

**Corporate Support Centre**  
Paul Walker - Chief Executive

**To: All members of the Council**

our ref: Council - 10 October 2025  
contact: Matthew Evans, Democratic Services  
telephone: 01432 383690  
email: [matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk)

2 October 2025

Dear Councillor,

**You are hereby summoned** to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 10 October 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 10 October 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](mailto: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](mailto: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
<b>NOLAN PRINCIPLES</b>	9 - 10
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
<b>3. MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2025.	11 - 30
<b>4. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> To receive the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements.	31 - 38
<b>How to submit questions</b>	
<i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i>	
<i>5:00 p.m. on Monday 6 October 2025.</i>	
<i>Questions must be submitted to <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>. 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 <a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</a>.</i>	
<b>5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b> To receive questions from members of the public.	
<b>6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</b> To receive any written questions from members of the Council.	
<b>7. ELECTORAL REVIEW: PROPOSING THE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS PER WARD</b> To provide a view on the preferred number of elected members per ward in the county	39 - 42
<b>8. LEADER'S REPORT</b> To receive a report from the leader on the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council in July 2025.	43 - 68
<b>9. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS</b> To consider Notices of Motion.	69 - 76
<b>10. FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2026/27</b> The next meeting is the ordinary meeting of Council is on 5 December 2025 at 10.00 a.m.	

The remaining meeting dates in the 2025/26 municipal year are:

5 December 2025 – 10:00 a.m.

6 February 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

6 March 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

22 May 2026 – 10:30 a.m.

Council is asked to approve the schedule of full Council meeting dates in the 2026/27 municipal year as below:

24 July 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

9 October 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

4 December 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

5 February 2027 – 10:00 a.m.

5 March 2027 – 10:00 a.m.

21 May 2027 – 10:30 a.m.

## **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 25 July 2025 at 10.00 am**

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

**Councillors:** Polly Andrews, Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Graham Biggs, Dave Boulter, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Barry Durkin, Mark Dykes, Matthew Engel, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, Catherine Gennard, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Dan Hurcomb, Terry James, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, 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 and Director of Finance

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pauline Crockett, Helen Heathfield and Nick Mason.

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**12. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**13. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (PAGES 7 - 16)**

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

**15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (PAGES 17 - 20)**

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

## **16. LEADER'S REPORT**

Council received and noted the Leader's Report which provided an update on the activities of Cabinet since the previous ordinary meeting on 7 March 2025.

Council questioned the Leader and the following actions were raised:

- In response to a question concerning the commitment of the council to develop a 'Child Friendly Herefordshire' it was suggested that scrutiny could consider a task and finish group exercise.
- In response to a question regarding projects underway to increase SEND provision, additional information would be made available.
- In response to a question regarding the holiday activities and food programme 2025-2026, to liaise with government regarding the provision of funding for the Autumn half term for the programme.
- In response to a question regarding how the council would seek to address the deficit in the DSG, a strategy would be shared with members. The strategy would detail how the council would seek to take the issue forward with central government.
- In response to a question regarding thresholds for support it was suggested that scrutiny could consider an investigation into how local residents who did not qualify for the holiday activities and food programme but who were struggling could be supported during the school holidays.
- In response to a question regarding the timelines for the delivery for the Community Transport grant through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation 2025/2026 it would be considered what assistance could be provided to local community groups to access the funding.
- In response to a question regarding work that was ongoing with respect to riparian landowners it was explained that an update would be provided.
- To provide a response to a question regarding the procurement of highway resurfacing services and the extra miles resurfaced compared to the existing BBLP contract.
- In response to questions regarding calls to implement a 40 mph speed limit around Locks Garage in Allensmore an officer appraisal on the proposal would be sought.
- In response to a question regarding road side railings officers would be asked to look at the safety of corroded railings on Belmont Road and Greyfriars Bridge.
- In response to a question regarding food waste caddies and the potential for wildlife to scavenge, officers would be asked to consider that the containers were sufficient robust before they were issued.
- A response would be provided to a question regarding the proposed provision of fencing in Churchill Gardens, around Churchill House, following an officer review of the proposal.

## **17. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

Council debated the motions contained in the report by the Director of Law and Governance.

**Motion – Securing Herefordshire's Role in the UK and European Defence Industrial Strategy**

Councillor O'Driscoll proposed and introduced the motion.

Councillor James seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion. There was support across the majority of Council for the recommendations contained in the motion but concern was expressed by some members regarding the inclusion of munition and ammunition manufacturing in Herefordshire.

The motion was put to the recorded vote and was carried by a simple majority.

FOR (38): Councillors Andrews, Baker, Bartrum, Biggs, Bramer, Carwardine, Cole, Cornthwaite, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Durkin, Dykes, Foxton, Gandy, Hamblin, Highfield, Hurcomb, James, Kenyon, Lester, O'Driscoll, Oliver, Owens, Phillips, Dan Powell, Price, Proctor, Simmons, Spencer, Stark, Stoddart, Stone, Swinglehurst, Taylor, Thomas, Tillett, Allan Williams and Robert Williams.

Against (2): Councillors Harvey and Woodall.

Abstentions (10): Councillors Bartlett, Boulter, Engel, Fagan, Gennard, Hitchiner, Peberdy, Ivan Powell, Toynbee and Tully.

#### **RESOLVED:**

##### **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 – Future of Neighbourhood Planning services**

Councillor Dave Davies proposed and introduced the motion.

Councillor Rob Williams seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion. There was widespread support across the Council for the motion.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority.

### **RESOLVED:**

**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 – Housing Targets**

Councillor Harvey proposed and introduced the motion.

Councillor Toynbee seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion. There was widespread support across the Council for the motion.

The motion was put to the recorded vote and was carried by a simple majority.

FOR (49): Councillors Andrews, Baker, Bartlett, Bartrum, Biggs, Boulter, Bramer, Carwardine, Cole, Cornthwaite, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Durkin, Dykes, Engel, Fagan, Foxton, Gandy, Gennard, Hamblin, Harvey, Highfield, Hitchiner, Hurcomb, James, Lester, O'Driscoll, Oliver, Owens, Peberdy, Phillips, Dan Powell, Ivan Powell, Price, Proctor, Simmons, Spencer, Stark, Stoddart, Stone, Swinglehurst, Taylor, Thomas, Tillett, Toynbee, Tully, Allan Williams, Robert Williams and Woodall.

Against (1): Councillor Kenyon.

Abstentions (0):

### **RESOLVED:**

**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”.**

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm

**Chairperson**



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

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Frecknall, Hereford	Herefordshire Council is being both ambitious and generous in proposing to fund and build a Southern Link Road for National Highways to subsequently adopt as part of A49(T) Hereford Bypass. Would the cabinet member please confirm that the Southern Link Road's final design will be to DMRB 60mph standard throughout?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<b>Response:</b> I can confirm that the road will be built to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standards and with input from National Highways to inform design so that at some point when the whole of the Hereford Western Bypass is completed it could be adopted by National Highways as the A49 allowing the current A49 through the City to be detrunked. Decisions on speed limit will be informed by the design process and no presumption has been considered on a 60mph speed limit at this time.			
PQ 2	Mr Stephenson, Ledbury	<p>Small rural market towns, such as Ledbury continue to be forcibly and exponentially overdeveloped and expanded, against local peoples' wishes. This is without first considering or uplifting local services, which are already considerably straining to meet the current populace. This overdeveloped and forced urbanisation is destroying swathes of countryside, undermining local values, ways of life and the very identity of such market towns. If residents wanted to live in a suburban sprawl, they would have moved to larger towns. This overdevelopment causes, increased traffic, pollution, crime, increased safety and security risks to locals and children. Further to this, locals are effectively living in a building site, with constant road works for years to come.</p> <p>What are Herefordshire Council doing, and when will they stand up and fight for the county against Central Government's forced and unwanted overdevelopment of the area?</p>	Cabinet member environment
<b>Response:</b> The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024, introducing mandatory housing targets for all councils within England. The mandatory housing target for Herefordshire is 27,260 homes and this is considerably higher than the previous growth figure that was being planned for which would have resulted in 16,100 new homes over the same 20-year period. In response to the draft NPPF consultation that took place last summer, a detailed response was submitted to the Government on behalf of the council outlining concerns that the mandatory targets are set too high and do not reflect past build rates and market demand, similarly that rural counties such as Herefordshire would require significant investment in infrastructure in order to consider planning for this level of growth. These comments did not influence the published version of the NPPF in December which largely remained unchanged.			

In planning for growth, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) needs to consider sustainable locations that are accessible by more than one mode of transport and to focus development where existing services exist. This will involve looking at the city and the market towns as part of this process. The new Local Plan will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), the purpose of this document is to make sure that any growth is aligned with the necessary infrastructure required (for instance schools, highways, open space, health provision, active travel etc) and will be delivered as part of any new development.

The new Local Plan will be subject to two public consultation stages (called Gateway 1 and Gateway 2), which provides an opportunity for people across the county to shape the future strategy. We will publicise the dates for these consultation stages as soon as finalised, which will include meetings in the market towns including Ledbury.

PQ3	Ms Martin, Hereford	It is settled and undisputed transport science that congestion in urban networks at or close to capacity cannot be reduced with peri-urban road building, nor traffic growth arising as a result of development, and there is no bypass anywhere that has achieved it. The global professional and academic communities have accepted it and the DfT acknowledges it in guidance but the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure at Herefordshire Council disagrees with them. What evidence is there that the western bypass will defy the universal laws of transport physics and economics and where can we find it	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
-----	------------------------	--	---

#### **Response:**

You only need to look over the border at the success of the A4440 Worcester Southern Link Road to show that providing new and enhanced road infrastructure around an historic city, provides demonstrable benefits to accessibility for all modes of travel, enabling housing and economic growth, environmental improvements within the city centre and enhanced resilience of the transport network.

The current situation within Hereford, is similar to that addressed within Worcester, where there is a lack of resilient infrastructure as a result of the single river crossing, meaning that any disruption along key routes, such as Victoria Street, can have a significant impact across the city and beyond, disrupting all movement, including that undertaken by bus, cycling and walking, increasing pollution and a detrimental economic impact on businesses within the county. The provision of a second river crossing to the south of Worcester unlocked significant potential for the city and a new river crossing and enhanced road network for Hereford will achieve the same.

#### **Supplementary Question:**

In my question I asked for evidence that the western bypass would defy the laws of transport planning physics and achieve what no other bypass has ever achieved by reducing congestion in the city. The response was that "You only have to look over the border at the success of the A4440 Worcester Southern Link Road".

