

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

**To: All members of the Council**

our ref: Council - 6 March 2026  
contact: Matthew Evans, Democratic Services  
telephone: 01432 383690  
email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

26 February

Dear Councillor,

**You are hereby summoned** to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 6 March 2026** at the Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE at **10.00 am** at which the business set out in the attached agenda is proposed to be transacted.

Yours sincerely  
**Claire Porter**



**Monitoring Officer**



# AGENDA

## Council

Date: **Friday 6 March 2026**

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Time: **10.00 am**

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

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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)

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services on 01432 383690 or e-mail [matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk](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 Kevin Tillet**

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 Stef Simmons  
Councillor Louis Stark  
Councillor John Stone  
Councillor Charlotte Taylor  
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 Adam Spencer  
Councillor Pete Stoddart  
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst  
Councillor Richard Thomas  
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 13 February 2026.	11 - 24
<b>4. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> To receive the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements.	25 - 26
<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 2 March 2026.</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. 2026/27 COUNCIL TAX SETTING REPORT</b> To set the council tax and precepts for 2026/27  Please note: this report is marked as <i>to follow</i> and will be published following receipt of all parish council precepts.	
<b>8. APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL COMMITTEE</b> Council is asked to make an appointment to the vacant position of Vice Chairperson of the Employment Panel.  Background papers: none identified.	
<b>9. LEADER'S REPORT</b> To receive a report from the leader on the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council on 5 December 2025.	27 - 50

**10. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

To consider Notices of Motion.

51 - 58

## **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 13 February 2026 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor Roger Phillips (chairperson)  
Councillor Kevin Tillett (vice-chairperson)

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

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

\*denotes remote attendance

**38. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON**

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

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

**RESOLVED: That Councillor Kevin Tillett is appointed Vice-Chairperson of the Council for the remainder of the current municipal year.**

Councillor Tillett made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

**39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bruce Baker, Dan Powell and Rob Williams.

**40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Phillips declared –

- i) An interest in agenda item no. 10 – 2026/27 Budget Setting - as chairman of the Rural Services Network.

- ii) An interest in agenda items no. 11 – Pay Policy Statement – as the vice chairman of the National Joint Council (NJC) – local government, Chief Executives and Chief Officers.

Cllr David Hitchiner declared a non-registerable interest in agenda item no.9, 2026/27 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update, as a local resident to the proposed southern relief road. Cllr Hitchiner outlined the dispensation he had been granted to speak and take part in all meetings that discuss the matter.

A further declaration of interest was raised, see paragraph 46 below.

#### **41. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting 5 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

#### **42. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

#### **43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (PAGES 7 - 12)**

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.

#### **44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (PAGES 13 - 14)**

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.

#### **45. 2026/27 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services to agree the council tax reduction scheme for 2026/27.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services proposed the council tax reduction scheme for 2026/27 and introduced the report.

The Leader seconded the council tax reduction scheme for 2026/27 for approval.

Council debated the report.

A named vote was held to agree the council tax reduction scheme set out in the report. The scheme was carried unanimously.

FOR (50): Councillors Andrews, Bartlett, Bartrum, Biggs, Boulter, Bramer, Carwardine, Cole, Cornthwaite, Crockett, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Durkin, Dykes, Engel, Fagan, Foxtan, Gandy, Gennard, Hamblin, Harvey, Heathfield, Highfield, Hitchiner, Hurcomb, James, Kenyon, Lester, Mason, O'Driscoll, Oliver, Owens, Peberdy, Phillips, Ivan Powell, Price, Proctor, Simmons, Spencer, Stark, Stoddart, Stone, Swinglehurst, Taylor, Thomas, Tillett, Toynebee, Tully, Allan Williams and Woodall.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

**RESOLVED:**

**That:**

- a) **The Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27, with the same parameters as the existing scheme be approved.**

**46. 2026/27 CAPITAL INVESTMENT BUDGET AND CAPITAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services to approve the 2026/27 capital investment budget and capital strategy update. Council noted those supplements published following the despatch of the agenda including the Budget Council meeting procedure 2026 and the Section 151 officer's section 25 statement both published on 6 February.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services moved the report and proposed the recommendations.

The Leader seconded the report and the recommendations.

Council debated the report.

The 2026/27 capital investment budget and capital strategy update was put to the recorded vote and carried by a simple majority.

FOR (35): Councillors Andrews, Bartrum, Biggs, Boulter, Bramer, Carwardine, Cole, Cornthwaite, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Durkin, Dykes, Foxton, Gandy, Hamblin, Harvey, Highfield, Hurcomb, James, Kenyon, Lester, Mason, Phillips, Ivan Powell, Price, Spencer, Stoddart, Stone, Swinglehurst, Taylor, Thomas, Tillett, Toynbee, Allan Williams and Woodall.

Against (0):

Abstentions (15): Councillors Bartlett, Crockett, Engel, Fagan, Gennard, Heathfield, Hitchiner, O'Driscoll, Oliver, Owens, Peberdy, Proctor, Simmons, Stark and Tully.

**RESOLVED:**

**That: Council:**

- a) **Approve the revised capital programme for 2026/27 attached at appendix C;**
- b) **Approve the capital strategy at appendix D; and**
- c) **Approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts of up to £1.0 million in 2026/27, to support transformation to generate ongoing revenue savings and reduce service delivery costs in future years.**

*There was an adjournment at 11:16 a.m.; the meeting reconvened at 11:30 a.m.*

Cllr Fagan declared a registerable interest in agenda item no.9, 2026/27 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update, as a trustee of Llanwarne Village Hall which had received grant funding from the council.

**47. 2026/27 REVENUE BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Council considered a report from the Leader to set the 2026/27 budget.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report and moved the budget.

The Leader seconded the report and the budget.

Councillor Terry James, as Group Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group spoke on the budget.

Councillor Stef Simmons, as Group Leader of The Green Party Group spoke on the budget.

Councillor Liz Harvey, as Group Leader of the Independents for Herefordshire Group spoke on the budget.

Councillor Clare Davies, as Group Leader of the True Independents Group spoke on the budget.

Council debated the budget recommended by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services closed the debate.

The 2026/27 budget, medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy was put to the recorded vote and was carried by a simple majority.

FOR (48): Councillors Andrews, Bartlett, Bartrum, Biggs, Boulter, Bramer, Carwardine, Cole, Cornthwaite, Crockett, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Durkin, Dykes, Engel, Fagan, Foxton, Gandy, Hamblin, Harvey, Heathfield, Highfield, Hitchiner, Hurcomb, James, Kenyon, Lester, O'Driscoll, Oliver, Owens, Peberdy, Phillips, Ivan Powell, Price, Proctor, Simmons, Spencer, Stark, Stoddart, Stone, Swinglehurst, Taylor, Thomas, Tillett, Toynee, Tully, Allan Williams and Woodall.

