

Corporate Support Centre
Paul Satoor - Chief Executive

To: All members of the Council

our ref: Council - 24 July 2026
contact: Matthew Evans, Democratic Services
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16 July 2026

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 24 July 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 24 July 2026**

Time: **10.00 am**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

Matthew Evans, Democratic Services

Tel: 01432 383690

Email: matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

Agenda for the Meeting of the Council

Membership

Chairman
Vice-Chair

Councillor Roger Phillips
Councillor 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
NOLAN PRINCIPLES	9 - 10
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2026.	11 - 16
4. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements.	17 - 22
How to submit questions	
<i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i>	
<i>5:00 p.m. on Monday 20 July 2026.</i>	
<i>Questions can be submitted via the Online questions portal Further information and guidance is available at Get involved - Herefordshire Council</i>	
<i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting.</i>	
<i>Full details about asking questions and the deadlines at public meetings can be found here: constitution of the council</i>	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive questions from members of the public.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the Council.	
7. LEADER'S REPORT To receive a report from the leader on the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council on 6 March 2026.	23 - 52
8. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS To consider Notices of Motion.	53 - 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 22 May 2026 at 10.30 am

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

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

Officers: Chief Executive, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Manager

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

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

A motion to elect Councillor Roger Phillips as Chairperson of the Council was moved.

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

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

Councillor Phillips made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

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

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

A motion to appoint Councillor Kevin Tillett as Vice-Chairperson of the Council was moved.

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 forthcoming municipal year.

Councillor Tillett made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

3. TRIBUTES TO TONY JOHNSON

Council paid tribute to former councillor and Leader of the Council Tony Johnson who had passed away recently. Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bartrum, Boulter, Dykes, Dan Powell and Thomas.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 6 March 2026 and the extraordinary meeting on 1 May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Tributes were paid to the outgoing Chief Executive from the Chairman, the previous Leader and current Leader of the Council.

8. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A motion to elect Councillor Jonathan Lester as Leader of the Council was moved.

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

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

Councillor Allan Williams left the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council considered a report by the solicitor to the Council relating to appointments to committees of the Council and outside bodies in line with the rules of political proportionality. The Chairman outlined the tabled supplement, published on 22 May, with an updated appendix 2 containing details of the number of seats on the scrutiny management board and the allocation of those seats to political groups.

Recommendation (a)

A motion was moved to agree the list of ordinary committees listed at paragraph 10 be confirmed with their terms of reference as set out in the council's constitution which was put to the vote and carried.

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

Recommendation (b)

A motion was moved to agree the number of seats on each committee as set out at paragraph 10 and the allocation of those seats to political groups as set out at paragraph 11 which was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED: That the number of seats on each committee as set out at paragraph 10 and the allocation of those seats to political groups as set out at paragraph 11 be approved.

Recommendation (c)

A motion was moved to agree the allocation of seats on outside bodies to political groups as set out at paragraph 13 which was put to the vote and carried.

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

Recommendation (d)

A motion was moved to agree the appointment of co-opted members of the children and young people scrutiny committee which was put to the vote and was carried.

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

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

Recommendation (e)

A motion was moved to agree the suspension of proportionality in respect of a number of local outside bodies which was put to the vote and was carried with no votes against.

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

Recommendation (f)

Council noted the table of committee membership (in appendix 1 to the report) which outlined the current chairpersons and vice chairpersons of Council committees. The Chairman invited any changes to the listed appointments which included those set out below:

A motion was moved that Councillor Rebecca Tully was appointed as vice-chairperson of the Health, care and wellbeing scrutiny committee which was put to the vote and was carried.

A motion was moved to appoint the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of council committees, consistent with the listing in appendix a of the report and subject to the change outlined above, which was put to the vote and carried.

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

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

Recommendation (g)

Council noted the updated table in appendix 2, as contained in the tabled supplement of 22 May, containing details of the number of seats on the scrutiny management board and the allocation of those seats to political groups. The supplement proposed no change to the allocation of seats as previously agreed. A motion to agree the allocation of seats on the scrutiny management board was moved, put to the vote and carried.