You only have to drive in Worcester and along the Southern Link Road to see that, £194m later, not only do the people of Worcester still have a

congested city, they now have a congested bypass as well and it's going to get worse because this dualling scheme was completed less than three years ago. Do the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure and supporters of this scheme not understand that resurgent traffic in bypassed urban areas typically takes up to five years to manifest fully and that therefore the Worcester scheme can't be held up as an example of a successful traffic reduction measure?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

The road layouts within historic cities was never designed to meet modern day needs with traffic growth having grown steadily in the last 30 years and predicted to rise in the future due to the increased housing targets across the country. As a result, Hereford's road network is already struggling to cope with demand, mainly due to the throttling effect of the single river crossing. It is therefore common sense that an additional river crossing, will help spread this load, and ensure less disruption to traffic times within the city, particularly in conjunction with the additional sustainable travel schemes that the council is delivering within Hereford.

A traffic analysis of the scheme will be developed to provide evidence of the beneficial impact of providing a by-pass compared to alternative options.

PQ 4	Mr Milln, Hereford	<p>Of the unattractive modern five storey steel tower at Jacob's Court consented by Herefordshire Council within the Central Conservation area without reference to design coding but soon found to be unsafe and scaffolded in 2010, questions were asked in June 2021 and November 2023.</p> <p>By 2021 the scaffolding, costing the Council £400 per month, already totalled over £60,000. The Cabinet Members' response to the 2023 supplementary assured us the timescale for resolving the issues and recovering the Council's rising costs were being finalised.</p> <p>Yet it is clear, another two years on, this is not the case and the building remains as much of an eyesore as ever it was. A scheme of repair, approved in 2022, is imminently due to expire for non-commencement.</p> <p>Given the failure to address the problem over many years, what action should Herefordshire Council now take?</p>	Cabinet member environment
------	-----------------------	---	-------------------------------

**Response:**

We recognise the need to bring this issue to a speedy conclusion and are working with the Owner's Management Committee for Jacobs Court.

**Supplementary Question:**

The Cabinet member's one line response fails to advance the Jacob's Court issue one jot. Grenfell Tower has been going on for eight years, Hereford's Jacob's Tower fifteen and before anyone is injured by it, its unsafe panels must be replaced and the eyesore scaffolding and sheeting removed if only to put a stop to the continuing drain on the public purse. I ask again what is the timetable for carrying out the remedial work and recovering some £80,000 Herefordshire Council has spent on a building that is privately owned?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

Conversations are ongoing and it is not possible to give a definitive answer currently.

PQ 5	Mr Morfett, Hereford	With the limited headroom on the local sewerage systems, the current Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2014 required £24Million to expand sewerage capacity improvements in Hereford, Leominster and Rural Areas to alleviate sewer system overflows during times of flood. How much funding has been paid to date to protect public health and ensure that developments do not result in sewage pollution to people, property and rivers?	Cabinet member environment
------	-------------------------	--	-------------------------------

**Response:**

Welsh Water and Severn Trent are the statutory water and sewerage undertakers within Herefordshire. Therefore, they are legally obligated to provide water and sewerage services, this includes a continuous high quality water supply, ensuring that wastewater is properly disposed of, and managing their networks efficiently. Statutory Undertakers set out their investment programme in an Asset Management Plan (AMP) and these have been overseen by Ofwat, the economic regulator of the water and sewerage industry. In terms of the details of investment to date and over a given period, this is information that would need to be provided by the statutory undertakers concerned.

Statutory undertakers will be consulted upon sites as part of the detailed site assessments that will be undertaken to inform the development of the local plan. Similarly statutory undertakers are consulted on planning applications that come forward to Development Management for consideration. Furthermore, the Corporate Direct for Economy and Environment will meet with both Welsh Water and Severn Trent to ensure that they remain accountable and committed to the improvements scheduled within their AMP Plans. The Statutory Undertakers will be invited to appear before CCSC Scrutiny Committee to ensure that they are considering the impact of their decisions including their investment programmes.

PQ 6	Mrs Protherough, Hereford	In noting that the anticipated cost of the SLR will require an allocation of £30 million, funded by a loan, what action will be taken in 2026 to meet additional cost if tenders from contractors are significantly higher than anticipated?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
------	---------------------------------	--	---

**Response:** The Capital Programme, approved by full Council in February 2025, includes an allocation of £30m to deliver the first phase of the Hereford Western Bypass. The Outline Strategic Business Case identifies estimated costs and confirms that a review will be undertaken to confirm construction costs and a full business case will be prepared prior to committing to expenditure. Options for future funding will be identified following completion of the full business case and confirmation of costs.

**Supplementary Question:**

What additional costs would be required through council tax to meet repayments on the loan and what would be the impact on other initiatives and projects at the council?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

The answer could be provided next year when the full design had been produced.

PQ 7	Ms Albright, Leominster	Does the council feel that 811 homes levied and 'released' under the phosphate credit scheme since 2019 is an acceptable level of delivery?	Cabinet member environment
------	----------------------------	---	-------------------------------

**Response:** The Council is proud of the progress and delivery of our pioneering and award-winning nature-based phosphate mitigation strategy which has to date created 247 kg of phosphate credits which will enable approximately 1,500 new homes. Following the release of these credits we have been working proactively with developers to progress planning applications using these and the 811 homes referenced is the number that have progressed to date.

This is however only one element of our overall approach which also includes working to support developers with private mitigation schemes and addressing the huge issue of restoring the overall health of the river.

To support developers to bring forward private mitigation schemes we have developed additional guidance, case studies, FAQ's and templates in order that this can minimise or mitigate the need to access the Council's credit scheme. We are also committed to continually reviewing and updating these to consider the best available technology to meet this challenge.

**Supplementary Question:**

247kg equates to around £3.45 million extracted from struggling local SMEs for no ecological gain.

The council is also in receipt of additional grant funding of around £2.7 million to specifically support housing delivery in the Lugg.

Does HC have plans on how to spend the funds they have accrued - to achieve the best outcomes as quickly as possible?

Is it ethical or effective to maintain the housing moratorium/mitigation situation when evidence shows new homes are not the cause of the nutrient overload in the Lugg and new homes are desperately needed?

Will Herefordshire Council write to catchment MPs and agencies to implore decision makers to remove the moratorium and instead adopt a 'fair share' position that reflects the data? And to beseech agencies to prioritise catchment restoration, rather than maintaining the ecological crisis and so continue to ransom cash from the wrong sector?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

As part of the Council's Phosphate Mitigation Strategy approved by Cabinet in February 2024, this approved the commencement of the second phase of the programme which is currently in delivery, and also detailed the subsequent phase three.

Later this year a further report will be brought forward to Cabinet seeking approval to commence this third phase, whilst also proposing the exploration of further mitigation measures to inform the further and future phases.

The Council continues to work in partnership with stakeholders and government agencies towards achieving catchment restoration and the consideration of 'fair share'. However under the current legislation we are still required to ensure nutrient neutrality as set out in the Habitat Regulations.

PQ 8	Mr Hill, Hereford	<p>Would the Cabinet Member please consider introducing an Article 4 Direction (as has been done in Hereford City) to Herefordshire's other Market Towns requiring planning permission for change of use even within the same permitted development use class?</p> <p>Such moves would help to restore public and business confidence in maintaining a vibrant, diverse, and functional high street, particularly for independent traders and for reducing crime/disorder. This could also reasonably extend to restrictions on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO). I would be keen to see a mapped out timetable to bring this into action within the remainder of this current administration.</p>	Cabinet member environment
------	----------------------	---	-------------------------------

**Response:** An Article 4 Direction is part of planning legislation that allows the council to remove permitted development rights including changes of use from an area or property in certain limited situations where it is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of an area. An Article 4 itself does not prevent the development to which it applies but instead requires that planning permission is first obtained from the council for that development. Before pursuing an Article 4, the Council would give consideration to more effective and proportionate policy tools, for instance Local Plan Policies and Area Specific Design Codes. In order to introduce an Article 4 the Council would require justification and evidence to demonstrate that permitted development rights pose a real and specific threat to local amenity or the wellbeing of an area, the impact must be localised and blanket Article 4 Directions over large areas (i.e whole Market Towns) are discouraged. Article 4 Directions must be proportionate to the harm that it is seeking to address and the removal of permitted development rights should not go beyond what is necessary to protect the identified interest. Therefore, there are no current plans to introduce an Article 4.

PQ 9	Ms Laan, Hereford	<p>2,250 parks and green spaces across the UK have reached the high standards required to receive a coveted Green Flag Award in 2025, but none were awarded in Herefordshire. Investing in parks and green spaces not only improves the health and quality of life for its residents but it boosts tourism, reduces crime, strengthens community and makes the County an attractive destination for new employers. Why is this Council not able to fund the proper care and maintenance of its public open spaces, which so many other Councils can achieve?</p>	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services
------	----------------------	--	--

**Response:**

Herefordshire is blessed with several parks, open spaces and outstanding natural beauty, which we are proud of. Herefordshire Council manages 141 parks and green spaces, 64 of which include children's play areas. We are committed to investing in green spaces as they are critical recreational facilities for our residents. £1 million has been made available in our capital budget for this financial year and 2026/27 to enhance as many of these play areas as possible.

All parks and green spaces receive regular grounds maintenance in order to ensure that the sites remain safe and amenable for users. The contract that delivers this maintenance is coming to an end in 2026 and council officers are currently working on implementing a new contract in June 2026.

Once the new contract is in place, the aspiration is to review parks and green spaces in order to identify sites that could be suitable for a Green Flag application.

PQ 10	Mr McGeown, Weobley	<p>It is my understanding that Herefordshire Council has a statutory duty as set out on page 98, Working together to safeguard children 2023, There exists no statutory "cut off" for the time of receipt but Herefordshire's published best practice is:</p> <p>To provide copies of the reports submitted by all agencies for Review Child Protection Conference to parents and older children ... a minimum of 5 working days before review conferences to enable any factual errors to be corrected and the family to comment on the content."</p> <p>These reports will be submitted on standard template forms such as:  <a href="https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/documents/cpc-multi-agency-reporting-template-updated-march-2020">https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/documents/cpc-multi-agency-reporting-template-updated-march-2020</a></p> <p>Am I correct in my understanding of this statutory duty and are different templates used by Health and Police etc?</p>	Cabinet member children and young people
-------	------------------------	--	--

**Response:**

Most of our partner agencies do use the template provided as best practice to guide reports that they submit to conferences although some agencies will use their own formatting and we allow this flexibility.

**Supplementary Question:**

Thank you to Councillor Powell for confirming that "all agencies reports" are submitted for Review Child Protection Conference and their format.

The Report Template clearly states:

"Have you shared your report with the family and / or person your information relates to"

Followed by a section for confirmation.

I have yet to find a family who have received "Reports from Other Agencies 5 working days in advance of RCPC". I believe this part of the Statutory Duty has never been achieved.

But my information can only be anecdotal.

Councillor Powell, through his position, can access all the full facts.