Against (1): Councillor Gennard

Abstentions (1): Councillor Mason

## **RESOLVED:**

**That Council approves:**

- a) the council tax base of 74,315.25 Band D equivalents in 2026/27;**
- b) an increase in core council tax for 2026/27 of 2.99%;**
- c) an additional precept in respect of adult social care costs of 2% applied to council tax in 2026/27 resulting in a total council tax increase of 4.99%, increasing the Band D charge from £1,969.36 to £2,067.63 for Herefordshire Council in 2026/27;**
- d) the balanced 2026/27 revenue budget proposal totalling £234.1 million, subject to any amendments approved at the meeting, specifically the net spending limits for each directorate as at appendix C;**
- e) delegates to the section 151 officer the power to make necessary changes to the budget arising from any variations in central government funding allocations via general reserves;**
- f) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2029/30 at appendix A be approved;**
- g) the Treasury Management Strategy at appendix D be approved;**
- h) that any further additional funding above that assumed in this revenue budget and received in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for**

**2026/27, is applied to fund the revenue budget with a corresponding reduction in the reserve funding assumed from the Business Rates Risk Reserve.**

**48. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27**

Council considered a report by the Chairperson of the Employment Panel to approve the pay policy statement for 2026/27.

The report and recommendation was moved by the Leader (as chairperson of the employment panel) and seconded by Councillor Terry James.

The pay policy statement was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED – That:**

**(a) the pay policy statement at appendix A is approved for publication.**

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm

**Chairman**



**Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the public**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Fisher, Bromyard	<p>On 1 April 2022 the Planning Inspector directed the Council to determine 36 applications to modify the Definitive Map. A deadline was set for determining each application. All deadlines have now passed; none of the 36 applications have been determined. Moreover in the case of four other applications which were determined in 2021 (M344,M345, M346,M348), the required Orders have still not been made.</p> <p>Will the Council confirm that this important statutory area of work will be resourced to deliver the following minimum service level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A minimum of five DMMOs to be determined each year.</li> <li>2. Where it has been determined to make an Order, the Order shall be made within three months of determination.</li> <li>3. Where no objections are received to the advertised Order, the Order shall be confirmed within three months of the expiry of the objection period.</li> </ol>	Cabinet member local engagement and community resilience

**Response:** We can confirm that there are 36 applications which the Council have been directed to determine.

Due to staffing changes and the specialist knowledge required to make these determinations none have been progressed to date, as the officer who is able to investigate has been progressing other priority applications and training newer officers.

In respect of M344, M345 and M346 these are undergoing final checks and are due to be published imminently. M348 is being re-examined and a final determination will be made over the coming weeks.

To answer your specific numbered questions:

1. We anticipate the team will be able to progress a minimum of five Definitive Map Modification Orders each year.
2. In respect of order publication this will be determined by the volume and number of legal orders being progressed however we will endeavour to make the Order within three months of determination wherever possible.
3. If no objections are received to an Order, officers will confirm the order as soon as possible, however in certain circumstances physical works and possible enforcement action may be required which will dictate the timescales involved which may cause a delay in confirming the Order within three months of the expiry of the objection period.

PQ 2	Mrs Morawiecka, Hereford	Herefordshire Council has already spent £2.456million on the Hereford Southern Link Road with the Capital programme showing budgeted expenditure on this scheme of £13.5million in 2026/27. Cabinet has said that Council approval for a capital project is not approval to spend. Who gave approval to spend £2.456million to date on this capital project and how much can the Cabinet approve to spend on this road project before a full business case and a report on value for money needs to be prepared?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p><b>Response:</b> Cabinet in March 2024 agreed to an initial budget of £10.3m to develop Phase one and gave officers delegated authority to spend. The spend of £2.456m is in line with that decision. The money has been spent on progressing land purchase, updating designs, ecology work, developing planning applications in line with updated planning regulations and producing a revised business case.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question:</b></p> <p>The cabinet agreed an initial spend of £10.3million so with the Council approving a further £13million capital spend in 2026/27 for the Southern Link Road it seems they can approve up to £23.3million with no full business case or any evidence to show this will deliver the traffic benefits claimed for the full bypass scheme.</p> <p>Please answer my initial question which asked HOW MUCH EXPENSE OR CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENT can be incurred by the Cabinet, binding on the Hereford taxpayer, before there is any full business case or whether this investment offers Value for Money for the residents of Herefordshire?</p>			
<p><b>Response:</b> Cabinet has authorised the use of £10.3m for the development of the scheme. Cabinet will consider the Full Business Case ahead of making the decision to authorise the award of the construction contract and use of the capital budget for construction.</p>			
PQ3	Mr Milln, Hereford	<p>While this administration, at agenda item 10, appendix B, proposes to make cuts and raise charges in a number of service areas, it fails to identify the clear saving it could make at Jacobs Court in my ward. I have raised this many times over the years, most recently at Council last July. The cabinet member, unable either to justify the circa £80,000 and rapidly rising cost to the Council of its eyesore scaffolding or provide a timetable for addressing it, refused to answer my questions.</p> <p>What is the total financial liability (ongoing and unrecovered costs and unrealised values) to Herefordshire Council of property not included in the capital programme which has delivered no public benefit for more than two years, including long term unresolved enforcement cases such as Jacobs Court as well as unused property in its own portfolio?</p>	Cabinet member environment

**Response:**

Jacobs Court is not owned by the council, it is in private ownership. The council's building control service previously undertook urgent action to prevent glass windows from the building falling on to the public through erecting scaffolding. The previous owners of the building went into administration, the council is at an advanced stage of negotiation with the new owners (a consortium of the owners of the individual flats in the building) to pass on the current financial liability (£400 per month), and to ensure they complete the necessary works to ensure the building is safe.

The council budget includes both a capital and revenue allocation to maintain the sites that we own and are directly responsible for.

**Supplementary Question:**

You failed to answer my substantive question which sought only a sum, namely the total unrecovered value on liability property cases going back over two years. Privately owned eyesore Jacobs Court is one example and here we are owed more than £80,000 on a botched planning case unresolved for fifteen years. Crumbling and long closed Council-owned lavatory blocks at St Peters Square and East Street also in may ward are another. The listed timber barns at New House, Almeley, left decaying following the folly of this administrations' treatment of the County farmed estate years ago a third. No public benefit in any of this – just a waste.

I ask for a breakdown identifying these costs showing which are recoverable and which are sunk or lost and how would these impact relevant budgets beneficially or adversely as these matters are addressed?

**Response:**

A written response would be provided.

Written response provided on 25 February:

*The total Jacobs Court liability is £118,000 and we are reviewing the potential to recover this where possible, whilst noting the original business that owned the building went into administration a number of years ago .*

*The Nieuport, Almeley barns are in the council's direct ownership, we have incurred costs of £12,172.26 and are looking at the potential to seek planning approval prior to possible disposal.*

*The two closed toilets are also being reviewed for potential marketing and sale.*

PQ 4	Mrs Protherough, Hereford	Herefordshire Council says that a 30minute free parking for "pop to shop" will help the local economy, whilst increasing car parking fees for visitors looking to make longer visits to Hereford & the market towns. What is the impact assessment that shows free car parking increases spending in the local economy and reduces congestion in the City centre, as opposed to offering free bus travel or investing in pay on departure systems for Council car parks?	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services
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**Response:**

The Pop and Shop initiative is the implementation of a manifesto promise from the current administration. A free parking period in council car parks was requested by a variety of residents and businesses, and this is what is being implemented, and has been extended to on street parking in Hereford. An impact assessment has not been carried out – while a free parking period can be one contribution to supporting the local economy, there are many other measures that are relevant including enhancing the customer experience and public realm, strengthening the nighttime economy, events, culture and many other elements. In addition, it should be appreciated that there has been no increase in car parking charges since 2023. The parking strategy is currently being updated and will be consulted on later this year, park and choose (connecting car parks to other forms of transport) and the payment systems for car parks will be considered in the strategy.