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

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

10. CONSTITUTION UPDATE

Council considered a report which proposed amendments to the Council's constitution.

The Chairperson of the Audit and Governance committee introduced the item and moved the recommendations in the report.

The Vice-Chairperson of the Audit and Governance committee seconded the recommendations in the report.

Council debated the report and the following action was raised:

- To include in the next review of the constitution, an analysis of the quality and standard of responses provided to public questions.

An alteration to the recommendations contained in the report was outlined. The number of representatives appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board from the Integrated Care Board should be three following the agreement of this number by the Board. The proposer and seconder of the motion and the meeting provided consent for the alteration to be included in the motion.

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

RESOLVED:

That Council approves changes in the Constitution:

a) in Appendix 1 to enable a change to the process for questions from the public and members;

b) in Appendix 2 to enable changes to clarify substitutes on Scrutiny Management Board;

c) in Appendix 3 to make changes to clarify the planning rules in respect to deferrals;

d) in Appendix 4 to make changes to clarify the appointments and procedure for the Health and Wellbeing Board – that the number of representatives of the Integrated Care Board appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board numbers three (3);

e) in Appendix 5 to makes changes to the Special Urgency procedure for executive decisions to ensure the Monitoring Officer is aware that a request has being made;

f) in Appendix 6 to enable motions to be allowed at some Annual Councils;

g) in Appendix 7 to clarify the rules relating to business cases for capital schemes;

h) in Appendix 8 to amend the requirements about the publication of Records of operational decisions (RoOD);

i) in Appendix 9 to make amendments to the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct; and

j) in Appendix 10 to describe the scope and purpose of Political Group Consultations.

The meeting ended at 11.08 am

Chairperson

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting **24 July 2026**

Chairman of Council Report



At the end of June we celebrate Armed Forces week across the nation. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of defending our country and the freedoms we so take for granted. Herefordshire has a long military tradition which in recent generations has strengthened to

being our largest single employer with an estimated 1,000 military children in our county primary and secondary schools.

183 businesses and public bodies in the county have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant which helps support the large number of veterans who transfer from military to civilian life. The council has a long tradition of being very supportive and supports a Veterans centre which with many voluntary organisation gives support, advice and friendship to ex- military.

Shown in the photo above is the platform for the raising of the flag in Hightown Hereford with Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Hereford Mayor and myself. There was also a special day in Kington hosted at Lady Hawkins School where some of the pupils gave excellent speeches.

HRH the Duchess of Gloucester visited The Little Princess Trust to celebrate its 20th anniversary. The trust receives hair donations and has made over 20,000 wigs for children with cancer. They are also one the UK largest funders of children`s cancer research. The Duchess also visited Wyevale nurseries.



I joined the Lord Lieutenant at the presentation of the Kings Voluntary award to the Colwall Orchard Group. The award, equivalent to an MBE, is presented to community and voluntary organisations who have made a significant impact in their local area. The Colwall Orchard group oversee two traditional orchards and allotments

providing opportunities for local people to be involved with nature, food production and country crafts.

Together with Kings Enterprise award for businesses, if as a local member you think there are groups or businesses in your ward that might be worthy of consideration please contact the Lord Lieutenant office at plough lane.

Since our last council meeting the Vice Chairman and I have undertaken various activities including Violette Szabo picnic at Wormelow, Royal Three County Show, meeting of the Mayors and clerks with our new Chief Executive, and Citizenship ceremonies at Garner Hall.

Cllr Roger Phillips OBE JP

Chair Herefordshire Council



Chief Executive's Update Full Council 24 July

I am pleased to present my first update to Council since taking up the role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service on 26 June.

Over my first few weeks in Herefordshire, I have spent time meeting members, officers, partners and stakeholders across the county. I have been struck by the strong sense of commitment to public service that exists throughout the organisation, alongside a shared ambition to continue improving outcomes for residents and communities.