So what proportion of families subject to RCPC does Councillor Powell think get to receive these reports, an honest best guess at a percentage would provide a satisfactory answer?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

As I explained in my response to your public question submitted to cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 the timeliness of child protection review conferences is the statutory key performance indicator.

The Director has confirmed that although most agencies do provide written reports for their contributions some will attend in person and provide a verbal report which is then included in the minutes. It is for the author of these partner agency reports to share with the parent and check the factual accuracy of the content of their reports prior to submission to Children Social Care. CSC do not record data on this.

The Corporate Director has advised that service is working on its own practice standards and the system monitoring of activities with them and she confirmed that the service do know from our case audits this is an area of improvement required.

PQ 11	Ms Reid, Hereford	<p>The Chief Executive's report mentions Ofsted's (17/7/2025) letter about their monitoring visit regarding children in care. It states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">'The consistent moderation of practice audits, to ensure reliable evaluation of practice, and ... remain areas for improvement.'</p> <p>Overall, the letter is positive. However, there is contradictory evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent negative media coverage including an online <i>Observer</i> article entitled: 'Outcry as council seeks to make man who faced child abuse trial a family guardian'. The article written in July 2025 states: 'A decision will be made about whether to give him [currently a foster carer] permanent guardianship at a family court hearing next month.'</li> <li>The website (<a href="http://www.families4change.org.uk">www.families4change.org.uk</a>) of the Families' Alliance for Change (Herefordshire) has a 'Media Coverage' section.</li> <li>The inquest into 21-year-old care leaver Natasha 'Tash' Ashby's death is due in March 2026.</li> </ul> <p>What is your current appraisal of Herefordshire Children's Services?</p>	Cabinet member children and young people
-------	----------------------	---	--

**Response:**

Ofsted monitoring visits are focused on work undertaken by the department within the six month period prior to the monitoring visit taking place, therefore current practice. In addition, through its Quality Assurance Programme, the service also seeks feedback from current and recent service users, draws on current Key Performance indicators and undertakes audit of practice within the three months of the case audit. These four process seen collectively are providing a positive picture of improvement and outcomes for children. In the Ofsted Monitoring Visit of Oct 24 and Feb 25 we also



see positive progress and practice in those areas being made. As such our appraisal of the Children Services is, as reflected in the Ofsted letter of June 25, that positive progress at pace is being made.

**Supplementary Question:**

I mentioned contradictory evidence to Ofsted's (17/7/25) letter, for example, recent media coverage like *The Observer's* article and the upcoming inquest into a care leaver's death. But there is other evidence such as anecdotal evidence and a letter detailing serious concerns about Herefordshire Children's Services that was sent by Families' Alliance for Change (Herefordshire) to Ofsted before their monitoring visit focused on children in care. There are around 400 children in care and three inspectors inspected over two days.

Your response to my public question mentions "the service also seeks feedback from current and recent service users". However, there is a substantial power imbalance between service users and social workers, etc.

In view of the above, how can you be confident that the feedback process is really rigorous and is truly capturing the views and experiences of service users?

**Response to Supplementary Question:**

Between September 2024 – March 2025 109 families had provided feedback. In the first quarter of the current year 53 families had provided feedback which demonstrated a willingness on the part of local families to share their experiences with the council.



**Agenda item no. 6 - Question from members of the Council**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr Hitchiner, Stoney Street	<p>Residents in my Ward have expressed concern about the state of Belmont Road between numbers 70 to 32 as it does not reflect well on the pride we have in our County. In particular, the vegetation growing around the railings and the railings themselves. This road is a key route into the city and because the traffic is slow, there is plenty of opportunity for residents and visitors to pause and admire the weeds. The vegetation has now been cleared I understand in preparation for Hereford in Bloom.</p> <p>This vegetation should not be cleared only to satisfy Hereford in Bloom. It should be cleared more regularly. Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that the programme of works should include the clearing of this vegetation in this location at least three times a year in April, July and September of each year?</p>	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question, Councillor Hitchiner.</p> <p>The vegetation at the location you mention has been recently cleared in advance of Hereford in Bloom. Such locations are not allocated to lists for routine maintenance but are cleared on an ad-hoc basis when the need arises. Any consideration of routine maintenance at this location along Belmont Road will need to be assessed alongside other areas on arterial routes into Hereford. Routine maintenance of such areas across the county can be explored with the new public realm contractor once available budgets are understood.</p>			
MQ 2	Cllr Proctor, College	<p>In July 2024 as part of a presentation to the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee the council stated that there were 1,953 people on the Homepoint list.</p> <p>In response to a recent FOIA request the council stated that this number had dropped to 663 in June 2025.</p> <p>What has happened to the 1,290 people who have vanished from the list?</p>	Cabinet member adults health and wellbeing
<p><b>Response:</b></p>			

In July 2024, the number of households registered on HomePoint was 1,943 as reported to the Scrutiny Committee. In November 2024, the council implemented a new IT system for HomePoint which meant that every person registered on the system at the time needed to reapply. Every household was contacted a number of times to complete their reapplication. At the time of the response to the FOI in July 2025, the number of households on the waiting list was correct at 663 households – a combination of those who had reapplied and new applications.

As at 24 July 2025, there are currently 712 households active on HomePoint, with a further 121 households who have partially completed their application and a further 508 households who are waiting to be assessed or who have not provided all their required documentation. This would mean that the number of households on the HomePoint system – either active or in process – is 1,341.

Key to securing an accurate figure is annual maintenance and updating of the system. When this is undertaken, the number of households will always reduce because households find their own accommodation and forget to update the system, households have secured accommodation with a Registered Provider and their application was not closed or they do not reply to emails asking if they wish to remain on the register.

Prevention is key to all the teams that form the Housing Service. Housing Officers actively work with households to prevent homelessness but where this is not possible they offer advice/ guidance as well as financial assistance. Anyone that makes a homelessness application will, with assistance from a Housing Officer, complete a HomePoint application. Social housing is in high demand with limited availability, so all households are also encouraged to look for alternative solutions to the waiting list. The Housing Officers will assist the household to secure private rental accommodation, can offer mediation, prevent evictions, secure accommodation with a Registered Provider or offer a financial solution such as a loan, rent or deposit. All of these preventative measures are helping to reduce numbers.

**Supplementary question:**

In November 2024, the council implemented a new IT system for Homepoint which meant that every person registered on the system at the time needed to reapply. I cannot imagine any technical or administrative reason for this. I can't imagine that when we implement a new planning system, we will require everybody to resubmit planning applications or that if we switch our council tax system, we will require everybody to re-register for council tax. So, what is it about people seek seeking social housing that means the council thinks it's acceptable to treat them in this way?

**Response to supplementary question:**

The system that was procured by the council for housing did require information from the previous system to be transferred manually to the new system. It was not an ideal situation but allowed the opportunity to clean up the data and correct entries for people who have found alternative accommodation, moved out of the area or their circumstances have changed. When Councillor Proctor was given the information initially it was quite low but since then we have continually written to people who were on the register to make sure that they are not missed off and we are continuing to put them on the system and new people are being added every day. I accept and I think the director accepts that the process of the procurement of that particular system was not what we would have wanted. But unfortunately we were not in a position to do very much about it at the time and we are continuing to have concerns about some sections of that system.

MQ 3	Cllr Oliver, Saxon Gate	<p>What measurements of air pollution have been taken over Hereford city during the last four years?</p> <p>Do these measurements show any decrease in the levels of pollution over those years?</p> <p>Have any actions being taken by the council over the last four years to try and reduce pollution?</p> <p>Which areas of the city have the highest levels of pollution, bearing in mind there is no safe level of air pollution, and all of us will be breathing in toxic air?</p> <p>Have air pollution measurements being taken in all of our market towns and if so how do they compare with Hereford city?</p>	Cabinet member environment
------	----------------------------	---	-------------------------------

**Response:**

Thank you for your question regarding air pollution monitoring and the actions taken in Hereford and other areas of the county. Over the past four years, the council has carried out regular air quality monitoring in Hereford using both an automatic monitoring station and a network of passive diffusion tubes. The automatic station, located in the city, records continuous real-time levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), and finer particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), which are among the most significant pollutants affecting public health. In addition, passive diffusion tubes provide nitrogen dioxide readings at various roadside locations across the city. All results are reported annually in the council's Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR), which is publicly available on the Herefordshire Council website.

The data over the last four years shows that levels of nitrogen dioxide in Hereford have generally declined, with a noticeable drop in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown and a gradual return to lower, more stable levels in subsequent years. Overall, the trend remains downward, and the most recent ASR confirms that pollution levels are currently below national air quality objectives. Particulate matter levels have also remained within the government's target thresholds, although these can vary depending on weather conditions and seasonal activity such as domestic heating.

To support air quality improvements, the council has implemented a range of measures over the past four years. These include investment in active travel infrastructure such as walking and cycling routes, the installation of electric vehicle charging points, and improvements to traffic management and public transport. The council's Air Quality Strategy sets out its longer-term approach to reducing emissions and protecting public health.

Within Hereford, the highest levels of pollution are generally recorded along busy roads, particularly the A49 corridor where queuing traffic and congestion are more common. The city centre has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) as a result of previous exceedances of nitrogen dioxide limits, and it remains a focus for continued monitoring and action. Addressing emissions from the A49 continues to be a key objective, and proposals to detrunk the A49 aim to reduce the volume of through traffic in the city centre. In the longer term, a bypass is also expected to support improvements in local air quality by diverting traffic away from the most polluted areas.

Outside of Hereford, air quality is also monitored in the county's market towns. In Leominster, an automatic monitoring station is in place which, like Hereford, measures NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Leominster also has an AQMA centred on the Bargates area due to past traffic-related pollution. In other market towns such as Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, and Bromyard, monitoring is undertaken using diffusion tubes which track nitrogen dioxide levels.

The results from these towns have consistently shown lower pollution levels than in Hereford, and no AQMAs have been required in those areas to date.

In summary, Herefordshire Council continues to monitor air quality across the county and to take proportionate action where pollution risks are identified. The latest data indicates that pollution levels are improving and remain within national standards, but the council recognises that there is no safe level of air pollution and remains committed to ongoing efforts to reduce emissions and protect health.

**Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting**  
**10 October 2025**

**Chairs Report to Council**



**This August saw the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Japan and the end of the second world war hostilities . I attended several commemorative events across the county to mark the occasion and remember the sacrifice given by so many people. Given the many challenges in our world today and the strong military presence in our county it is right to reflect on this significant landmark.**

**Our head of finance, Rachael Saunders, made a presentation on the changing funding of local authorities at the Rural Conference organised by the Rural Services Network (RSN). The online conference held over four days had 1,400 attendees and covered a range of topics focusing on rural areas including enterprise, housing, health care, net zero, connectivity and transport. The RSN continues to lobby on behalf of rural services <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/>**

**Hereford hosted the 297<sup>th</sup> Three Choirs Festival in July which is one of the longest established music festivals in the world and was attended by HRHs The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. The Festival will return in 2028 for its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Hereford.**

**The council has been working with the Hereford City Guides, a group of local volunteers who give guided tours of our city, to replace the old wooden statue of the bulldog of the former cathedral organist. The bulldog fell into the River Wye off the banks of the now King George V Playing fields and frantically scrambled to get back to the bank.**



**The organist turned to Edward Elgar who was with them at the time and challenged him to put the scene into music. He did – it is the 11<sup>th</sup> Enigma variation. The new stone statue was unveiled and the council will now take on the ownership of this special memorial. The old wooden statue will be retained in our museum.**



**The Leader and I attended the opening of the Pavillion on Castle Green, a new community facility which was supported by the Stronger Towns Fund. The original building which is a Grade II listed Georgian**

**building on Medieval foundations is spectacularly positioned overlooking the river Wye adjacent to the Castle Green. It housed the Hereford Art College for about 100 years and was owned by Herefordshire Council.**

**Herefordshire Council transferred the ownership to the friends of Castle Green who sought public funding to enhance the building including a new modern extension. The Chair paid tribute to the support and cooperation of the Council in delivering the project which gives the City a gem of a facility for meetings, activities and exhibitions together with a café. The versatile space with water frontage also continues to give a home to the City`s Youth Canoe Club.**





**The King's Awards for Enterprise are for outstanding achievement by a business. The awards are highly prized by companies and only granted to exceptional businesses. There were over 1,200 applications nationally of which 119 were awarded with two companies in Herefordshire awarded. I was delighted to attend the awarding of the Kings Award to Level Peaks who are based in**

**Holmer by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Edward Harley for their outstanding achievement in international trade.**

**The defenced based company has developed a product used in training for security personnel which has huge take-up across the NATO alliance and beyond. If members consider they have successful companies in their wards please find out more details below:**

**[The King's Awards for Enterprise: About the awards - GOV.UK](#)**

**The Council will know of our Chief Executive`s decision to retire next March and while there will be opportunities to properly record our thanks in the future I wanted to express my thanks to him for his continued common sense and practical approach to overseeing the delivery of our public services.**

**The Little Princess Trust celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special service at the Cathedral. The trust which makes real hair wigs for children is also the largest charity to support research into Child cancer in the UK. We can be rightly proud that the charity still maintains its operations in Hereford.**

**The Vice Chair and I have attended many events over the last few months including the Battle of Britain commemorations this year in Ross, and the Baton of Hope suicide prevention initiative.**

**Cllr Roger Phillips JP**



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

I am pleased to present this update to Council after what has been a period of progress, challenge and collaboration across our organisation and county.

We recently welcomed the final Local Government Association's **Corporate Peer Challenge** (CPC) report after their visit in the summer. I'm proud to say their report described us as a "good council striving to improve further". They recognised our strong leadership, governance, member-officer relations and commitment to transformation. The team highlighted our ongoing improvements in children's services, financial management and partnership working. Their recommendations – including accelerating our transformation programme, strengthening our data capabilities and refreshing our Medium-Term Financial Strategy – will help shape our strategic priorities going forward.

In spite of delivering a balanced budget this year we face significant financial pressures going forward. Following the publication of a **refreshed medium-term financial strategy** (MTFS), in September, we raised concerns about proposed changes to government funding that could leave us with a £27.3 million gap in 2026/27 – this was exacerbated by the loss of the £7 million Rural Services Delivery Grant. While we do have a sound financial base – as pointed out by the CPC – we are losing out to the way in which funding is allocated. We are actively engaging with government and partners to advocate for fairer funding for rural councils like ours, while at the same time we are developing plans for savings – building on the £40 million saved over the last five years, more income generation and strategic investment to ensure we can continue delivering vital services.

I am very proud of the Finance team, led by Rachael Sanders, after Herefordshire Council became the first local authority in the UK to have its **statement of accounts** — detailing financial performance, management and bookkeeping — formally approved for the previous financial year. This is an outstanding achievement and speaks to our strong financial stewardship.

After weeks of detailed preparation we recently welcomed the **Care Quality Commission's inspection** team to Herefordshire to review our Adult Social Care Services. The inspectors spent three days at Plough Lane, interviewing members and officers. Their assessment framework comprises four themes: working with people; providing support, ensuring safety and leadership. Their preparation and professionalism were exceptional, and the inspectors commented on the warm welcome and energy they experienced throughout their visit. We expect the findings of their inspection to be published in the Autumn.

We have appointed a **new Chief Technical and Data Officer** to lead our digital transformation work. Ed Garcez will take on this new role, which will be pivotal in helping us deliver better and more accessible services to residents while working smarter and more efficiently. A key enabler of our transformation agenda will be the adoption of new technologies that can bring real benefits to residents, and I am confident that Ed will help us to achieve that. At the same time we are mindful of the need to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery, especially for those who are digitally excluded or where in-person or more locally-based service provision is necessary.

As mentioned in my last update, work continues 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 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.

Herefordshire has been selected as one of 43 areas in England to join the **National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme (NNHIP)** - a part of the Government's Ten-Year Health Plan. The initiative aims to shift care closer to home, prevent illness and support people with complex needs through integrated services. Herefordshire's inclusion highlights the strength of its existing One Herefordshire Partnership, which already brings together NHS providers, GPs, local government, and the voluntary sector to deliver joined-up care. The programme will support local innovation and help scale successful approaches.

We are pleased that Hereford has been selected to receive up to £20 million of funding as part of a Government programme called **Pride in Place** Strategy to "support and empower communities at the hyper-local level". This programme was previously known as the Plan for Neighbourhoods, and in September the government announced a further 169 "left-behind" communities being added. We will be working with the government and members on how best to invest this funding.

We hosted over 100 delegates at a fantastic **Herefordshire Employment & Skills Conference**. The event brought together businesses, training providers, and educators to address skills gaps, workforce planning, and apprenticeships. Keynote speaker, and former SAS member, Mark Billingham MBE QCB inspired attendees with his journey and message of resilience. This conference is part of our commitment to supporting better-paid jobs and economic development across Herefordshire.

Officers and members have been working hard to facilitate the welcoming the **Baton of Hope** to Hereford (on 2 October), raising awareness of suicide prevention. The procession will be the only one of its kind in the West Midlands region and is expected to see thousands of residents – some of whom have personal experience – taking part. Members will also have seen our updated Suicide Prevention Strategy was presented to Cabinet in September.

Congratulations to the council's **fostering team** for their nomination at the West Midlands Children's Services Team Excellence Awards 2025 in the Regional Team Excellence category. The team have all worked so hard to ensure our fostering service is second to none, and they were rightly recognised by their regional professional peers in Children's Services.

More broadly, Herefordshire is now part of a **newly formed Integrated Care Board (ICB)** cluster, which includes NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB and NHS Coventry and Warwickshire ICB. This move is part of a national strategy to strengthen leadership and collaboration across neighbouring systems while maintaining local accountability. Simon Trickett has been confirmed as the permanent Joint Chief Executive of the cluster. Crishni Waring, Chair of NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB, will also take on the role of Joint Chair for both boards from 1 October. Although the two ICBs remain separate statutory bodies, the shared leadership model is designed to improve strategic alignment, deliver efficiencies, and support more integrated care across the region.

**Jane Ives**, Managing Director of Wye Valley NHS Trust, retired in September 2025 after nearly a decade leading the organisation and a long career in the NHS. She has been succeeded by Sarah Shingler, former Chief Nursing Officer at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. Sarah brings extensive leadership experience across acute and community services, and her appointment reflects a move toward more integrated leadership across the region. I would like to thank Jane for her collaborative and engaging work with Herefordshire Council.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of two distinguished public servants in recent weeks. **Mark Yates**, Chair of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, died on 23 September 2025 after a short illness. Mark was a widely respected leader whose career spanned decades of public service, including his time as Chief Fire Officer of Hereford and

Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. Since becoming Chair of the Trust in 2021, Mark brought compassion, clarity and unwavering dedication to improving care and supporting colleagues across the system. His legacy will be felt for years to come, and our thoughts are with his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

Former Mayor of Hereford, **David Fleet** passed away at home on 16 September. Former Councillor Fleet, who was also a Freeman of the City, was a well-respected and liked public figure who worked tirelessly for the people of Hereford.

Finally, you will have seen that I will be stepping down as Chief Executive in March 2026 after 43 years in public service. It has been an honour to serve Herefordshire and work alongside such dedicated colleagues. I remain committed to supporting a smooth transition and ensuring our momentum continues. There are a number of big challenges ahead and I am determined to help us navigate through them all.

In the meantime, I'm looking forward to the Parish Summit on 7 October, where officers and members will come together with clerks and councillors from town and parish councils to discuss how we can strengthen our partnerships in the interests of the residents we all serve.





# **Title of report: Electoral review: Proposing the number of councillors per ward**

**Meeting: Council**

**Meeting date: Friday 10 October 2025**

**Report by: Democratic Services Manager**

**Classification**

Open

**Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

**Wards affected**

(All Wards);

**Purpose**

As part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) electoral review, the council must recommend, by two-thirds or more voting majority, to state that it wishes to retain one member per ward electoral arrangements.

This report invites the Council to provide its view on the preferred number of elected members per ward in the county. It is recommended (in line with para. 6 below) that the council resolves to retain the current one member per ward arrangements.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That Council:**

- a) Resolves, by a majority vote, to retain its current electoral arrangements of one member per ward, and
- b) Presents its resolution to the Commission stating the Council's position on its preferred electoral arrangements

## Alternative options

1. The Council can choose not to pass a resolution on its preferred electoral arrangements. This is not recommended. Authorities can request a single member ward review but must notify the Commission before it carries out the warding pattern consultation.

The Council does not need a resolution to inform the Commission that it is content to potentially return to multi-member wards, should the commission be considering this option.

It is right, therefore, that members can debate and determine what the council's preferred electoral arrangements are and that the Commission can take this view in to account when considering any recommendations they may wish to make.