**Supplementary Question:** It is disappointing that this administration has done no impact assessment on the 30minute free parking, “pop to shop” initiative vs other possible measures to support the local economy. In this same budget the council is looking to spend over £45million on a road they claim will reduce congestion in the centre of Hereford, where the major cause is motorists driving short distances in and out of the City. How much will the 30 minute free parking increase frequent, short car trips in and out of Hereford, increasing city congestion vs offering free bus travel or extending student bus passes to include free weekend and evening use?

**Response:**

A written response would be provided.

Written response provided on 26 February:

*The Pop and Shop initiative is only one small contribution to supporting the local economy. There are a wide range of different initiatives to support the local economy. These include; Merton Meadow Regeneration and Flood Alleviations scheme. Hereford Transport Hub, developments such as Holme Lacy Road, forthcoming improvements to bus stops and increasing the number of Real Time Information (RTI) screens at bus stops and interchanges.. The Council offers a range of business support services through Herefordshire Growth Hub. The Council has created the Hereford Enterprise Zone to support the creation of over 1,000 jobs and is currently breaking ground in Ross on Wye, which will create further jobs and inward investment. The Council has issued over £4m in business grants, via UKSPF to support Herefordshire businesses. The forthcoming Local Cycling Walking and Wheeling Investment Plan will start to map out locations for developing further alternative travel choices. We have already implemented a concessionary bus fare scheme for older people They can access free bus travel across the county. However, we have extended the concessionary fare scheme to include travel before 9:30am, which is the minimum government guidance for when concessionary travel can start. So, on almost all services people with a concessionary bus pass can travel before 9:30am providing better access to services, shops and healthcare. Furthermore, there is also a disabled person's bus pass available to Herefordshire residents with a permanent disability or with a disability that is expected to last at least one year. Additionally, if a disabled person is unable to travel on a bus without the assistance of another person because of a disability, they can*

apply for a companion pass. Any Herefordshire resident who qualifies for a disabled person's bus pass on the grounds of disability, and because of that disability is unable to travel on a bus without the assistance of another person, can apply for a companion pass. The companion pass provides free travel on journeys that start in Herefordshire.

PQ 5	Mr Newman, Hereford	<p>The Cabinet member has said that this Council is committed to see a full bypass realised. This is apparently the reason that benefits of the full Western bypass are included in the Outline Business Case for the Hereford Southern Link Road, whilst not including the full capital cost of this much bigger road scheme.</p> <p>As councillors are being asked to approve capital spending just on the Southern Link Road, what are the direct and quantifiable benefits that will be delivered by spending over £45million on this scheme as a standalone road project?"</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:** Council is being asked to approve putting the capital funding into the budget, Cabinet will still need to make the final decision to approve spending once it has fully considered the value for money business case which will be published ahead of the decision to award the construction contract in July 2026.

**Supplementary Question:** I am sorry the answer must relate to a different question. When the benefits of the full Western Relief Road are excluded from the Outline Business case for the Hereford Southern Link Road, what are the direct and quantifiable benefits that will be delivered by spending over £45million on the Southern Link Road scheme as a standalone road project?

**Response:** Phase One of the Western Bypass will deliver a number of transportation, economic, social and environmental benefits which are driving a positive Benefit Cost Ratio. These will be outlined in detail within the business case which will be published in due course.



**Agenda item no. 7 - Questions from members of the Council**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr Harvey, Ledbury North	Will the Cabinet Member: Community Services and Assets highlight to Councillors and residents which publicly owned assets he proposes now to sell to generate capital receipts, and what the value for money criteria are that he intends to use for his latest schemes?	Cabinet member community services and assets
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The council is currently reviewing all of our property assets and land holdings. The review considers for each site the potential to deliver our strategic priorities, the current level of income/ yield, if we could generate additional income (for example through leasing currently vacant units), or if the site were to be disposed of, could it generate private investment in achieving council objectives or generate an income to support the council's future financial position.</p> <p>This review forms part of the activity planned, as part of the council's future financial strategy, to maximise commercial income from the council's asset base, as set out at para 3.4 of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. No specific sites have yet been identified for disposal while the review is underway. Any sites selected for potential disposal will be subject to a governance decision(s) in accordance with the council's constitution.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary question:</b></p> <p>Which publicly owned properties does the cabinet member propose to sell to generate £5m of capital receipts in the coming financial year and what are the value criteria that he intends to use to identify these divestments.</p>			
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>A written response would be provided.</p> <p>Written response provided on 26 February:</p> <p><i>The Outline Business Case submitted for the proposed £5m Historic Building Fund is based on the council borrowing funds (in 2027/28) to be repaid through increased income from the council's estate (not the disposals of sites) over a 40 year period.</i></p> <p><i>The property team are currently reviewing opportunities to maximise income from the existing estate, for example through leasing currently vacant units, to meet this additional cost. This will be fully detailed in the Historic Building Fund full business case.</i></p>			

*To please note that the council is also currently on site on the Merton Meadow implementing the £2m flood alleviation scheme which will enable the future development of up to 400 homes.*

*We are also continuing to explore how employment land can be brought forward on the Bromyard Depot site through working with the private sector.*



## Chief Executive's Report to Council - 6 March 2026

I am pleased to update Council on key developments since my last report on 13 February. Given the short period of time between meetings, this update is necessarily more concise. In that earlier report, I shared the positive outcome of our Ofsted inspection, the progress of major capital projects such as the Hereford Transport Hub, our strengthened partnership work across health and the wider public sector, and our county-wide Expression of Interest for UK City of Culture 2029.

February has also seen momentum in our economic development work. The launch of **Invest in Herefordshire**, our new investment-facing campaign and website, marks an important step in strengthening the county's profile to prospective employers and investors. This modern platform highlights our key sectors, business strengths and development opportunities, and is complemented by targeted marketing in areas such as defence and cyber-security, which are central to our growth ambitions.

Herefordshire Council has invested £50,000 in **grassroots community projects** across the county, supporting 56 local initiatives through the Small Sparks Fund, delivered in partnership with the Herefordshire Community Foundation. The fund, which offers grants of up to £1,000, received an overwhelming 98 applications and has enabled a wide range of community-led schemes to move forward - from improving green spaces and supporting youth activity to tackling loneliness and social isolation. The initiative reflects the Council's commitment to empowering local communities and strengthening wellbeing, connection and resilience across Herefordshire.

Our commitment to creating opportunities for young people has been particularly visible in recent weeks. We joined partners and employers at the Herefordshire Apprenticeship Awards, celebrating the achievements of apprentices across the county. I was delighted that colleagues from both our Children and Young People's Directorate and Community Wellbeing Directorate were recognised, with children's social worker **Jake Fosterjohn** named Apprentice of the Year (Degree Level) and adult's social worker **Daniel Kent** receiving a Highly Commended award.

This celebration of skills and aspiration coincided with the release of a new video marking the first anniversary of our **Youth Employment Hub**, which has already supported more than 300 young people into training, careers guidance and employment support.

Our focus on supporting vulnerable young people continued through the **Care Leavers' Marketplace** at Maylord Orchards, which brought together council services and partner agencies to help care-experienced young people navigate the transition to independent adulthood. This event demonstrated the value of joined-up working across social care, housing, careers, employment support and our wider partnership network, ensuring young people receive the right help at the right moment.