Having joined the council at the end of June, I have also had the opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made since Council last met in May. It is clear that the organisation enters its next chapter from a position of relative strength. Significant progress has been made in recent years, providing solid foundations on which we can continue to build.

One of the most important developments during this period has been the council's continued focus on organisational improvement. In May, the Local Government Association returned to Herefordshire as part of its Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review. The review recognised the significant progress that has been made since the original peer challenge in June 2025 and provided positive feedback on the council's response to the recommendations around transformation, organisational capacity, financial planning, performance and partnership working.

I am particularly encouraged that this independent review recognised not only the progress made but the council's willingness to challenge itself and maintain a culture of continuous improvement. My intention is to build further on that approach as we continue modernising the organisation and strengthening our ability to deliver for residents.

A second significant milestone has been the confirmation of the council's balanced revenue outturn position. This position has been achieved against the context of continuing pressures on local government finance and reflects disciplined financial management across the organisation. The draft Statement of Accounts for 2025/26 were published on 29 May 2026, one month ahead of the statutory deadline. External audit testing of the financial statements is now in progress with a plan to receive the audit opinion in September, well in advance of budget setting for 2027/28.

The council successfully delivered savings whilst continuing to manage increasing demand in areas such as adult social care, special educational needs and disabilities, home-to-school transport and temporary accommodation. At the same time it was able to make record levels of capital investment into local infrastructure and services.

As I settle into the role, one of my key priorities will be ensuring that financial sustainability remains at the heart of decision-making. That means continuing to align resources to the council's strategic priorities, maintaining strong financial control and ensuring that transformation activity delivers measurable benefits for residents and taxpayers.

Alongside financial resilience, service improvement remains a major focus. The recent Care Quality Commission assessment of adult social care recognised a number of important strengths, including leadership, governance, partnership working and the strength of provider relationships. Equally, the assessment identified areas where further improvement is needed. The organisation has responded positively to those findings and work is already underway to build on existing strengths while driving further improvements in service quality, responsiveness and outcomes.

Sustaining improvement in both children's and adults' services will remain one of my foremost priorities. The achievements in children's services over recent years have been remarkable and demonstrate what can be achieved through clear leadership, strong partnerships and sustained focus. My priority is to ensure these improvements continue to mature and become embedded for the long term.

The mobilisation of the new Public Realm Service on 1 June has also been one of the most significant organisational changes undertaken by the council in recent years. The new model is designed to provide greater accountability, better performance management, more responsive services and increased use of technology and data. It reflects a wider ambition to modernise how services are delivered, strengthen oversight and ensure that residents experience a more consistent and efficient service.

Transformation and modernisation will continue to be central themes over the coming years. The next phase of improvement must focus on how we operate as an organisation, ensuring that our systems, processes and technology support better decision-making, improve productivity and enable staff to spend more time focused on residents and communities.

This includes strengthening performance management and organisational assurance. Effective organisations require clear information, robust governance and the ability to identify both opportunities and risks at an early stage. Building on the work already underway, I want to see greater use of data, stronger performance insight and a consistent focus on delivery across all services.

I am also keen to ensure that we continue investing in our workforce and organisational capability. The recently announced partnership with NMITE to support skills and workforce development demonstrates the importance of building talent and creating opportunities for future generations. Internally, we must continue to invest in leadership development, learning, culture and staff wellbeing so that the council remains an employer capable of attracting, retaining and developing talented people.

Since joining the organisation, I have also been impressed by the quality of partnership working across Herefordshire. Whether through our relationships with the NHS, West Mercia Police, schools, universities, businesses, parish councils or voluntary and community organisations, there is a strong foundation for collaborative working. I am keen to deepen these partnerships further and ensure the council continues to play a leading role in bringing organisations together around shared priorities.