## Key considerations

2. In May, the Commission indicated its intention to conduct an electoral review in Herefordshire. Electoral reviews are an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. Within scope of such a review is consideration of:
  - a. the total number of members to be elected to the council;
  - b. the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards/divisions) for the purposes of the election of councillors;
  - c. the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and
  - d. the name of any electoral area.
3. Herefordshire Council is being reviewed now because it has not been reviewed since 2013. The Commission has a duty to review local authorities in England from 'time to time'. When the Commission undertakes an electoral review, their principal aim is to deliver good electoral equality across a local authority area. This means ensuring that, for any principal council, the ratio of electors to councillors in each electoral ward/division, is as nearly as possible, the same.
4. Based on current electorate data and projected housing growth over the next 5 years, Herefordshire is showing a small number of wards which indicate a higher variation (over 10%) from the Commission's preferred measure of 2,800 electorate per council member.
5. All Authorities have a legal duty to work with the Commission to gather information regarding the following:
  - a. details of current electoral arrangements and the current electoral register;
  - b. identification of parishes and their boundaries;
  - c. other indicators which identify and build up a map of communities and,
  - d. five-year electorate forecasts from the planned end of the review
6. In September, the Council's member working group convened to consider the Commission's review. One of the questions put to the group, by the Commission, was to explore whether there was a preference to retain one member per ward electoral arrangements, or whether the Council would be open to returning to a system of multi-member wards (up to three members per ward). The unanimous view, of the working group, is to retain the current one member per ward arrangements.
7. It is important to note, the Commission has no pre-determined view on what local electoral arrangements should look like in Herefordshire prior to completing their review. They will be led by the evidence, guided by their local consultations and will consider any recommendations that the council may wish to propose on local electoral arrangements.



8. It is also important to note that should the council resolve and recommend one member per ward arrangements, this does not guarantee that those arrangements will continue. The Commission has noted that *'it will endeavour to construct a uniform pattern of wholly single member wards/divisions except where that would not be the best balance of our statutory criteria of electoral equality, community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government'*.
9. This means that if the Commission is minded to recommend an increase in the number of council wards, it will try to do so by creating single member new wards (in addition to the existing 53 electoral wards). It will also seek to avoid creating multiple-member wards wherever it is possible to do so, but this outcome of the review cannot be guaranteed. Any new wards being considered would require an additional council seat to be created (in addition to the existing 53 elected member seats).

### **Community impact**

10. The Commission's stated delivery aims of an electoral review is to achieve a level of electoral fairness whereby each elector's vote is worth the same as another's. These stated aims are compatible with the council's own stated priorities, as set out in the Council's 2024 to 2028 plan. These are:
  - I. People - We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported.
  - II. Place - We will protect and enhance 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.
  - III. Growth - We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county. We want to attract inward investment, create more jobs, enable housing development and provide the right infrastructure to keep Herefordshire moving forward.
  - IV. Transformation - We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money

### **Environmental impact**

11. There are no environmental implications resulting from this decision.

### **Equality duty**

12. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
13. As the electoral review is not a council decision, the assessment of, and the checks regarding, equality impacts rest principally with the Commission.

### **Resource implications**

14. None at this stage other than officer time. The cost of the review is borne by the Commission.
15. However, any future changes in council size, for example, an increase in council wards/seats that the Commission may recommend will have a direct impact on the member allowance

budget from May 2027 onwards. The [current basic allowance](#) is £9,394 per annum, any new council seats being proposed will incur additional basic allowance(s) to be funded.

## Legal implications

16. The electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England must, by law, be reviewed from time to time. These legal provisions are set out in Section 56 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

## 17. Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
By not gaining a clear position from members on their preferred electoral arrangements, it runs the risk that the Commission could make recommendations that are not supported by the Council.	This decision, if agreed, ensures that the Commission will have regard for the preferred one member per ward electoral arrangements.
The Commission is unable to accommodate a formal request to maintain one member per ward electoral arrangements on the basis that this does not support their statutory criteria of electoral equality, community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government'.	Whilst the council may not favour a possible return to multi-member wards, the Commission will have set out their final recommendations with a view to achieving the fairest representation at the next cycle of local government elections.

## Consultees

18. In September, the Council's member working group considered what the preferred electoral arrangements options were for Herefordshire. Their unanimous view was to retain the current one member per ward arrangements. The council is now asked to consider this option.

## Appendices

None

## Background papers

None



# Title of report: Leader's report to Council

**Meeting:** Council

**Meeting date:** Friday 10 October, 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 25 July, 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 the recent Cabinet decision on the West Midlands Safe Centre report. This report and its associated appendices were restricted under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, in Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

---

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

5. All councillors and members of the public have the opportunity to review all of the executives fully open decisions for five clear working days prior them being taken.
6. 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).
7. 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

8. 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.
9. [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.
10. 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

11. 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

12. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
13. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires 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, equality impacts will be outlined in each of the decisions listed at appendix 1 and 2.

### **Resource implications**

14. 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 1 and 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**

15. 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.
16. 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 and 2 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

### **Risk management**

17. There are no risks arising from the recommendations of this report. The risks of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 and 2 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, 10 October, 2025

**Appendix 2:** Executive decisions taken since 18 July to 2 October 2025

**Appendix 3:** Cabinet member portfolios

### **Background papers:**

None Identified



## **Foreword**

*As Leader of Herefordshire Council, I'm proud to share the progress we've made since our last meeting. Our ambition to deliver the best for Herefordshire runs through every decision and action we take.*

*We're seeing strong delivery across schools, roads, transport, employment land and the public realm. Construction is underway on the £10 M Hereford Transport Hub, improving travel options and connectivity across the county. The ground-breaking ceremony in August marked a major step forward for infrastructure and economic opportunity.*

*Work has begun on Peterchurch School, expanding from 105 to 210 places, with new SEN and Nurture Hub facilities. Works are also due to begin on the £2.4 M redevelopment of Hampton Dene Primary School, delivering new classrooms, improved accessibility, and enhanced SEN provision.*

*We've approved £7.2 M to progress Ross Enterprise Park, unlocking space for up to 1,000 jobs and 29,400m<sup>2</sup> of employment floor space. We've also committed £2 M to flood resilience, protecting homes, businesses and infrastructure.*

*To tackle housing and homelessness, we've acquired the former John Haider building – now renamed after philanthropist John Venn – to provide emergency accommodation and reduce hotel reliance, saving over £600,000 annually. We've launched consultations on our Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy to shape our approach over the next five years.*

*Our highways investment continues, with dozens of miles of roads improved or made safer. New quieter road schemes are starting soon, and essential bridge repairs – including at Mordiford – have been completed on time or ahead of schedule.*

*We're progressing regeneration at Merton Meadow, including a £2 M flood alleviation scheme and space for up to 400 homes. Our commitment to public services remains strong, with improvements in children's services, new bus routes, and upgrades to Hereford Leisure Pool that reduce energy costs.*

*Schools continue to perform well, with a 98.4% A-level pass rate and strong GCSE results. We acted swiftly to maintain critical services following NRS Healthcare's withdrawal, safeguarding support for over 12,000 residents.*

*We've launched a new Domestic Abuse Strategy (2025–2028) and been recognised as a Neighbourhood Health Pioneer, reflecting our focus on integrated care and wellbeing. September's Employment & Skills Conference brought together over 100 delegates to explore workforce planning and development. I have been delighted to have seen so much positive feedback about the conference, with one prominent local business leader saying it was the best event of its kind they've ever attended in Herefordshire.*

*We're preparing for the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review, with consultation expected in November.*

*Cabinet has taken strategic decisions aligned with our Council Plan, including progressing phase one of the Hereford Bypass, advancing the Children and Young Persons' Improvement Plan, and launching a new framework for alternative education provision.*

*We've written to the Secretary of State for Transport proposing a new approach to grant funding for the bypass's southern link road. This would guarantee delivery over three years and allow us to reallocate resources to accelerate future phases.*

*We've approved the use of retained business rates from the Hereford Enterprise Zone to fund a county-wide programme for business growth, skills and inward investment. With £1.4 M now available and future annual income expected at £1.1 M, this provides a sustainable funding stream for economic development. The programme will invest in:*

- Skills: workforce planning, employer upskilling, and bursaries.*
- Business Growth: support for high-growth sectors and innovation.*
- Inward Investment: promoting Herefordshire to attract new businesses and investors.*

*We welcomed the Care Quality Commission for its inspection of Adult Social Care Services and await formal feedback. Early impressions were encouraging.*

*The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge recognised us as a "good council striving to improve," highlighting our strong sense of place, maturing political culture and confident leadership. I'm proud of the positive culture we've built and the direction we're heading. We've moved quickly on some of CPC's recommendations by strengthening our leadership team with a new Chief Technical and Data Officer to drive digital transformation.*

*Our updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy, published last month helps us understand the impact of the government's proposed fair funding formula. Modelling suggests a potential funding gap of £27.3 M in 2026/27 – 11% of our net budget – placing us below average for unitary councils. Despite delivering over £40 M in savings over five years, we must take decisive action to balance the budget and deliver our ambitions. We're disappointed by the proposed funding allocation and hope our consultation response will influence the final outcome.*

*I'm pleased to report a clean audit opinion for our 2024/25 accounts – the second consecutive year – and proud that Herefordshire was the first UK local authority to achieve this. My thanks to Rachael Sanders, our Finance Director and her team, and the Audit and Governance Committee for their key role in this outstanding achievement.*

*Finally, I was saddened at hearing the passing of former Cllr David Fleet, a respected public servant and former Mayor of Hereford. My condolences go to his family.*

*I also want to acknowledge our Chief Executive, Paul Walker, who will step down in March 2026 after more than four decades in public service. I'm deeply grateful for his outstanding contribution and know he will continue to serve with dedication until his departure.*



## 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.

-----OoO-----

**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: Alternative Provision Procurement Framework**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Develop new Alternative Provision for children with needs that require additional support to enable them to remain in, or return to, mainstream education.

**This year we will:** Identify a provider

In August, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approved a framework of commissioned providers who are able to deliver alternative provision. This provision being for children who are not able to attend school and those needing additional support. Herefordshire Council has a duty (under Section 19 of the Education Act, 1996) to commission alternative provision for pupils who face challenges accessing mainstream education. This can be as a result of mental or physical health issues, exclusion (fixed and/or permanent), or special educational needs (SEN).

Herefordshire Council will commission an alternative provision framework to provide compliant high-quality education to help improve outcomes for children and young people who require alternative forms of education. The framework consists of three lots enabling potential providers to demonstrate how they can meet the council's requirements, needs, and quality measures to deliver successful outcomes.

This will include full access to relevant education provision following a permanent exclusion and access to full time education for looked after children where no school has been identified. It will also cater for children who are placed into the county who have difficulties in accessing education due to specific needs. The framework will provide fair and equitable services which will offer:

- a. more choice of provision to meet need
- b. centralised service for education and SEN team to purchase
- c. the broker team to coordinate the process for timely responses
- d. standardised forms and processes
- e. build strong relationships with the council
- f. robust quality assurance, and
- g. supported reintegration to mainstream schools.

This arrangement will commence at the start of January 2026 and will be in place for up to 7 years. Alternative Provision is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) via the High Needs Budget (HNB).

**2: Domestic Abuse Strategy**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy

**This year we will:** Develop and implement the Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan.

In July, Cabinet approved the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2025 to 2028, in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Domestic abuse has a huge impact on society and is one of the most pervasive of all social problems. It causes long term pain and suffering for those affected and their families. It is

often a hidden crime that disproportionately affects women, with people experiencing domestic abuse often reluctant to report their situation.