Families also benefitted from our latest **Big HAF Day**, held at Whitecross School and attended by more than 470 children and parents. The event showcased a full day of engaging, inclusive activities for families during half-term.

Alongside these community-focused initiatives, we continue to deliver essential infrastructure and public realm improvements. This month has seen **sustained highway works** across the county as part of the council's major investment in roads, including resurfacing and drainage repairs on key routes such as Stonebow Road near Hereford Hospital. This work supports our wider commitment to improving road safety, reducing reactive repairs and ensuring the network is resilient during periods of severe weather. It is important to note that the council is repairing

approximately 150 road defects a day, with more 3000 repairs being carried out since the start of the year.

It has been an important few weeks for **safeguarding leadership** with key appointment processes underway. We interviewed candidates to become new Chair of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, an important independent, strategic leadership role, helping to ensure local agencies work together to protect vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. I also chaired the interview panel for the next Independent Scrutineer of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, a key senior level appointment who provides assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We saw strong candidates for both roles, and I confident we will continue this vital partnership work with robust, committed and highly experienced people in place.

At a national level, Government has confirmed that areas outside existing devolution arrangements may now apply to become **Foundation Strategic Authorities**, and we have begun exploring what this could mean for Herefordshire in practice. While Local Government Reorganisation does not directly affect us as an established unitary authority, we continue to monitor developments closely following the announcement of formal consultation on potential unitary models in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

Finally, I would like to thank colleagues across all services for their professionalism, energy and care during a period of ongoing pressure but visible progress. Whether supporting young people, keeping the county moving, delivering essential services or advancing our long-term ambitions, their work continues to demonstrate the resilience and values that underpin this council's service to the community.

I ask members to note these updates and the positive direction they represent, and I remain happy to provide any further detail.



# Title of report: Leader's report to Council

**Meeting:** Council

**Meeting date:** Friday 6 March, 2026

**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 5 December, 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. 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.

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 one decision has been taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice). This was the Extension of the council's Care Homes (Unified) Contract decision taken on 16 February, 2026
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, 6 March, 2026

**Appendix 2:** Executive decisions taken since 28 November 2025 to 26 February, 2026

**Appendix 3:** Cabinet member portfolios

### **Background papers:**

None Identified



## Foreword:

*As Leader of Herefordshire Council, I am pleased to present this latest report, highlighting the progress and decisive action we have taken since my last report in March. Once again, our shared ambition to deliver the very best for Herefordshire is reflected throughout, with clear evidence of delivery across our priorities: People, Place, Growth and Transformation.*

*Since December, we have taken significant steps to strengthen our financial position and invest in the county's future. Council has now approved our 2026/27 capital and revenue budgets (and associated instruments) - robust, responsible plans that respond to the funding gap created by the Government's Fair Funding Review, while investing in highways, housing, flood resilience, infrastructure and the local economy. Full Council's decision on 13 February approved a comprehensive package of measures that reflect what residents told us matters most, including the condition of our roads and the protection of vital services.*

*The budget includes a 4.99% council tax increase to maintain delivery of services alongside major capital investment in resurfacing, emergency accommodation, infrastructure maintenance and heritage assets and a savings programme of £20 million to be achieved through transformation of services, reduction of costs and managing demand.*

*We have also celebrated a significant landmark achievement for our children and young people. Ofsted has formally judged Herefordshire's Children's Services to be Good overall, with Outstanding leadership - a transformation from the inadequate rating of 2022. This is a hugely significant moment for the county, and I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Cabinet Member Cllr Powell, Corporate Director Tina Russell, the Children and Young People's Directorate, Chief Executive Paul Walker and all staff and partners involved in this improvement journey. Their dedication has made a profound difference to the lives of children and families.*

*Our commitment to young people remains central to our agenda. To mark National Apprenticeship Week, we released a new video celebrating the first anniversary of our Youth Employment Hub. More than 300 young people have received tailored careers, skills and employment support since the hub opened last year - an achievement we are hugely proud of. In that same week, I was delighted to attend the council's first ever Apprenticeship Awards, celebrating the outstanding dedication, ambition and talent of apprentices and employers across the county. The event showcased exactly why investing in skills matters: it strengthens our economy, supports local businesses to thrive, and gives young people the opportunities they deserve to build successful careers right here in Herefordshire.*

*For adults, we have approved the re-procurement of our Independent Adult Advocacy Service to ensure people who need support to make decisions about their care continue to receive high-quality, statutory advocacy. Meanwhile, our Emergency Duty Team service for children has been secured for a further three years, ensuring safeguarding support remains available around the clock. We have also taken decisions that protect vital community assets, including agreeing in principle to retain the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School following a strong, community-led business case.*

*Our determination to build a vibrant, ambitious and confident Herefordshire was further demonstrated with the announcement of our county-wide partnership bid to become UK City of Culture 2029. This bold proposal, developed collaboratively with arts, culture and creative organisations, celebrates Herefordshire's identity as "A Living Borderland" - a rural county alive with creativity, community, heritage and innovation. Should we be successful, the benefits would extend far beyond 2029.*

*We continue to drive forward growth and investment. February saw the launch of the new Invest in Herefordshire campaign and website - a modern, compelling platform for attracting business investment and showcasing our economic strengths, key employment sectors and development opportunities. This will support our ambition to secure new jobs, boost productivity and increase prosperity across the county.*

*On growth, our focus remains on unlocking housing, supporting local businesses and creating opportunities across the county. You will see in my full report, the council plans to increase the amount of social housing, speed up development on key sites, bring empty homes back into use and improve existing properties. A £10m capital programme for 2026/27 will help deliver more homes for large families, accessible housing, accommodation for young people, and additional temporary accommodation to meet growing demand and reduce long term costs. I am proud the Council (collectively with the Registered Providers) has delivered 731 dwellings in the County since 2023).*

*We have also supported the Hereford Business Improvement District in progressing to its third term, enabling more than £1.9 million of local investment to boost tourism, city-centre vitality and business confidence. This work sits alongside wider economic initiatives, including our new Invest in Herefordshire service, our enterprise-zone renewal efforts, and steps to secure sustainable growth in key sectors.*

*In response to feedback from businesses and residents, Cabinet has agreed to extend the popular 30-minute free parking scheme to include on-street bays in Hereford city centre, complementing the existing 'Pop & Shop' provision in council-operated car parks from April. This measure supports footfall, accessibility and the local economy.*

*Major regeneration and infrastructure projects are also progressing at pace. At Merton Meadow, construction is now underway on the innovative flood alleviation scheme - a nature-based project that will create wetlands, enhance biodiversity and unlock the potential for new homes and public spaces north of the city. Alongside this, the Hereford Transport Hub continues to take shape, with the installation of the central canopy marking a visible and exciting milestone in creating a more welcoming, accessible gateway to the county.*

*Progress continues on the Hereford Bypass, including the approval of the Compulsory Purchase and Side Roads Orders required to assemble the land needed for construction of phase one. At the same time, our work to protect and improve the natural environment is accelerating: we have adopted the new Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy, launched public consultation on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and continued to unlock new homes through phosphate-mitigation projects that protect river health.*