That place leadership role is becoming increasingly important. Delivering positive outcomes for residents depends not only on the services we provide directly, but also on our ability to influence, convene and collaborate. As Chief Executive, I am committed to strengthening the council's role as a strategic leader for the county and ensuring that we work effectively with partners to maximise opportunities and address challenges.

A good example of this broader organisational maturity has been the careful review of major programmes and capital projects during recent months. The updated approach to HMAG and Shire Hall demonstrates the council's commitment to balancing ambition with affordability, ensuring that investment decisions remain sustainable, deliverable and focused on long-term value.

During this period we have also launched the council's latest employee survey. I am a strong believer that organisational success depends upon listening to and learning from our workforce. The survey provides an important opportunity for colleagues to tell us what is working well, where

improvements are needed and how we can create an environment in which people are able to do their best work. The results will inform future priorities around leadership, culture, workforce development, wellbeing and organisational change. As we continue our transformation journey, understanding the views and experiences of staff will be critical to ensuring that change is shaped with colleagues rather than simply delivered to them.

Looking ahead, my early priorities are organisation-wide and focused on building long-term confidence. These include sustaining improvement in children's and adults' services, strengthening performance and assurance, prioritising the budget and aligning resources to what matters most, advancing digital and modernisation so people can work smarter, delivering visible progress on key regeneration and infrastructure programmes, deepening partnerships and strengthening the council's role as place leader for Herefordshire.

The council has a clear plan, strong foundations and a committed workforce. There remain significant challenges ahead, but I believe we are well placed to meet them. I look forward to working with members, staff and partners as we continue the next phase of improvement and delivery for the benefit of the people of Herefordshire.

Paul Satoor
Chief Executive
Herefordshire Council



Title of report: Leader's report to Council

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 24 July, 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 6 March, 2026.

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 leader's 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. All decisions taken since the previous report (in March) are listed in appendix 2. These decisions have been made available on the council's website.
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.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
John Coleman

6. Of the decisions taken since my last report one decision has been taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice). This was the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Subscription decision taken on 18 May 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 2026-2027](#) outlines how the council's priorities and objectives will be achieved and what will be delivered in this 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 includes:
 - 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, the equality impacts of each decision can be viewed in each of the decision reports.

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. They have been taken into account at the time the decisions were taken and will inform future monitoring of risk as part of the council's risk management reporting.

Consultees

None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Leaders report to Council 24 July, 2026

Appendix 2: Executive decisions taken since 6 March to 16 July, 2026

Appendix 3: Cabinet member portfolios

Background papers:

None Identified

Foreword

I am pleased to present this latest report, covering a period of significant delivery and progress since my last update in March.

Since that meeting we have continued to focus on turning the ambitions of the Herefordshire Council Plan into practical action. In April, Cabinet approved the Delivery Plan for 2026/27, providing a clear roadmap for delivering our priorities of People, Place, Growth and Transformation. The decisions set out in this report demonstrate that work is already well underway across all four areas of the Council Plan.

Supporting residents remains at the heart of everything we do. Since March we have approved the new Crisis and Resilience Fund, providing over £2.8 million of support for those facing financial hardship, agreed new housing investment programmes, adopted a five-year Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and continued work to ensure people can access the support they need at the right time and in the right place.

We have also continued to invest in the next generation. As well as introducing Child Friendly Herefordshire, we have made significant investment in school places and educational facilities; providing support for children and young people with SEND, and our summer activities programme providing free activities and during the school holidays, we are working to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life.

Alongside this, support for carers, community groups and local voluntary organisations, together with the introduction of the new Councillor Ward Grant Scheme, is helping strengthen local communities and support grassroots projects across the county.

We have maintained momentum on a number of major infrastructure and growth projects. Since my last report, we have launched the Back the Bypass campaign, progressed detailed design and early works for Phase One of the Hereford Bypass, approved the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan, continued active travel works at Holme Lacy Road, and good progress of the Hereford Transport Hub, which is now approximately three-quarters complete and remains on course to open later this year. These schemes are critical to improving connectivity, unlocking growth and creating opportunities for future generations.