The Safe Lives prevalence tool uses data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales merged with local population and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) data. This allows the council to capture a true understanding on the prevalence of domestic abuse in a local area. The latest available data estimates that:

- a. There are 25,000 adult victims in Herefordshire who have experienced domestic abuse at some point in their lives since aged 16
- b. Of the total estimated adult victims 19,000 (68%) are female
- c. 8,000 victims have experienced domestic abuse in the last year, of these 68% were female
- d. Only a third of female victims and a quarter of male victims in the past year were 'visible' (visible relates to the number of victims who told a support professional organisation).
- e. 4,500 children were living in a household with domestic abuse present in the last year, and
- f. 4,500 people were using abusive behaviours in their intimate partner relationships in the past year, of these 20% were estimated to be serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The impact on individuals and families results in a variety of needs arising across a wide-range of public services, from police and health care through to education, housing support and criminal justice. The council recognise that a collaborative approach to developing and delivering services is fundamental to preventing and responding to domestic abuse.

The strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders through the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. It uses data which incorporates qualitative data gathered from practitioners and people with lived experience of domestic abuse in Herefordshire. The strategy will be implemented and monitored via an action plan held by the Local Partnership Board. The Board includes representatives from

- a. Herefordshire Council including representatives from Community Wellbeing and Children and Young People
- b. West Mercia Women's Aid
- c. West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Centre
- d. Local NHS organisations, including the Integrated Care System (ICS)
- e. West Mercia Police
- f. Registered Landlords of Social Housing
- g. Lived experience advisory network
- h. The perspective of people with "protected characteristics", who are often under represented among people seeking support.

The strategy and action plan includes specific tasks to promote, publicise and provide regular communications targeted at raising awareness and sign-posting support services to victims of domestic abuse.

### **3: Children and Young Persons' Improvement Plan - Phase 3**

**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.

Children's Services was inspected by Ofsted in July 2022 under the Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework. The overall judgement was that Herefordshire Children's Service is 'inadequate'.

Six Ofsted monitoring visits have taken place to date; this is their seventh report. The last two monitoring visits in November 2024 and February 2025 found that the Phase 2 plan was having impact and services were improving. The Improvement Plan Phase 3 was

reported to Cabinet in July. The Council is expecting their full and final inspection of Children's Services (ILACS) by the end of 2025.

The Phase 3 Improvement Plan has been developed to bring continuity and continued focus, pace and measures to the improvement journey. The Phase 3 plan continues the approach and has re-set actions for improvement and development against each of the Ofsted recommendations.

**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.

**4: Merton Meadows Flood Alleviation - delivery of construction works**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Commence the flood alleviation works on the Merton Meadow and Essex Arms sites in Hereford

**This year we will:** Commence development of the flood alleviation works

In September 2021 the council was awarded £2M from the Government's Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) to procure infrastructure works relating to flood alleviation on the Merton Meadows sites.

In August, this year, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth approved the draw-down of the remaining £1.2 M from the BLRF to procure, appoint, commission and commence the works to deliver the scheme. This decision enables the first £800,000 of the grant to be spent on the required site investigation and design works. This latest decision approved the spend of the remaining £1.2M to appoint a contractor and implement the flood alleviation works.

The grant was awarded to the council to achieve the following outcomes;

- a. address flooding issues associated with these key city centre sites to unlock strategic sites for regenerative development,
- b. address the strategic need to regenerate this gateway area of the city, deliver much needed affordable and social housing as defined in the Herefordshire Housing Market Needs Assessment
- c. provide key worker accommodation to support local health and education institutions,
- d. address flooding issues affecting this and surrounding properties,
- e. improve biodiversity, and
- f. improve access links between the new station transport hub and city centre.

The flood alleviation scheme has been designed to include capacity to accommodate up to 400 new homes across the Merton Meadow sites, which has been determined by the initial high level masterplan exercise. These works are expected to be concluded by January, 2028.

**5: Ross Enterprise Park Phase 1: Construction Phase**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Commence development works on Ross Enterprise Park

**This year we will:** Procure a contractor and Commence works to create access to the site, and four acres of service development ready plots

In July, the Cabinet Member Community for Services and Assets approved expenditure of up to £7.229M to progress delivery of Ross Enterprise Park (phase 1) into the next phase of construction. This decision also enabled the council to undertake procurement for a main contractor and other essential suppliers to deliver those works.

Ross Enterprise Park is one of the largest strategic employment sites in Herefordshire. It has excellent road transport links including easy access to the Midlands, Wales, the Southwest corridor and to the Northwest. The 15-hectare site is allocated to provide 10 hectares of employment land that could in the fullness of time accommodate 29,400 square metres of new employment floor space and support up to 1,000 jobs. The entire site is in council ownership and has benefited from planning permission approved by the Planning and Regulatory Committee on 21 February 2018.

The Herefordshire Economic Plan identifies a critical need for employment land in strategic locations to support the growth of higher value jobs in the county. There remains a strong demand for employment land in Ross on Wye. This decision will encourage and enable local business and employers to stay in Herefordshire and continue their growth ambitions.

Phase 1 of the project will deliver an initial four development plots (circa 1 acre) potentially delivering between 77,000 and 100,000 sq ft of floorspace and between 150 to 600 jobs. It will also include all public highway and active travel improvements necessary to satisfy the sites planning obligations.

#### **6: Hereford Enterprise Zone Retained Business Rates – Herefordshire Growth Programme**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Support existing and new businesses on Hereford Enterprise Zone to increase productivity and provide better paid jobs.

In August, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth approved the expenditure of retained business rates from the Hereford Enterprise Zone held in the Enterprise Zone Business Rates Growth Reserve. This will be used to deliver a county-wide business growth, skills and inward investment programme.

A key benefit of a government designated Enterprise Zone is that the council is able to retain 100% of business rates generated in the specified area for a defined period. The rates retention scheme has been in existence at the Hereford Enterprise Zone since 1 April 2023 and is due to continue until 31 March 2038.

Whilst the Enterprise Zone has been in existence for a number of years, there is a time lag between generating significant new funds for reinvestment, as land is remediated, sold and developed. To date the retained business rate income has met the operational costs of Hereford Enterprise Zone.

It is anticipated that the Hereford Enterprise Zone will generate c£1.1 M of additional income per year up until the end of 2038. From the balance of income from 2023/24 and 2024/25 there is currently a reserve available of circa £1.4m to support economic development activity.

The cabinet member's decision approved the utilisation of these funds to support the economic growth in the county in the following core areas:

- a. A Skills Programme – this will include activities such as creating a dedicated employment skills officer to support businesses to plan their workforce;
- b. A Herefordshire skills boost programme to support local employers to upskill their workforce and to provide bursaries to enable local people to seek higher education opportunities in the county;
- c. A Business Growth Programme - establishing a range of interventions to support businesses in key growth sectors including activities such as scale up support for

high growth, a research & development innovation fund automation, AI, and innovation improving productivity.

- d. An Inward Investment Programme – to raise awareness of Herefordshire’s offer, seeking investment from businesses to attract developers to support the growth of the county, and attract private investors.

**7: Work with partners to provide high quality and affordable housing to meet all needs**

**A commitment from the leader to provide Council with updates on the delivery of housing.**

Work continues to progress well on the Merton Meadow Urban Village Programme. The target start date is 14 October, subject to planning conditions discharge, with completion of phase 1 expected towards the end of the year. A further round of public engagement which will be focussed on young people, is due to place take during October.

The freehold acquisition of the John Venn Building (*formally known as the John Haider building*) was completed in August. Tender documents, to commence works to the site, are in preparation with a target start date on site for December. The completion of the works is expected to be in November 2026.

Buttercross, in Leominster, is progressing well. The plans to convert the upper floors for affordable housing have taken a step closer with the recent submission of a buildings regulations application. The tender for a main contractor is due to go out this month (October) with a target start date of December. The duration of the work is estimated to be 6 to 9 months with a target date for the first occupants being June 2026.

The total number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (collectively with the Registered Providers) in the County are as follows:

- Yr – 2023 to 2024 = 268 dwellings
- Yr – 2024 to 2025 = 276 dwellings
- Yr – 2025 to 2026 (*to date*) = 161 dwellings

***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.***

**8: City and Market Town Public Realm Investment**

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

**Key Milestones to achieve the Deliverable:** Identification and delivery of appropriate projects across Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye, working in partnership with the Town Councils of each.

On 7 February 2025, following Council’s approval of the Capital Programme Review, £1.2 M additional budget was allocated for City and Market Town Public Realm Investment during 2025/26. This additional funding is provided for targeted investment in highway



maintenance and public realm improvements. The investment will improve accessibility, overall condition and active travel across the city and market towns. The works will be delivered as part of existing investment plans or to supplement existing s106 funding that is insufficient to deliver the required projects.

The £1.2m will be distributed to Hereford City and the five market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye (all of whom will receive a £200k share). Officers will work with each of the city and town councils to help them identify appropriate, affordable and deliverable highway maintenance and public realm improvements. These improvements will need to meet the requirements of the original business case associated with the funding being made available. A list of agreed and costed schemes will be approved by the Corporate Director of Economy and Environment. Herefordshire Council will deliver the necessary works within the 2025/26 financial Year.

## **9: Road Safety Schemes**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Deliver highway improvement schemes at known collision cluster sites

**Key Milestones to achieve the Deliverable:** Design and commence delivery of works at top ranking sites including (i) A465 junction with B4348 Locks Garage, Allensmore, and (ii) B4203 junction with B4204 High House Crossroads, Upper Sapey.

In 2024/25, the Local Transport Annual Plan budget provided through central government allowed for a further £200k of investment into local road safety schemes. With this level of investment, the Council is unable to deliver major schemes that would address road safety concerns at known collision cluster sites. It will, however, focus on minor safety improvements.

In 2024, 112 killed or seriously injured casualties were recorded on the road network in Herefordshire. There were also 357 slight injury casualties that occurred on a public highway which were reported by the police.

Public safety is always a principal concern when investing in road safety schemes. The human impacts of road traffic accidents is, of course, at the forefront of everyone's mind when they happen. There are other associated costs, however, when road accidents happen. These include medical care, vehicle and property repairs, emergency services, and the indirect costs such as loss of work days whilst recovering from injuries. Making the right interventions with investment not only saves lives by making our roads safer, it also reduces costs in other areas.

In September, the Cabinet member for Roads and Regulatory Services approved the spend of £3M investment for road safety schemes split over 2025/26 and 2026/27. This funding will be directed toward delivering highway improvement schemes at known collision cluster sites.

Based on existing data, this funding will permit schemes to be delivered at top ranking sites including

- (i) A465 junction with B4348 Locks Garage, Allensmore, and
- (ii) B4203 junction with B4204 High House Crossroads, Upper Sapey.