*The council is taking extensive action to tackle the rise in potholes across Herefordshire, with highway crews completing more than 3,000 repairs since January and carrying out up to 150 repairs each day. Recent exceptional weather - prolonged rainfall followed by freezing temperatures - has significantly accelerated the formation of potholes, but teams are working daily to inspect and prioritise the most urgent defects. Alongside reactive repairs, the council is*

*investing in long-term improvements to strengthen the road network, including 47 miles of resurfacing, 62 miles of preventative surface dressing, major drainage upgrades, and an additional £13.5 million committed to resurfacing, patching and preventative treatments. Residents are encouraged to support this work by reporting defects through the Report It app, with a new resurfacing and surface-dressing programme to be announced soon.*

*I have been continuing to actively engage with my counterparts (alongside Paul Walker) across neighbouring authorities on devolution, most recently to understand the implications and opportunities presented by the Government's recent confirmation that areas outside existing devolution arrangements may now apply to become Foundation Strategic Authorities. These discussions have focused on the practical benefits such a designation could offer in strengthening our strategic capacity, economic resilience and long-term planning across the wider region. While Local Government Reorganisation does not directly affect us as an established unitary authority, it remains important that we fully explore the options available and assess whether a coordinated approach could deliver tangible advantages for Herefordshire. As this work develops, I will ensure that group leaders and ward members are kept informed so that the emerging considerations, opportunities and risks are clearly understood and fully reflected in future decision-making.*

*At the time of writing, my team is currently making the final preparations for the upcoming Parish Summit (3 March), where I look forward to an evening discussing key topics, including Councils' Charter, Child Friendly Herefordshire, Public Realm and Parish Grants. As ever we will be holding a marketplace with council teams on hand to discuss services or issues with parish councillors and clerks.*

*Under Transformation, we continue to modernise how the council operates, deliver value for money and strengthen the resilience of frontline services. We have extended our Dynamic Purchasing System for passenger transport, allowing us to deliver home-to-school, SEND and commercial transport in a flexible, efficient and legally compliant way while we procure a replacement system under the new legislative framework. Across directorates, new service plans and strengthened financial monitoring are improving performance management and ensuring we can track progress against the Council Plan throughout the year. These changes reinforce our ambition to be an efficient, innovative and future-ready organisation.*

*I was saddened to hear of the death of former Councillor Roland Summers of Leominster who passed away, aged 90, in January. Former councillor Summers was Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Chair of the (related) Economic Development Programme Panel, and a member of the Central Area Planning Sub-Committee. Whilst, I did not know him personally, it is clear from the positions he held at the council, he was a dedicated public servant to the people of Herefordshire, and I would like to pass on my condolences to his family on behalf of the administration.*

*As always, I want to thank our officers, councillors, partners, volunteers and communities whose hard work and support continue to deliver real benefits for the people of Herefordshire. Together, we are building momentum, strengthening resilience and creating a future we can all feel proud of.*

## My Report to Council:

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

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

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

### Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025 – turning the strategic vision in to delivery

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

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

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

**1: Children's Services: Ofsted Inspection outcome and Improvement plan phase 3**

**Underpins Delivery Plan Objective:** Support all children to have the best start in life

A full Ofsted inspection in November 2025 found Good overall effectiveness with Outstanding leadership impact, published in January 2026. Inspectors highlighted strong leadership, a child-centred culture, effective partnerships, a stabilised workforce, robust quality assurance, and high-quality social work practice. Services were praised for effective early help, strong safeguarding thresholds, skilled practitioners, impactful multi-agency work on exploitation, improved foster and kinship care support, and a strong care leavers' service.

Two development areas were identified: management oversight of the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer (LADO) function and identification/assessment of children in private fostering, both already being addressed. Following these improvements, the independently chaired Children's Improvement Board has agreed to stand down, with future oversight returning to normal council governance arrangements. The Secretary of State's next decision will be informed by the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) outcome and a further commissioner review due in March 2026.

Cabinet has authorised the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to lead the completion of the Phase 3 improvement plan and Ofsted outcome action plan. This work will be integrated within a Children Services business plan for 2026/27 with future governance and monitoring in line with other council directorates.

## **2: Re-procurement of Herefordshire Independent Adult Advocacy Services**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Enable people to support themselves and each other by providing the right help at the right time

**This year we will:** Review all Supported Living services, offering accommodation and support to adults with a range of needs including learning disability, autism and mental health with the aim of ensuring a range of services that are fit for the future and meet changing needs

In January, the Cabinet Member: Adults, health and wellbeing approved the re-procurement of Herefordshire Independent Adult Advocacy Services, by way of an open tender process.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide independent advocacy to help people—particularly those who are vulnerable or lack mental capacity—take part in decisions about their care, treatment, and rights. Advocacy ensures that individuals' views are heard, their wishes are respected, and their rights are protected, especially where there is no appropriate family member or friend to support them. It plays an essential role in assessments, care planning, treatment decisions, safeguarding enquiries, and complaints processes.

The current contract for Independent Advocacy Services began in August 2021 and will end on 31 July 2026. An Invitation to Tender is planned for publication in January 2026, with the new contract due to commence on 1 August 2026. The proposed contract will run for a minimum of five years, with options to extend for up to a further two years (5+1+1), providing continuity and stability for both the council and service providers.

The service delivers statutory advocacy in line with key legislation, including the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended), Care Act 2014, and Health and Social Care Act 2012. Alongside statutory duties, the service also provides community advocacy, reflecting the wider principles of the Care Act. The advocacy service offer includes:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) for people aged 16 and over who lack capacity to make serious decisions and have no one appropriate to support them.
- Relevant Person's Representative (RPR) support for individuals subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards who lack capacity and have no suitable representative.
- Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) for people detained under the Mental Health Act, including those on Community Treatment Orders, provided on an opt-out basis.
- Care Act Advocacy to support people who would otherwise struggle to engage in social care assessments, planning, reviews, and safeguarding.

- NHS Complaints Advocacy to help individuals raise concerns about NHS-funded care.
- Community Advocacy, offering non-statutory support, information, and signposting to adults who have difficulty expressing their views.

Together, these services ensure that individuals are supported to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives and that statutory responsibilities are met.

### **3: Retaining of the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School**

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

**This year we will:** Continue to deliver the schools capital investment programme, which will include commencing construction at Peterchurch Primary School

In October 2022, the Cabinet agreed to give Peterchurch Primary School and the Parish Council 12 months to produce a viable business case to retain the school swimming pool. If no viable case was provided, demolition would go ahead. The school's business case shows that the pool can be retained with essential renovations costing £80,500. These works would address roofing, electrics, lighting, safety systems, flooring and changing facilities. The business case also indicates that the pool could operate with a small annual surplus.

In December, the Cabinet Member: Community services and assets, approved the decision to retain the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School, in principle, as part of the new school site.

There is very limited alternative swimming provision locally, and travelling elsewhere would increase costs, reduce curriculum time and create barriers for pupils. Retaining the pool supports statutory Key Stage 2 swimming requirements and provides clear educational, health and wellbeing benefits for both pupils and the wider community. The pool has been used for decades and is valued locally, with consultation confirming strong community support for its retention.

The council would not be responsible for funding the renovation. Delivery would depend on Section 106 contributions from a nearby housing development, any available budget within the school rebuild project, and decisions made by the school's governors. The recommendation is to retain the pool as part of the site, allowing future planning without committing the council to carrying out or funding the works.