Equally important has been the successful launch of our new Public Realm Service from 1 June. This is not simply a change of contractor, but a fundamentally different approach to delivering highways and environmental services. The new operating model has been designed to provide greater accountability, make better use of technology and data, improve responsiveness for communities and enable the council to take a more proactive approach to maintaining and improving the county's roads, drainage systems, public spaces and environmental assets. It reflects our commitment to improving the condition of our highways network, responding more effectively to local concerns and delivering better outcomes for residents across Herefordshire.

Our commitment to economic growth remains equally strong. Ross-on-Wye Enterprise Park has now been formally launched and will become one of the county's most significant employment sites, supporting hundreds of jobs and providing opportunities for businesses to grow and invest in Herefordshire. Through Invest Herefordshire we continue to promote the county as a destination for inward investment, with a particular focus on sectors such as advanced manufacturing, engineering, defence, cyber security and green technologies. We have also

continued to support local businesses through skills and workforce development initiatives, including our partnership with NMITE, helping ensure local people have access to the skills needed to benefit from future economic opportunities.

Protecting and enhancing our environment remains a key priority. I am particularly pleased that Herefordshire Council has played a leading role in bringing together the recently launched River Wye Charter. The Charter represents a shared commitment by organisations across the catchment to work together to restore and protect one of our county's most important natural assets. It demonstrates that the future of the River Wye depends upon collective action, shared responsibility and a willingness to work together across traditional boundaries.

Alongside this, we have approved a new Carbon Management Plan, continued work to improve river health and biodiversity, and progressed measures that will help make Herefordshire more resilient to climate change while supporting active travel and sustainability.

Despite continuing pressures facing local government, I am pleased that the council delivered a balanced revenue outturn position for 2025/26 while continuing to invest in services, infrastructure and major projects. We have committed £86M of capital expenditure – the highest level recorded for this council. This has included

- £40.3m highways and public spaces*
- £3.4m investment in council assets*
- £11.1m investment in school improvements, and*
- £12.6m investment in transport and infrastructure*

This demonstrates prudent financial management, a clear focus on value for money and a determination to continue investing in Herefordshire's future.

This period has also marked an important transition for the council. In June, I was delighted to welcome Paul Satoor as our new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. Paul brings a wealth of experience, strong values and a proven track record of leadership, and I look forward to working closely with him as we continue to deliver our ambitions for residents, communities and businesses across the county.

At the same time, I would like formally to place on record my gratitude to Paul Walker for his outstanding service to Herefordshire Council over the past five years. Under Paul's direction the council strengthened its financial position, improved governance and performance, progressed major infrastructure projects and oversaw the transformation of children's services from an Ofsted rating of inadequate to good, with outstanding leadership.

The report that follows highlights a council that is ambitious for its communities, prepared to invest in its future and committed to delivering results. While challenges remain, there is clear evidence of progress across all four priorities of the Council Plan. By continuing to focus on delivery, innovation and partnership working, we are building a stronger, more prosperous and more resilient Herefordshire.

My Cabinet and I remain committed to doing the very best for Herefordshire in everything we do.

*Councillor Jonathan Lester
Leader of Herefordshire Council*

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 2026 to 2027 – turning the strategic vision in to delivery

Central to the realisation of the Council Plan is the Delivery Plan 2026-27, 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: Crisis and Resilience Fund, 2026/29

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

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

In April, the Cabinet Member for adults, health and wellbeing approved the acceptance and delivery of the Department for Work and Pensions' Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). This fund provides £2.817 million in 2026/27 to support households experiencing financial hardship across Herefordshire. The fund replaces the previous Household Support Fund and introduces a longer-term, prevention-focused approach aimed at helping residents build financial resilience, reducing reliance on emergency support and strengthening local community-based services.

