will be delivered by Directorates.

22: Property Services Estate Capital Building Improvement Programme 2025/28

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Continue to invest in the property assets of the council to ensure they are maintained and decrease the burden on revenue repair works
This Year we will:	Deliver the programme of projects

In May, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets approved the drawdown and spend, from the capital programme of £6,019,602 and the implementation of the care facility emergency programme of works within a total budget of £604,000.

The number of establishments within the property estate that are required to be maintained is 363 and within that total there are 176 that bring in an income in the region of £3 million per annum. Capital improvement works will help to ensure this investment ensure that the council's assets are maintained to a level that they are lettable and able to generate income. The capital programme incorporates work projects to the corporate and commercial estate which are prioritised based upon criteria set out in the maintenance strategy.

23: Information Communication Technology systems upgrades & server replacements

Stated Delivery Plan Objective:	Complete and build on the foundation work to improve our existing IT platforms and infrastructure to transform how we work and deliver services to our resident
This Year we will:	Finalise the roll out phase one of Microsoft 365 to ensure the workforce have the latest version of Microsoft tools and initiate pilot programmes to test technological applications and evaluate outcomes for residents and council ways of working

In April, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services agreed the draw down of £500,000, identified in the 2025/26 capital budget, to enable the Council to deliver its Digital Data & Technology strategy 2024. The money will deliver key elements of the council's digital transformation by providing modern and fit for purpose ICT infrastructure.

This investment is allowing us to update software such our Geographical Information Systems. We are also investing in reducing our exposure against emerging vulnerabilities and cyber threats. Replacing our current Closed Circuit TV case management system will ensure security and operational integrity, supporting the council's obligations to maintain a secure and compliant IT environment. And we are updating our Civica Software to ensure we remain compliant with our regulatory requirements in the Public Services Network (PSN) duties (to provide a secure network).

To move forward with our transformation activity, we are investing in systems that offer Artificial Intelligence and we are already seeing the benefits with our staff being able to work more efficiently. Through migrating data into the Microsoft 365 (M365) Cloud, it will enhance data security with advanced encryption and compliance. Hoople Limited and other third parties will be commissioned to complete the work on behalf of the council with direction and support from the Head of ICT and the council's Transformation team.

Re-procurement of Unit 4 Business World

In March, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services gave approval for Unit 4 Business World, our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, to be reprocured and rehosted by a cloud hosted system. The Unit 4 Business World ERP system was procured by Herefordshire Council in 2010/11. The underlying technology hosting the system is now approaching the end of its supported life, with supplier support ceasing completely in 2026. The system supports many of the critical administrative processes within Herefordshire Council including Finance, Payroll and HR management.

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 29 November, 2024 to 6 March, 2025	Date Taken	Effective From
Cabinet Decisions		
Bus Service Improvement Plan capital funding	07/07/2025	12/07/2025
Bromyard Employment Land and Leominster Business Hub Development	07/07/2025	12/07/2025
Housing related support for children in care and care leavers aged 16-25	04/07/2025	11/07/2025
Local Transport Grant allocation	27/06/2025	04/07/2025
Property Services Estate Capital Building Improvement Programme 2025/28	30/05/2025	06/06/2025
Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan	27/05/2025	03/05/2025
Procurement of a professional services supplier to support Highways & Infrastructure (formerly a non key cabinet member decision)	01/05/2025	09/05/2025
Garden Waste Collection Service	01/05/2025	09/05/2025
Food Waste Collection Service	01/05/2025	09/05/2025
High Needs Budget 2025/26	24/04/2025	01/05/2025
Shire Hall Phase 2 Refurbishment Work	22/04/2025	29/04/2025
Warm Homes: Local Grant	17/04/2025	26/04/2025
Delivery Plan 2025-26	27/03/2025	03/04/2025
Highways Infrastructure Investment - Additional Funding	26/03/2025	02/04/2025
Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways - Additional Funding	26/03/2025	02/04/2025
UKSPF Allocation 2025/2026	25/03/2025	01/04/2025
ICT systems upgrades & server replacements	27/03/2025	03/04/2025
Re-procurement of Unit 4 Business World	24/03/2025	01/04/2025
Allocate and spend Active Travel Measures funding on delivery of Transport Hub	13/03/2025	20/03/2025
Housing Development Company	06/03/2025	13/03/2025