### **4: Children's Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team (EDT) Service**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Support all children to have the best start in life

**This year we will:** Ensure sufficiency of local care placements

In January, the Cabinet Member: Children and Young People approved the direct award of the Children's out of hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT) social care service contract to the incumbent service provider for a further 3 years with the option to extend for up to an additional 48 months.

The Council has a legal duty under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need, including outside normal working hours. To meet this responsibility, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides an out-of-hours service for children and young people at risk of significant harm where waiting until the next working day would be unsafe.

The EDT responds to urgent statutory matters such as child protection assessments, emergency child-in-need assessments, decisions about accommodating children, applications for emergency protection orders, joint visits with the police, and coordination following sudden unexpected child deaths. The service ensures immediate safeguarding actions are taken when required.

Since 1998, the EDT service for Herefordshire has been delivered by Worcestershire County Council and is staffed by a service lead, nine part-time social workers and an administrative assistant. Inspections by Ofsted over several years have consistently recognised the effectiveness of the out-of-hours service, noting timely, proportionate decision-making and appropriate responses to urgent need, even where wider children's services were judged to require improvement.

Herefordshire Council is satisfied with the quality of the service, which operates under clear joint protocols and regular contract monitoring. Although the current contract cannot be extended, legal advice confirms that a new contract can be directly awarded without a full procurement exercise because it qualifies as an exempt "horizontal" contract under the Procurement Act 2023. Funding has already been approved through the Council's budget, and no political group consultation was required.

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

## **5: Housing Delivery Update**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** 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 affordable housing.

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

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

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

On Tuesday, 24 February, we held a housing summit with registered providers where we explored how we can use of our assets to facilitate delivery by making housing sites available through sale, long term leases and Joint Ventures. We discussed pre let mandate agreements to help underwrite funding bids and revenue as we work with together with partners to support funding bids to Homes England.

We explored how the planning system and our own planning policies can be enabled to prioritise the delivery of more affordable housing in rural areas. There is a clear role to play here for S106 to assist in delivering more units and we are determined to ensure the flow of

this vital source of finance can be unlocked. We focussed on how we can help in supporting community groups, seeking to deliver rural affordable housing, to create diversity and quality in the affordable housing being provided.

We ended the meeting with agreement that we would have some working groups to try and identify additional ways to address the immediate need of households in temporary accommodation.

Herefordshire has delivered more than 1,400 affordable homes since 2020, including social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership properties. Over 120 of these homes were designed specifically for people with additional needs, such as young people at risk of homelessness, families escaping domestic abuse, refugees and residents requiring accessible accommodation.

This progress has been achieved despite significant challenges, including rising construction costs and reduced development capacity. Alongside new homes, the council has invested in better temporary accommodation and support programmes for vulnerable groups.

Looking ahead, the council plans to increase the amount of social housing, speed up development on key sites, bring empty homes back into use, and improve existing properties. A £10m capital programme for 2026/27 will help deliver more homes for large families, accessible housing, accommodation for young people, and additional temporary accommodation to meet growing demand and reduce long-term costs.

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) = 234 dwellings (an increase of 50 dwellings since my last report).

Looking ahead, the council plans to increase the amount of social housing, speed up development on key sites, bring empty homes back into use, and improve existing properties. A £10m capital programme for 2026/27 will help deliver more homes for large families, accessible housing, accommodation for young people, and additional temporary accommodation to meet growing demand and reduce long-term costs.

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

## **6: The New Public Realm Services**

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

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

In December, Cabinet approved the award of a contract for the provision of the new Public Realm Services contact for Public Realm Services for an initial period of 6 years and 10 months (so as to align with Council financial years) and with the option for the Council to extend for a further 3-year period subject to, and in accordance with, the performance review mechanism set out in the contract.

Public Realm Services are a statutory responsibility of Herefordshire Council and are essential to the county's infrastructure and quality of life. These services include maintaining highways, green spaces and street cleanliness, managing drainage and lighting, providing bereavement services, and ensuring safe and reliable travel for residents, businesses and visitors.

The current Public Realm Services contract was awarded in 2013 and is largely outsourced, with the Council retaining a limited client and contract-management role. In April 2024, Cabinet agreed that this model no longer met the Council's requirements and approved termination of the contract with effect from 31 May 2026.

Given the scale, visibility and financial significance of Public Realm Services, Cabinet approved a new delivery approach in November 2024. This includes bringing some services back in-house and adopting a new contract model based on a schedule of rates rather than a cost-reimbursable arrangement. The new approach is designed to better support the Council's vision, ensure continuity of statutory services, and provide improved value and flexibility.

The procurement process for the new contract has been specifically designed to align with these objectives and to maintain uninterrupted service delivery from 1 June 2026. The new contract also promotes greater engagement with community groups and town and parish councils, enabling additional voluntary or paid services where appropriate.

Until the new arrangements begin, the Council and the existing provider will continue to work together to ensure a smooth and well-managed transition. Details of the procurement process are set out in the report, although the identity of the successful bidder cannot be confirmed until the contract award process is completed in line with public procurement regulations.

## **7: Hereford Western Bypass – Phase 1: Land Acquisition Compulsory Purchase Order**

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

**This year we will:** Complete the necessary work to tender for the design and construction of Phase 1 of the Hereford Western Bypass

In July 2025, Cabinet approved a strategy to acquire the remaining land, confirming that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) would be progressed in parallel with voluntary negotiations. The council's preference is to acquire land by agreement, but it must demonstrate value for money, work within a limited budget, and meet its delivery timetable. Running the CPO alongside negotiations reduces the risk of delays if agreements cannot be reached.

In December, Cabinet approved the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Side Roads Order (SRO) for the acquisition of land and rights required to construct, operate, facilitate and maintain the first phase of the Hereford Western Bypass.

The New Road Strategy for Hereford, approved by Cabinet in March 2024, includes the delivery of the Hereford Western Bypass, which is planned in two phases. Phase One will link the A49/B4399 junction with the A465 (formerly the Southern Link Road), with Phase Two extending the route north to rejoin the A49.

Phase One is intended to significantly improve access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone, particularly from south-west Herefordshire and South Wales. It will reduce traffic congestion at the A465/A49 junction near Greyfriars Bridge and remove traffic from unsuitable rural roads currently used as shortcuts. This phase also supports wider ambitions for housing and employment growth across the city, county and region.

Full planning permission for Phase One was granted under planning reference P151314/F and implemented in July 2019. Further construction is programmed for December 2026, but this is dependent on acquiring most of the land along the route. At present, only one parcel of the required land is in council ownership.

#### **8: Phosphate Income: Housing delivery update**

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

As at the point of drafting, £1,436,251 (up by £137,956.48 since my last report in December) in phosphate income has been received. To date these actions have released planning permissions for 886 dwellings (an increase of 135 dwellings since December).

#### **9: Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (H-THAWS).**

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

**This year we will:** Adopt the countywide Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

In January, the Cabinet Member: Environment approved the new countywide Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (H-THAWS). This strategy will support the council's Biodiversity Duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021.

Tree and hedgerow management was later reviewed by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee in November 2024. The committee made several recommendations, including setting a clear percentage target for increasing tree cover and providing practical advice and guidance on tree planting and good hedgerow management. These recommendations have directly informed the development of this strategy, and funding was identified to support its production.