Alongside this decision approval was given to a local eligibility framework that will ensure support is allocated according to financial need and individual circumstances. The programme will operate through a cash-first approach, providing direct financial assistance where appropriate, alongside a "no wrong door" access model that enables residents to access support through a range of council and partner services. The programme will also support wider preventative measures, including debt advice, income maximisation services, targeted outreach and community resilience initiatives, helping to reduce the risk of residents escalating into crisis. A new digital payment and referral systems will be introduced to improve accessibility, coordination and accountability.

The decision delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to accept future CRF allocations through to 2028/29 and to make the operational and budgetary decisions required to administer the fund. Spend will be in accordance with the approved framework and Government grant conditions.

2: Allocation of Basic Need Capital Grant for the Expansion of John Masefield High School and Weobley High School

Stated 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

In June, the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets approved £5.39 million programme of capital investment to expand John Masefield High School and improve

accommodation at Weobley High School. The funding is drawn from the Department for Education Basic Need Capital Grant funding and Section 106 contributions. The investment will help the council meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and ensure that educational facilities remain suitable for current and future demand.

The largest element of the programme is the expansion of John Masfield High School in Ledbury, increasing the school's capacity from 750 to 900 pupils. The expansion responds to sustained growth in demand for secondary school places arising from population increases and new housing developments in the area. The project will provide additional teaching and specialist learning spaces to support the increased number of pupils and secure sufficient capacity for the future.

The programme also includes the relocation of modular accommodation from Peterchurch Primary School to Weobley High School. This will replace temporary accommodation that has reached the end of its operational life and provide improved classroom facilities, additional teaching space and enhanced amenities. The reuse of existing council-owned modular buildings is intended to deliver improved accommodation in a cost-effective manner.

Subject to planning and procurement requirements, the Weobley project is expected to be completed during 2026, with the John Masfield expansion due to be delivered for the 2028/29 academic year.

3: Strategic Housing – Three-year Capital Programme, 2026/29

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

This year we will: Enable people to access the housing they need through the strategic housing service

In April, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth approved the expenditure of £4.1 million of capital funding over the next three years to support a range of housing initiatives. The funding is designed to address homelessness, increase the supply of suitable accommodation and meet the needs of vulnerable residents across Herefordshire.

This decision helps to address the significant and growing pressures within the local housing system. Demand for temporary accommodation has increased steadily, with the number of households accommodated rising from 93 in January 2023 to 184 in January 2026. During 2024/25, the council provided temporary accommodation for 326 households. The costs of providing emergency accommodation continue to rise, with a single room in a local hotel costing the council around £85 per night, equivalent to more than £31,000 per year, while housing benefit payments do not fully cover these costs.

A key element of the programme is the introduction of an Empty Properties Grant Scheme to bring long-term vacant homes back into use. Herefordshire currently has more than 1,800 empty properties, including over 600 homes that have been vacant for more than a year. Grants of up to £50,000 per property will be available to support refurbishment, with funding tied to agreements

that make homes available at below-market rents. This will enable the council to move families out of temporary accommodation and into more stable housing.

The funding will also support the development of accommodation for groups whose housing needs are particularly difficult to meet, including large families, disabled residents and households requiring accessible homes. The council is currently supporting several larger families in unsuitable or expensive temporary accommodation and maintains an Accessible Homes Register with more than 70 households awaiting suitable housing solutions. The investment is intended to create more sustainable local accommodation options, reducing reliance on costly out-of-area placements and improving outcomes for vulnerable residents.

The programme also provides transitional accommodation for homeless young people and care leavers, helping them move towards independent living. The council intends to purchase at least four properties for this purpose, creating a stepping stone between supported accommodation and permanent housing. Supported housing placements for looked-after children cost the council on average £61,000 per year. Investment in transitional accommodation has the potential to improve independence while delivering significant long-term savings.

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.

4: 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 April, the cabinet member for local engagement and community resilience approved up to £450,000 of capital funding to undertake works at depots and other facilities. This work is required to support the mobilisation and delivery of the Council's new Public Realm Service contract. Initial works identified included the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Thorn and Kingsland depots, together with improvements to Council office accommodation at Thorn Depot. Further requirements may emerge as the new service becomes fully established.