These sites are considered to require significant investment in large scale improvements, such as signalisation and realignment. Both schemes are expected to be completed by the end of March 2027.

#### **10: Wye Valley Natural landscapes – acceptance of grant funding**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Support the Wye Catchment Partnership Catchment Management Plan

**Key Milestones to achieve the Deliverable:** Work with both governments to secure funding to support delivery of the plan

Under the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have been providing enhanced resources for the management of National Landscapes across England. Government have also consolidated funding through the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), and Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places (SLSP) which is now focused as a 'Nature & Carbon Fund' to address the nature and climate emergencies.

In August, the Cabinet member for environment approved the council's acceptance of a number of funding awards from the National Grid, DEFRA, the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. These grants, totalling £3.8M, will contribute to the future management and duties of the Wye Valley National Landscape, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Wye Valley National Landscape is managed as a cross-border multi-authority partnership under a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). The council has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the other constituent local authorities, namely Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire County Councils.

The Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) is a grant scheme that is part of National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) targeted at reducing the impact of National Grid's existing electricity transmission lines in English and Welsh National Landscapes.

The Welsh Government are also making new revenue and capital allocations, including the new Designated Landscapes Farming grants programme. This includes the continuation of the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and Sustainable Landscape Sustainable Places (SLSP) fund. The Wye Valley National Landscape Team may bid for other grants and funding to deliver the Work Programme for the Wye Valley National Landscape/AONB Management Plan as agreed by the Joint Advisory Committee.

#### **11: Procurement Strategy for the Hereford Western Bypass - Phase 1**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Progress the necessary work to tender for the design and construction of Phase 1 of the Hereford Western Bypass

**Key Milestones to achieve the Deliverable:** Progress the Design and Construction tender for the Hereford Western Bypass Phase 1

In July, Cabinet approved the first phase of the Procurement Strategy for the Hereford Western Bypass. This decision gives authority to procure a pre-construction services agreement for the design and enabling works. A two-stage procurement process enables designs to be undertaken in parallel with construction preparations. This decision enables the council to bring a contractor in at an early stage (Early Contractor Involvement); this is industry best practice and will ensure that buildability issues are considered when finalising the designs.

Contractors go through a competitive process to be appointed to a framework which in turn gives assurance to the council that the contractors have met quality standards and are able to demonstrate value for money. The use of a framework to procure a construction partner enables a partner to be on board considerably quicker than through an open competitive tender route.



A further report will be brought to Cabinet in 2026 seeking approval to award the construction contract. To this end, securing the early engagement of a contractor through a two-stage procurement process provides the best solution for meeting the scheme's delivery objectives.

The council is also seeking to procure land from landowners along the length of the scheme. Whilst it is very much preferred that this can be achieved through negotiation, where this is not possible, use of the council's powers of compulsory purchase (CPO) may be required. A report to Cabinet will be brought later in the year to provide a further update.

## **12: Phosphate income/credits**

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

At the point of drafting, £1,402,242.52 (up by £38,808.00) since my last report in July in phosphate income has been received. To date these actions have released planning permissions for 876 dwellings (an increase of 65 dwellings since July). The Council will receive a further £423,614.00 on commencement of development on these sites.

## **Other Cabinet Decisions and progress reports**

### **13. Herefordshire Suicide Prevention Strategy**

In September, Cabinet approved the Suicide Prevention Strategy for Herefordshire 2025 - 2029. The strategy has been developed in collaboration with local partners and highlights our commitment to reduce the number of local lives lost to suicide. The strategy takes a whole-county, all-age, collaborative approach to reducing the number of suicides in Herefordshire. Partners will be jointly responsible for the delivery of the strategy and will lead the development of a coordinated action plan. Each respective partner will be responsible for delivering their own actions within the plan.

Our local strategy outlines seven commitments that align with, and bring local focus to, national priorities. These are:

- Commitment 1 – Making suicide everyone's business - encouraging all partners to play their part in suicide prevention
- Commitment 2 – Strengthen mental health and early intervention support - increasing awareness of local support, training and activities
- Commitment 3 – Improving data and evidence, to provide up to date local data to inform service delivery
- Commitment 4 – Expanding partnership - working to maintain and build trusted relationships to improve accessibility and delivery of services
- Commitment 5 – Identify at risk priority groups and ensuring support is available and accessible.
- Commitment 6 – Provide effective crisis support - ensuring that the right support is available at the right time including enhanced accessibility to crisis support.
- Commitment 7 – Offer suicide bereavement information and support to increase awareness of suicide bereavement services and support, improve understanding of those affected by suicide and ensure accessibility of support for all ages.

Review of progress made in meeting the commitments of the strategy will be undertaken annually, taking account of key changes in data, trends, national guidance, strategy and policy.

#### **14. Corporate Peer Challenge, held 23 - 26 June 2025**

In September, Cabinet received the report on the outcome of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, held 23 - 26 June 2025, and to approved the council's action plan in response to the recommendations for publication.

The core messages from the CPC is that:

*"Herefordshire is a good council that is striving hard to improve further. It benefits from a strong sense of place, a maturing political culture, and a growing confidence in its leadership. The council has developed a respected identity among partners and is seen as a constructive and increasingly strategic player in the region. There is a clear recognition of the challenges ahead, particularly in relation to transformation, capacity, and financial sustainability.*

*The council is approaching these with determination and a willingness to learn. The peer team found a council that is self-aware, committed to improvement, and increasingly outward facing. There is a shared understanding of the importance of transformation, and while the journey is still at an early stage, the council is laying the groundwork for long-term change".*

The CPC noted that the council's finances are currently in a good base position. A refresh of the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) will enable the council to undertake more robust scenario planning to prepare for future uncertainties. It also recognised that Herefordshire is a rural county with demographic challenges, such as an ageing population and inequalities in service access, housing, and education.

The peer team reflected that the council's leadership - both political and managerial - is increasingly confident and respected. There is a level of political maturity, with members working constructively across party lines and a strong emphasis on consensus-building. The chief executive and leader are seen as visible and accessible, and their leadership has contributed to a positive shift in organisational culture. Governance is generally strong with clear structures and ongoing improvements in risk management.

The CPC team identified five key recommendations which form the basis of the council's action plan, these are:

- Recommendation 1: Transformation - focus on corporate transformation and provide the resources needed to deliver.
- Recommendation 2: Use of data must be improved so that insights can flow to support service improvement and framing the scope of the transformation programme.
- Recommendation 3: Medium Term Financial Planning Carry out planned refresh of Medium Term Financial Strategy and provide some scenario planning for future years
- Recommendation 4: Internal Capacity Strengthen and stabilise the internal capacity to overcome challenges in the thin-client model of delivery. And,
- Recommendation 5: Working with partners to deliver Partners are very supportive, and the council can build on this to develop strategic engagement with the voluntary sector and others to help deliver services.

Cabinet have agreed an action plan to report our progress against these recommendations. These will be monitored and reported upon through the quarterly performance reports to Cabinet.

#### **15. Quarter 1: Performance Report**

Cabinet has reviewed performance for Quarter 1, 2025/26 across all Directorates for this period. The performance reports align to the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the associated annual Delivery Plan for the 2025/26. They provide a summary of the activities undertaken

to deliver the key priorities and goals in Quarter 1 and highlights progress in delivery of the key performance indicators.

The report notes that the 199 out of 226 milestones (88%) profiled as being 'in progress' by the end of Quarter 1. In 2025/26 these projects are on track to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

## **16. Quarter 1: 2025/26 Budget Report**

Cabinet has received the Q1 budget report which forecasts the position for 2025/26. The report includes explanation and analysis of the drivers for budget variances, and outlines the current and planned recovery activity to reduce the forecast overspend. The report also provides assurance that progress has been made towards delivery of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.

The forecast 2025/26 outturn shows a net overspend of £4.3 M at Quarter 1, before management action estimated at £3.3 M to reduce the forecast overspend for 2025/26 to £1.0 M.

## **17. Medium Term Financial Strategy – Update**

Council approved the 2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the 4-year period to 2028/29 on 7 February 2025. The approved MTFS highlighted significant uncertainty in terms of future funding arrangements and allocations across local authorities over the medium-term period as a result of planned funding reform and reset of Business Rates during 2025.

Informed by assumptions and estimates of funding available at the time of preparation, the MTFS identified an estimated potential funding gap for the medium-term period 2025/26 to 2028/29 of £4.2 M and recognised the need to revise the MTFS to reflect updated levels of funding as information is received from Government. The MTFS report also sets out the approach and timetable for development of the 2026/27 budget and MTFS for the 4-year period 2026/27 to 2029/30, to be recommended for approval by full Council in February 2026.

Key priorities for the council in the current financial year (2025/26) are summarised below:

- a. The delivery of services within the approved revenue budget;
- b. Robust monitoring of in-year performance against the approved revenue budget to ensure timely identification of appropriate management recovery actions;
- c. Delivery of savings comprising £3.9 M of savings in the approved 2025/26 Revenue Budget and £11.9 M of savings not delivered recurrently in prior years which have been carried forward for delivery in 2025/26; and
- d. Development of the 2025/26 Revenue and Capital Investment Budgets, review and update of the MTFS.

The updated estimate of funding represents a potential loss to the 2025/26 baseline position of £12.0 M over the three-year period to 2028/29. Work to challenge and review the previous estimate of net expenditure requirement has been undertaken. The impact of this reduction in funding through the Fair Funding Review requires a revised estimate – this indicates a funding gap of £27.3 M in 2026/27 rising to £54.4 M in 2028/29.

It is expected that this estimate will be subject to change over the months leading up to the publication of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, in December 2025. As a result of further expected updates to data and formulae which determine funding allocations, the MTFS, and underlying income and expenditure estimates and assumptions, will be further reviewed, modelled and tested over the budget development period through to February 2026.

This work will also model and incorporate the impact of transformation and planned savings and efficiencies on the estimated funding gap in 2026/27 and future years.

#### **18. Risk Management Update Quarter 1 2025-26**

Cabinet received an update on the status of corporate risks at the end of Quarter 1 2025/26 (June 2025) at their September meeting. The revised Risk Management Strategy 2025/26 and Risk Appetite Statement were approved by Cabinet in June 2025. The Strategy sets out the approach and principles of risk management, outlining the council's risk appetite, to inform the management of risks by Members and Officers across the council.

The council's 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan has been reviewed to ensure it is aligned to the refreshed Risk Strategy and risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register. The development of a comprehensive risk-based plan ensures that internal audit activities are focused on the highest-impact risks to the council's objectives.