The resulting Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodlands Strategy encourages residents, landowners, organisations and partners to take their own actions in support of a shared vision for a more connected treescape across the county. It sets out an ambitious but realistic long-term vision for conserving, improving and expanding Herefordshire's trees, hedgerows and woodland network.

To support delivery, the strategy recommends establishing a Herefordshire Treescape Task Group. This group would help drive and promote the strategy as part of a wider review of environmental partnerships, working alongside key local stakeholders and external

organisations such as National Landscape Partnerships, Natural England and the Forestry Commission.

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

#### **10: Passenger Transport: Extension to the Dynamic Purchasing system**

**Stated Delivery Plan Objective:** Complete the review of home to school transport to mitigate increasing costs through a new delivery model

**This year we will:** Implement a new commissioning strategy and implement a dynamic purchasing system to achieve better value for money

In February, the Cabinet member: Transport and Infrastructure extended the current Passenger Transport Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Home to School, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and commercial transport services.

Herefordshire Council has operated a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for passenger transport since 2018, replacing a traditional framework to provide greater flexibility and efficiency. The DPS allows transport providers to join at any time, which is particularly important in a fragile market where operators frequently enter and leave. It simplifies the process for awarding contracts and supports the delivery of home-to-school, SEND and commercial transport services.

More than 400 contracts are currently delivered through the DPS on a daily basis. This approach enables the Council to respond quickly to statutory transport needs and to achieve best value, as running separate tenders for each contract would be impractical given the volume and complexity involved.

The introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 requires existing DPS arrangements established under previous regulations to be extended by February 2026 and to end by February 2029. Due to the scale and complexity of the transport arrangements, and the lack of established precedents under the new legislation, procuring a replacement system is expected to be resource-intensive.

We took the decision to extend the current DPS to maintain continuity of service, allow sufficient time to procure a new agreement, assess the implications of the new legislation, clarify future procurement requirements, and ensure that any new processes are supported by clear communication and training for officers and suppliers.

#### **Other Decisions Taken By Cabinet and Cabinet Members**

#### **11: Adoption of the Dormington & Mordiford Neighbourhood Plan**

In February, the Cabinet Member: Environment approved revisions to the Dormington & Mordiford Group neighbourhood development plan (NDP) as part of the statutory development plan for Herefordshire. The Dormington & Mordiford Group Neighbourhood Development Plan was prepared by the parish council and local community under powers introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans must meet legal “basic conditions” and align with national policy and the Herefordshire Local Plan.

The plan was submitted to Herefordshire Council in February 2025 and consulted on later that month. An independent examiner concluded that, with minor modifications, the plan met all legal requirements and could proceed to referendum.

A local referendum was held on 13 November 2025, with 78.8% of voters supporting the plan. As a result, Herefordshire Council is legally required to adopt it. Adoption will also require an update to the countywide policies map to reflect the new neighbourhood planning policies.

## **12: Herefordshire's co-ordinated school admissions arrangements 2027/2028**

In January, the Cabinet Member: Children and young people, approved Herefordshire Council's proposed admissions arrangements for the academic year 2027/2028. For community and voluntary controlled schools, where the Council is the admissions authority, the arrangements must set out oversubscription criteria and the coordinated processes for admitting children to reception classes and for secondary school transfers.

The Council is legally responsible for ensuring that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code. The proposed arrangements largely reflect those already in place and take account of responses received during the most recent consultation, which took place in 2020–21. For schools where the Council is not the admissions authority—such as voluntary aided, foundation, trust, free schools and academies—each school is responsible for setting its own admissions arrangements every year by 28 February. In Herefordshire, this applies to 48 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and one through school.

Once admissions arrangements have been formally determined, information for schools where the Council is the admissions authority is published on both the Council's website and individual school websites. Regardless of who the admissions authority is, the Council retains responsibility for coordinating the reception and secondary transfer admissions process across the county. This includes ranking preferences for Council-controlled schools, while other admission authorities rank their own preferences and submit them to the Council as part of the coordinated process.

Finally, the document notes that admissions arrangements must be consulted on at least once every seven years. In Herefordshire, the last consultation took place between December 2020 and January 2021, meaning the next consultation is due by January 2028.

## **13: Extension of the council's Care Homes (Unified) Contract**

In February, the Cabinet Member: adults, health and wellbeing took the decision to extend Council's care Home Contract. The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure there is sufficient, suitable care provision for residents. To support this, a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for adult care home provision (with or without nursing) was established in 2016. The DPS was originally set up for five years and has since been extended several times.

The DPS is currently due to expire on 5 September 2026. The Council proposes to extend it until 23 February 2029, which is the maximum extension permitted under the regulations, representing a final extension of 2 years and 5.5 months. There is no financial limit associated with extending the DPS, as it does not have a fixed contract value.

The DPS provides access to pre-qualified suppliers through a competitive, fair and transparent process. New providers can join at any time during its lifetime. Extending the DPS will:

- Ensure continuity of care arrangements for individuals and providers
- Enable commissioning resources to focus on wider transformation and savings work
- Allow flexibility while future service requirements are shaped
- Provide time to fully consider procurement options under the Procurement Act 2023, introduced in February 2025

Care placements will continue to be made on an “as-and-when” call-off basis until the service is re-procured.

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 29 November 2025 and 26 February 2026	Date Taken	Effective From
<b>Cabinet Decisions and Proposed Budget and Policy Framework</b>		
<a href="#">Childrens Improvement Plan Phase</a>	05/02/2026	12/02/2026
<a href="#">2026/27 Council Tax Reduction Scheme</a>	05/02/2026 (BPF)	13/02/2026 (Council Decision)
<a href="#">Annual review of Earmarked Reserves – 2025/26</a>	05/02/2026 (BPF)	13/02/2026 (Council Decision)
<a href="#">2026/27 Budget, Medium Term Financial and Treasury Management Strategy - Revenue</a>	05/02/2026 (BPF)	13/02/2026 (Council Decision)
<a href="#">2026/27 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update</a>	05/02/2026 (BPF)	13/02/2026 (Council Decision)
<a href="#">DRAFT - 2026/27 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy Update</a>	20/01/2026	20/01/2026
<a href="#">2026/2027 Draft Budget – Revenue</a>	20/01/2026	20/01/2026
<a href="#">Hereford Western Bypass Phase One Land Acquisition Compulsory Purchase Order</a>	18/12/2025	25/12/2025
<a href="#">The New Public Realm Service</a>	18/12/2025	25/12/2025
<b>Cabinet Member Decisions</b>		
<b>Cabinet Member: Adult Health and Wellbeing</b>		
<a href="#">Extension of the council's Care Homes (Unified) Contract</a>	16/02/2026	16/02/2026
<a href="#">Reprocurement of Herefordshire Independent Adult Advocacy Services</a>	29/01/2026	05/02/2026
<b>Cabinet Member: Children and Young people</b>		
<a href="#">Herefordshire's co-ordinated school admissions arrangements 2027/2028</a>	21/01/2026	28/01/2026
<a href="#">Children's Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team (EDT) Service</a>	16/01/2026	23/01/2026
<b>Cabinet Member: Community Services and Assets</b>		
<a href="#">Retaining of the swimming pool at Peterchurch Primary School</a>	18/12/2025	25/12/2025
<b>Cabinet Member: Environment</b>		
<a href="#">Adoption of the Dormington &amp; Mordiford Neighbourhood Plan and the consequential updates to the countywide policies map</a>	03/02/2026	10/02/2026
<a href="#">Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (H-THAWS)</a>	09/01/2026	16/01/2026
<b>Cabinet Member: Transport and Infrastructure</b>		
<a href="#">Passenger Transport: Extension to the Dynamic Purchasing System (formerly known as Home to School and Public Transport: Extension to the Dynamic Purchasing System)</a>	03/02/2026	10/02/2026



## 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 6 March 2026**

**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 motion listed at paragraph 6 is 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.