The gives delegated authority to the Major Contracts Programme Director to identify, procure and deliver any necessary depot and facility improvements within the approved funding envelope. This enables the council to respond quickly to operational requirements, while ensuring that all necessary legal, property and landlord approvals are obtained before works proceed.

5: The New Public Realm Service - Highway Maintenance Plan

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: Deliver the highways maintenance investment programme across the county

This decision, taken by the Cabinet Member for Local Engagement and Community Resilience in May, approved the adoption of a revised Highway Safety Inspection Manual, coming in to effect from 1 June 2026. The new plan replaces the previous Highway Maintenance Plan and sets out the Council's system for inspecting the highway network, identifying defects and prioritising repairs. The framework ensures that the Council is able to meet its statutory duty to maintain the public highway and manage related risks.

The updated manual has been developed to align with the new Public Realm Services contract that commenced on 1 June 2026. It includes a revised structure focused on highway safety inspections, updated defect categories and response times, an amended risk matrix and revised procedures for dealing with reports from members of the public and other third parties. These changes are intended to ensure that highway defects are assessed and addressed consistently and appropriately under the new contractual arrangements.

The revised manual is intended to support the effective management of Herefordshire's extensive highway network and provide a clear and proportionate system of inspection and repair. Its aim is to help keep roads, footways and other highway assets safe and serviceable, while ensuring the Council can demonstrate a reasonable and robust approach to fulfilling its legal responsibilities as the local highway authority.

6: Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero CO₂ by 2030/31 and work with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change

This year we will: Adopt the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan and provide residents with different travel choices through integrated networks

In March, Cabinet approved the adoption of Herefordshire's updated Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWWIP). This plan sets out the council's long-term strategy for improving walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure across the county. The plan identifies priority routes and schemes that will help encourage active travel, improve travel choice, support healthier lifestyles and contribute to the council's carbon reduction objectives.

A key purpose of the LCWWIP is to provide an evidence-based framework for future investment in active travel infrastructure. Adoption of the plan will strengthen the council's ability to bid for and secure government funding; many national funding programmes now require local authorities to have an approved LCWWIP in place before applications can be considered.

The plan has been shaped through public consultation and stakeholder engagement, which generated significant feedback from residents. Consultees expressed strong support for improvements such as off-road walking and cycling routes, safer junctions, quiet lanes, better routes to schools, improved crossings, additional cycle parking and enhanced accessibility. This feedback received during the consultation has been used to refine the final plan, including the addition of further routes and connections identified by residents.

7: Hereford Western Bypass Phase One – Assessment Criteria

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 April, Cabinet approved a set of assessment criteria and pre-construction requirements that will be used by Cabinet when considering whether to proceed with the construction of Phase One of the Hereford Western Bypass. It does not approve the release of construction funding or the award of the construction contract at this stage. Instead, it establishes the framework against which the forthcoming Full Business Case will be assessed.

Phase One of the scheme will provide a new road link between the A49/B4399 junction and the A465, improving access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone and reducing traffic on key routes including Belmont Road, Walnut Tree Avenue and Holme Lacy Road. The project forms part of the wider plans to complete the Hereford Western Bypass in full; this first stage being an important component of the county's transport strategy and future growth plans.

A Full Business Case has been prepared and will be presented to Cabinet before any decision is taken on construction. The business case will be assessed against criteria based on the Government's Five Case Model, covering the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management aspects of the scheme. These criteria will be evaluated to assess value for money, transport benefits, affordability, environmental impacts, deliverability and overall investment value.

The criteria will confirm the key requirements that must be in place before construction can begin, providing assurance that necessary preparatory work has been completed. The adopted criteria and requirements will enable Cabinet to undertake a structured and transparent assessment before deciding whether to release the approved construction budget and authorise the start of construction

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, £2,190,490 (up by £754,239 since my last report in March) in phosphate income has been received. To date these actions have released planning permissions for 980 dwellings (an increase of 94 dwellings).