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 17 July to 2 October, 2025		Date Taken	Effective From
<b>Cabinet Decisions</b>			
<a href="#">Procurement Strategy for the Hereford Western Bypass -Phase 1</a>		17/07/2025	24/07/2025
<a href="#">Domestic Abuse Strategy for Herefordshire 2025 to 2028</a>		17/07/2025	24/07/2025
<a href="#">Children and Young Persons' Improvement Plan - Phase 3</a>		17/07/2025	24/07/2025
<a href="#">Q1 Performance Report</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<a href="#">Q1 2025/26 Budget Report</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<a href="#">Medium Term Financial Strategy - Update to Cabinet</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<a href="#">Risk Management Update Quarter 1 2025-26</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<a href="#">Herefordshire Suicide Prevention Strategy</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<a href="#">Corporate Peer Challenge</a>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<b>West Midlands Safe Centre (exempt report)</b>		25/09/2025	02/10/2025
<b>Cabinet Member Decisions</b>			
<b>Cabinet Member: Children and Young People</b>	<b>Date Taken</b>	<b>Effective From</b>	
<a href="#">Alternative Provision Procurement Framework</a>	20/08/2025	28/08/2025	
<b>Cabinet member: Community Services and Assets</b>			
<a href="#">Ross Enterprise Park Phase 1 Construction Phase</a>	22/07/2025	29/07/2025	
<b>Cabinet member: Economy and Growth</b>			
<a href="#">Merton Meadows Flood Alleviation - delivery of construction works</a>	21/08/2025	29/08/2025	
<a href="#">Hereford Enterprise Zone Retained Business Rates – Herefordshire Growth Programme</a>	21/08/2025	29/08/2025	
<b>Cabinet Member – Environment</b>			
<a href="#">Wye Valley National Landscapes - acceptance of grant funding</a>	01/08/2025	08/08/2025	
<b>Cabinet member: Finance and Corporate Services</b>			
<a href="#">ICT systems upgrades &amp; server replacements</a>	27/03/2025	03/04/2025	
<a href="#">Re-procurement of Unit 4 Business World</a>	24/03/2025	01/04/2025	
<b>Cabinet Member: Roads and Regulatory Services</b>			
<a href="#">Road Safety Schemes</a>	11/09/2025	18/09/2025	
<a href="#">City and Market Town Public Realm Investment</a>	29/08/2025	05/09/2025	



## 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
- Rivers and waterways
- 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 10 October 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 – Child Friendly Herefordshire**

(Proposed by Councillor Toni Fagan, Seconded by Councillor Ben Proctor )

#### **Council notes:**

- The saying that “*it takes a community to raise a child*” is especially true for local government.
- As corporate parents, councillors have a direct responsibility for children in the care of Herefordshire Council.
- As civic leaders, councillors also have a wider responsibility for running and shaping the county in which all young people grow, learn, and thrive.
- Recent years have demanded reflection on how we discharge these responsibilities, but reflection also offers opportunity: to imagine and create a different - better future.

#### **Council believes:**

- A Child Friendly Herefordshire requires councillors, officers, and partners across all sectors to commit to placing children and young people at the heart of decision-making.
- Listening to and acting on the voices of children and young people is central to improving their lives and building a stronger county for all generations.
- Every child and young person in Herefordshire deserves to be safe, loved, heard, and supported to reach their full potential.

#### **Council therefore resolves:**

1. To adopt a formal policy of *Child Friendly Herefordshire*, embedding the principle of putting children and young people’s safety and wellbeing at the heart of all decisions.
2. To ensure children and young people have meaningful opportunities to shape decisions that affect them, both now and in the future.
3. To ask the executive to work with partners across public services, schools, health, business, transport, community groups, and voluntary organisations to create a county-wide partnership for Child Friendly Herefordshire.
4. To ask the Leader to report annually to Council on progress towards making Herefordshire a county where children and young people thrive.

### **Motion 2 – Protecting Community Safety in Herefordshire - Opposing Cuts to PCSO Hours**

(Proposed by Councillor Robert Owens, Seconded by Councillor *tbc*)

#### **This Council notes that:**

- Police Community Support Officers (PCSO’s) are an essential part of neighbourhood policing in Herefordshire, reducing crime and the fear of crime, playing a crucial role in community engagement, crime prevention, and the early intervention of anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- The Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia has proposed a significant reduction in PCSO working hours, meaning that PCSO’s will no longer be on duty

after 8.00pm, despite the police precept being raised by 5.05% this year, an increase of £14 per person.

- This decision has been made even though incidents of ASB occur disproportionately during the evening hours; precisely the time when PCSO's would now be absent from their communities.

This Council believes that:

- The restriction of PCSO hours represents a serious threat to public safety and community confidence in local policing across Herefordshire.
- Visible and proactive community policing is vital in rural areas, market towns and Hereford City. All residents rely on local officers for reassurance, deterrence, and a swift response to low-level but persistent issues.
- The decision to limit PCSO hours appears to have been taken without sufficient consultation with local authorities or the communities most affected by ASB and crime.

This Council resolves to:

1. Formally oppose the decision of the Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner to limit PCSO evening working hours across Herefordshire.
2. Request the Chief Executive to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner, urging a reversal of this decision in recognition of the significant impact it will have on community safety and the visibility of policing in Herefordshire.
3. Request the Leader of the Council to communicate the Councils opposition to these proposed changes with both of Herefordshire's MP's and encourage them to raise the issue in Parliament, and to call for increased support and funding for neighbourhood policing in rural counties such as ours.

**Motion 3 – Improving access to employment, education and leisure for young people aged 16–19 through bus provision**

(Proposed by Councillor Rebecca Tully, Seconded by Councillor *tbc*)

This Council notes that:

1. Access to affordable, reliable and accessible public transport is essential for young people aged 16-19 “to access services including education, employment and healthcare throughout Herefordshire and beyond” (Draft Local Transport Plan-LTP5)
2. Disabled residents in Herefordshire are due to be able to use their concessionary bus passes before 9.30am from November 2025, (a move requested by Herefordshire MENCAP, March '25 Full Council)
3. Where pilot targeted bus schemes have been introduced, evidence shows that bus travel increases and there is an economic and public health benefit
4. The current transport assistance scheme for 16-19 yr olds charges users £1030 per person annually and is limited to travel before 6pm, weekdays, term time only
5. The current transport assistance scheme for 16-19 yr olds is used by 333 in-county individuals out of an estimated 3500 individuals
6. Increasing accessibility for young people supports the council priorities of people, growth,

place and transformation, and the objectives of the LTP

7. A Bus and Community Transport Task and Finish Group is currently examining how bus provision can be improved using the provisions of the current Bus Services Bill and is due to present to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee in June 2026

The council acknowledges that the current funding landscape is extremely challenging. Targeting support for 16–19-year-olds offers a potentially good return on investment, given the relatively low cost and high social impact. Offering incentives to travel on existing services—especially in partnership with operators—is a strategy that delivers long-term benefits, increasing bus ridership without damaging existing revenue streams or requiring investment into new routes or infrastructure.

Council resolves to:

1. Support in principle the expansion of affordable, accessible bus travel for 16–19 year olds in Herefordshire to:
  - a. Improve access to education, employment, and training
  - b. Reduce social isolation
  - c. Enhance health outcomes
2. Request the executive prepare proposals for inclusion in the 2026/27 budget for:
  - a. The provision of a pilot extension of the transport assistance scheme for 16-19yr olds in education to enable travel on evenings, weekends and holidays. This pilot would include evaluation of impact.
  - b. Identification of potential funding sources, including BSIP revenue grant and the Local Transport Grant revenue allocation; anticipated savings in other service areas (e.g., Economy, Public Health); and bus operator partnership or sponsorship opportunities.
3. Request the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Transport, urging support for pilot schemes and action on the Transport Committee's recommendation to explore national free or discounted travel for young people, alongside long-term, devolved funding for bus services.

#### 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	Further to the meeting of Cabinet and the Integrated Care Board, work to draw up a blueprint for local multi-disciplinary health delivery is underway. It is being informed by Herefordshire's successful Neighbourhood Health bid that was approved by NHS England in early September. Initial discussions have been held with the new Managing Director



		of Wye Valley NHS Trust and the paper is due to be submitted by end of October 2025.
<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>This Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the reinstatement of Minor Injury Units in Herefordshire as soon as possible to alleviate pressure on A&amp;E services and improve access to urgent care for residents across the county; and</li> <li>• Calls upon the Executive to work with NHS partners and other stakeholders to facilitate the reopening of Minor Injury Units in Herefordshire.</li> </ul>		

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
25 July 2025	Securing Herefordshire's Role in the UK and European Defence Industrial Strategy	<p>Work has started on taking forward a plan to action this motion and build on current work to support the Defence and Security sectors in Herefordshire.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Currently finalising a Defence and Security Prospectus for Herefordshire, having established and engaged with a forum made up of some of the leading local businesses in the sector.</li> <li>2. Drafted a letter to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Ministry for Business and Trade, which addresses the points set out in the motion, and which is intended to be sent in mid-October, when Prospectus is complete and can be sent, as supporting documentation.</li> <li>3. Using the Defence and Security Prospectus, and associated collateral to plan to engage with UK defence primes and SMEs to promote supply chain expansion in the county, including potential attendance at defence and security trade events in early 2026.</li> <li>4. Working closely with NMITE to encourage them to align training and apprenticeships with the emerging needs of the UK and European defence sector. NMITE have already been successful in attracting funding from AWE Nuclear Security Technologies, (the Ministry of Defence's nuclear capability partner), to be able to offer 12 fully-funded student places on their new BSc (Hons) Construction Management degree, to support the nuclear weapons sector.</li> <li>5. All engagement with the defence and security sector is underpinned by Herefordshire's values of</li> </ol>

		<p>environmental responsibility, ethical governance, and community benefit.</p> <p>6. A spin-off from the engagement with the local defence sector has highlighted that there is a need for a dedicated secure area for testing of military grade drones, so work is ongoing to explore suitable opportunities.</p>
<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> This Council resolves to ask the executive to:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Call on the Government to support rural areas like Herefordshire by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prioritising infrastructure upgrades in strategic industrial zones;</li> <li>○ Establishing an investment support scheme modelled on Enterprise Zones;</li> <li>○ Fast-tracking planning for clean-tech and defence-linked developments.</li> </ul> <p>Engage with UK defence primes and SMEs to promote supply chain expansion in the county, particularly for dual-use and green defence technologies.</p> <p>Work with FE and HE providers to align training and apprenticeships with the emerging needs of the UK and European defence sector.</p> <p>Ensure that all defence-linked investment is underpinned by Herefordshire's values of environmental responsibility, ethical governance, and community benefit.</p>		

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
25 July 2025	Housing Targets	The motion has been noted in respect of housing targets and will be taken into consideration as part of plan preparation. The Council has recently issued a 'call for sites' and this is the first stage in plan preparation to see what land is potentially available for development. If there is insufficient land to meet the requirements of the county over a 20 year plan period, a lower level of growth can be justified (a lower housing requirement). This will not be

		known until the 'call for sites' process has been concluded and all sites have been assessed.
<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>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”.</p>		

## 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**