Cabinet Member Decisions		
Cabinet Member: Children and Young People	Date Taken	Effective From
Housing related support for children in care and care leavers aged 16-25	04/07/2025	11/07/2025
High Needs Budget 2025/26	24/04/2025	01/05/2025
Cabinet member: Community Services and Assets		
Bromyard Employment Land and Leominster Business Hub Development	07/07/2025	12/07/2025
Property Services Estate Capital Building Improvement Programme 2025/28	30/05/2025	06/06/2025
Shire Hall Phase 2 Refurbishment Work	22/04/2025	29/04/2025
Cabinet member: Economy and Growth		
UKSPF Allocation 2025/2026	25/03/2025	01/04/2025
Cabinet Member – Environment		
Malvern Hills National Landscape Management Plan	27/05/2025	03/05/2025
Warm Homes: Local Grant	17/04/2025	26/04/2025
Cabinet member: Finance and Corporate Services		
ICT systems upgrades & server replacements	27/03/2025	03/04/2025
Re-procurement of Unit 4 Business World	24/03/2025	01/04/2025
Cabinet Member: Roads and Regulatory Services		
Highways Infrastructure Investment - Additional Funding	26/03/2025	02/04/2025
Resurfacing Herefordshire Highways - Additional Funding	26/03/2025	02/04/2025
Cabinet Member: Transport and Infrastructure		
Bus Service Improvement Plan capital funding	07/07/2025	12/07/2025
Local Transport Grant allocation	27/06/2025	04/07/2025
Allocate and spend Active Travel Measures funding on delivery of Transport Hub	13/03/2025	20/03/2025

Section1 - Cabinet member portfolios

Leader (corporate strategy and budget): Councillor Jonathan Lester

- 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

- 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.

Local Engagement & Community Resilience: Councillor Dan Hurcomb

- Future Public Realm Contract.
- Land Drainage, flood alleviation.
- Public Rights of Way.
- Highways Act Enforcement.
- Parish Council Grant Schemes.
- Communications and Social Media.
- 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



Title of report: Motions on notice

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 25 July 2025

Report by: Director of Governance and Law

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To consider motions received on notice.

Recommendation

THAT: the motions listed at paragraph 6 are debated and determined by Council.

Alternative options

- 1 There are no alternative options to the recommendation; the constitution makes provision for motions on notice to be debated and decided by Council.

Key considerations

- 2 The constitution provides that members of Council may submit written notice of motions for debate at Council. A motion must be signed by the proposer and seconder and submitted not later than midday on the seventh working day before the date of the meeting. A member cannot propose more than one motion on notice per meeting and a maximum of three motions will be debated at meetings of full Council.
- 3 Motions must be about matters for which the council has a responsibility or which affect Herefordshire.
- 4 Motions for which notice has been given will be listed on the agenda in the order in which notice was received unless the member giving notice states, in writing, that they propose to move it to a later meeting or withdraw it.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Matthew Evans, democratic services officer on Tel (01432) 383690

- 5 Up to one and a half hours will be allocated to debate motions on notice but that time may be varied at the discretion of the chairman.
- 6 Three motions have been received and will be debated at the meeting. The motions for debate are set out below:

Motion 1 – Securing Herefordshire’s Role in the UK and European Defence Industrial Strategy

(Proposed by Councillor Ed O’Driscoll, Seconded by Councillor Terry James)

This Council notes:

- The publication of the UK Government’s *Strategic Defence Review 2025 – Making Britain Safer: Secure at Home, Strong Abroad*, which sets out plans to make defence an engine for economic growth across the UK.
- The SDR’s headline commitments, including:
 - A new £1.5 billion “always-on” pipeline of investment in UK munitions and energetics factories, delivering at least six new manufacturing sites;
 - £6 billion investment in munitions and up to 7,000 UK-built long-range weapons;
 - Over 1,800 skilled jobs to be created across the UK defence sector;
 - A commitment to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP;
 - A new Defence Exports Office and forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy aimed at accelerating acquisition and opening up supply chains to UK SMEs.
- The announcement of a defence partnership between the UK and EU enabling UK companies to access EU defence programmes, including the €150 billion SAFE initiative and wider €800 billion ReArm programme thereby potentially unlocking substantial export and inward investment opportunities.

This Council further recognises:

- Herefordshire’s proud history in the defence sector, including its longstanding role in munitions production, Special Forces presence, and engineering excellence.
- The county’s strong foundations in advanced manufacturing and potential to host one of the government’s planned new munitions and energetics factories.