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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 One motion has been received and will be debated at the meeting. The motion for debate is set out below:

### **Motion 1 – Reinstatement of Hereford, Ross and Gloucester rail link**

(Proposed by Councillor Loluis Stark, Seconded by Councillor Ed O’Driscoll)

#### **Proposal**

**We should position Herefordshire early to take advantage of this move towards more local control of rail in shaping our rail strategy. That should include making a central pillar of the upcoming rail strategy, a bold, ambitious and visionary commitment towards the reestablishment of the Hereford, Ross and Gloucester rail link. This can then become one of our fundamental goals of rail devolution in the Midlands, as well as forming a more rounded transport infrastructure offering to Govt. for funding. As a first step, this motion proposes carrying out an initial feasibility study.**

#### **Local Context**

**Council agreed the 5th Local Transport Plan in December which aspires under Policy TN10 on rail to work with partners to enhance rail services across Herefordshire as well as long distance rail services with London and B’ham. The Cabinet lead said that this would be underpinned by a supplementary Rail Strategy.**

#### **Wider context**

**The Govt, laid landmark legislation, the Railways Bill, before Parliament last November which will fundamentally alter the rail landscape in Great Britain. The Bill aims to nationalise trains and reform the railway, so it better serves passengers unveiling the new look Great British Railways, bringing track and train back together. It represents a new railway, focused entirely on delivering a proper public service for passengers. Mayoral strategic authorities (MSAs) will be able to apply for full statutory and financial responsibility for local rail services, infrastructure and/or control of stations (full devolution), where this accelerates improvements for passengers and supports a more integrated network.**

#### **Benefits**

**Establishment of a strategic rail corridor from the edge of England to the heart of London, Bristol and the South.**

**Reestablishment of the rail link between two of the oldest English cities and the birthplace of British tourism.**

**Provides an additional rail link from London and Bristol to South and West Wales, including ferry ports, avoiding the Severn Rail Tunnel.**

**Enabling inward investment and a step-change in economic growth through strategic infrastructure investment in rail.**

**Supports the pro-choice travel goal of LTP5 as well as its aim for equity of transport access for the less advantaged.**

**Represents a modal shift in travel across the County and beyond.**

**Allows the Council to present a much more balanced package of transport infrastructure measures**

to the Govt for funding.

Enables the start of an enhance partnership with Gloucestershire, an important neighbouring authority.

Puts Herefordshire at the heart of the emerging revolution in delivery of rail services.

The resolution

This Council instructs the Executive to take five actions:

- 1) Enter early discussions with Gloucestershire County Council on the possibility of a joint feasibility study on the reestablishment of the rail link.
- 2) Write to the Secretary of State for Transport to set out our stall and see the likely support and possibility of funding for a feasibility study.
- 3) In parallel, test the market for any private finance interest in backing a feasibility study.
- 4) Engage with relevant partners and the engineering sector to seek specialist expertise for writing and scoping a feasibility study, including costs.
- 5) Report back on progress to Council within 12 months.

**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	This was discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2025 with health partners and it was confirmed that the approach to Minor Injuries Units would form part of the emerging development of the neighbourhood health model.
<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>Updates on elements of the motion:</p> <p>Resolution 1 - COMPLETED – Defence prospectus finalised in November 2025</p> <p>Resolution 2 - COMPLETED – letter sent on the 19<sup>th</sup> November</p> <p>Resolution 3 - COMPLETED – included in the letter of 19<sup>th</sup> November. Westminster reception event being planned for early 2026.</p> <p>Resolution 4 - Business as usual – regular engagement with local defence businesses. Inward Investment website to launch in January 2026.</p> <p>Resolution 5 - Business as usual - Herefordshire Skills Board considers all growth needs and opportunities. Herefordshire Skills Strategy including focus on defence and security due to be established in 2026.</p> <p>An executive response will be published to provide a formal response to the motion.</p>
<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>This Council resolves to ask the executive to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>3. Call on the Government to support rural areas like Herefordshire by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Prioritising infrastructure upgrades in strategic industrial zones;</li> <li>o Establishing an investment support scheme modelled on Enterprise Zones;</li> <li>o Fast-tracking planning for clean-tech and defence-linked developments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Engage with UK defence primes and SMEs to promote supply chain expansion in the county, particularly for dual-use and green defence technologies.</li> <li>5. Work with FE and HE providers to align training and apprenticeships with the emerging needs of the UK and European defence sector.</li> </ol>		

6. Ensure that all defence-linked investment is underpinned by Herefordshire’s values of environmental responsibility, ethical governance, and community benefit.

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>RESOLVED:</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>		

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
10 October 2025	Child Friendly Herefordshire	<p>Resolved – Child’s Voice Friendly Herefordshire Launch to Partners 4<sup>th</sup> March 26</p> <p>Lead Service Manager for Participation appointed and Participation Strategy completed with action plan for 26/27 in place</p> <p>Annual progress report will be presented October ‘26</p>
<p>Council resolves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. To ensure children and young people have meaningful opportunities to shape decisions that affect them, both now and in the future.</li> </ol>		

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 all children and young people thrive.

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
10 October 2025	Improving access to employment, education and leisure for young people aged 16–19 through bus provision	Provision has been made in BSIP funding to undertake a feasibility study in the 26/27 financial year to look at a pilot proposal for subsidised transport for 16 to 19 year olds. The study will include a review of financial viability both for a pilot and for wider roll out of a pilot in future years.

RESOLVED:

Council resolves

1. Support in principle the expansion of affordable, accessible bus travel for 16–19 year olds in Herefordshire to:
  1. Improve access to education, employment, and training
  2. Reduce social isolation
  3. 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.

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
5 December 2025	Charter for the River Wye	An executive response to the motion is being prepared.
<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>Council resolves</p> <p>This Notice of Motion calls on the executive to support the following charter for the River Wye and tributaries:</p> <p>The Right to Flow and Perform Natural Functions</p> <p>To maintain its natural course and seasonal rhythms without obstructions or extractions that detrimentally affect ecological function of any part of the river system.</p> <p>The Right to Biodiversity</p> <p>To good biological health through the existence of balanced, diverse, and viable, populations of native species and habitats specific to the Wye and its tributaries.</p> <p>The Right to Be Free from Pollution</p> <p>To exist in a state of ecological health and not be subject to detrimental levels of known and emerging pollutants that adversely affect the life of the river.</p> <p>The Right to be Supported by a Healthy Catchment</p> <p>To flow through environments which support the river as a balanced, sustainable, and resilient aquatic ecosystem.</p> <p>The Right to Regenerate</p> <p>To recover to full ecological function through natural processes and for this to be supported by intervention, where necessary, to halt the decline in biodiversity and abundance and to increase both over time.</p> <p>The Right to Representation</p> <p>To be represented and have these intrinsic rights recognised in the determination of matters that directly affect the river's health now and in the future.</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