This Council resolves to ask the executive to:

1. Develop a Herefordshire Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Prospectus, highlighting the county’s strategic readiness to host defence-related investment, including a munitions facility, with a focus on clean and sustainable manufacturing.
2. Formally write to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Ministry for Business and Trade, urging them to consider Herefordshire as a location for one of the planned new factories and associated supply chain investment.
3. Call on the Government to support rural areas like Herefordshire by:
 - Prioritising infrastructure upgrades in strategic industrial zones;
 - Establishing an investment support scheme modelled on Enterprise Zones;

- Fast-tracking planning for clean-tech and defence-linked developments.
- 4. Engage with UK defence primes and SMEs to promote supply chain expansion in the county, particularly for dual-use and green defence technologies.
- 5. Work with FE and HE providers to align training and apprenticeships with the emerging needs of the UK and European defence sector.
- 6. Ensure that all defence-linked investment is underpinned by Herefordshire's values of environmental responsibility, ethical governance, and community benefit.

Motion 2 – Future of Neighbourhood Planning Support Services

(Proposed by Councillor Dave Davies, Seconded by Councillor Rob Williams)

Herefordshire Council acknowledges that:

- Neighbourhood planning empowers local communities to shape the development and growth of their areas through the creation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans requires significant time, expertise, and financial resources, often placing a burden on parish and town councils.
- Neighbourhood Plans contribute to more democratic, locally-informed planning decisions and support the delivery of sustainable development aligned with community needs and aspirations.

Therefore it is Resolved to –

1. Call upon the Chief Executive to contact His Majesty's Government to provide increased and sustained funding to support the development, review, and implementation of Neighbourhood Plans.
2. Request that the Government ensures funding is accessible to all communities, to promote inclusivity and fairness in the planning process.
3. Write to Herefordshire MPs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government to communicate this resolution and advocate for enhanced support for neighbourhood planning.

Motion 3 – Housing Targets

(Proposed by Councillor Liz Harvey, Seconded by Councillor *tbc*)

In July 2024 Herefordshire along with every other planning authority in the country, received a letter from the Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, in which she gave notice of the government's intention to impose significantly increased top-down housing growth targets on all local authorities.

Here in Herefordshire this has meant an increase of over 11,000 houses to our already ambitious housing delivery plans. Meaning that the update of our Local Plan looking out to 2041 is being challenged to impose nearly 28,000 new homes on our rural communities and already pressed urban centres.

This housing target comes without justification and without consideration of local conditions. The target is not evidence based, it is not positively prepared, it is not reasonable and it is not sympathetic to the nature of our county.

This Notice of Motion proposes that:

Whilst this council will – as requested by government – “make every effort to allocate land in line with our housing need, as per the standard method”, this Council fully supports our officers and our Cabinet in their actively seeking to “justify a lower housing requirement than the figure the method sets, on the basis of local constraints on land and constraints on delivery”.

Updates – outstanding resolutions

- 7 The constitution provides that the report to Council, containing notices of motion on hand, will also include detail of progress of all outstanding resolutions. There are outstanding resolutions with respect to motions considered at earlier meetings of full Council; updates of progress against these resolutions are provided below:

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
7 March 2025	Minor Injury Units	Cabinet and Cllr O'Driscoll have met with the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board and agreed that, in line with the recently published NHS 10 year plan and the commitment to neighbourhood health, health partners and the council will work together to draw up a blueprint for local multi-disciplinary health delivery, building on the experience of the previous Minor Injury Units, by October 2025.
<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>This Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the reinstatement of Minor Injury Units in Herefordshire as soon as possible to alleviate pressure on A&E services and improve access to urgent care for residents across the county; and • Calls upon the Executive to work with NHS partners and other stakeholders to facilitate the reopening of Minor Injury Units in Herefordshire. 		

Community impact

- 8 Herefordshire Council's adopted code of corporate governance provides the framework for maintaining high standards of corporate governance in order to achieve the council's vision of “people, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and well-being for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire.”
- 9 In accordance with the code, the long-term nature of many of Herefordshire Council's responsibilities mean that we should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the council's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

Equality duty

- 10 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.

- 11 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. If any motion results in a request that the executive (cabinet) consider taking some action, the cabinet will have regard to the equality duty when determining its response to the request.

Resource implications

- 12 None arising from the recommendation; if any motion results in a request that the executive (cabinet) consider taking some action the implications of such action will inform any decision by cabinet.

Legal implications

- 13 None arising from the recommendation; if any motion results in a request that the executive (cabinet) consider taking some action the implications of such action will inform any decision by cabinet.

Risk management

- 14 None arising from the recommendation; if any motion results in a request that the executive (cabinet) take some action the risks associated with such action will inform any decision by cabinet.

Consultees

- 15 None.

Appendices – None

Background papers – none identified