9: Carbon Management Plan 2026 to 2031

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Work towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero CO₂ by 2030/31 and work with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change

This year we will: Reduce the council's own CO₂ footprint through implementing our Carbon Management Action Plan

In May, cabinet approved Herefordshire Council's Carbon Management Plan which sets out the council's approach to reducing carbon emissions from its own operations over the next five years. The plan is a key element of the Council Plan 2024–2028 and provides a framework for delivering continued improvements in energy efficiency, reducing environmental impact and supporting the council's longer-term objective of becoming carbon neutral.

The Carbon Management Plan identifies the council's main sources of carbon emissions and establishes a programme of actions to reduce energy consumption across its estate and operations. This includes improving the energy efficiency of buildings, increasing the use of renewable energy technologies and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The plan is intended not only to reduce emissions but also to strengthen the council's resilience to future energy cost increases.

To date, the council's carbon management plans have delivered significant reductions in carbon emissions reducing by 63.5% compared with the 2008/09 baseline by 2024/25. The new plan builds on this achievement by identifying further measures that will reduce emissions, improve energy performance and support the council's target of no longer being a net source of carbon emissions after 2030/31.

In addition to environmental benefits, the plan is intended to deliver wider organisational benefits through lower energy costs, increased energy security, greater use of locally generated renewable energy and improved air quality.

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.

10: Herefordshire Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031

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

This year we will: Utilise the full range of measures to prevent people becoming homeless including through the provision of transitional accommodation

The decision gave approval for the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031 and its associated Delivery Action Plan. This aligns with statutory requirements set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which mandates all local authorities to maintain up-to-date homelessness strategies and publish annual action plans. In adopting this strategy, the council remains compliant with our legislative requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002. It also ensures the council's compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the National Plan to End Homelessness (2025).

The strategy places particular emphasis on prevention, early intervention and recovery. Our own local analysis demonstrates that Herefordshire has made progress in preventing homelessness; however, ongoing challenges remain. These include increasing pressures from private rented sector evictions, family breakdowns, domestic abuse, and the growing complexity of support needs, particularly relating to poor mental and physical health among those at risk. The presence of families in temporary accommodation, including the use of bed and breakfast provision, further highlights the need for strengthened responses.

The development of the strategy has been informed by a comprehensive evidence base, including stakeholder engagement, service user input, data analysis, and benchmarking against national best practice. This has enabled identification of key systemic pressures and opportunities for improvement. The needs assessment confirms that homelessness in Herefordshire is closely linked to structural housing issues, health inequalities, and financial vulnerability, requiring a coordinated, multi-agency approach. In response, five strategic themes have been identified:

- I. improving systems for early identification and prevention;
- II. strengthening multi-agency partnerships;
- III. enhancing the availability and quality of accommodation;
- IV. embedding a data-led approach to decision-making; and
- V. maximising funding and resources.

These will be delivered through a detailed action plan designed to increase accommodation capacity, improve support pathways, and build long-term resilience across services.

11: Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4 - Grant Acceptance

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

The decision had been taken because of the importance of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF4) as an established government initiative to support councils to acquire good quality temporary accommodation. The type of accommodation that the council will be looking to provide will assist vulnerable families, including those resettled through national schemes. Previous rounds of the fund had already demonstrated success in Herefordshire through partnership working with Registered Providers, resulting in the delivery of additional homes. Round 4 is specifically focused on enabling the council to build its own stock, thereby reducing reliance on costly and unsuitable temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfast provision.

The funding has been provided to cover - typically - 40–50% of property costs with the council and its partners contributing match funding. The grant includes additional contributions toward associated costs such as refurbishment and furnishing, alongside a small revenue allocation to support delivery. The council has determined that this will enable the acquisition of 20 homes, with a combination of council-owned and Registered Provider-managed properties, maximising overall benefit without requiring additional unplanned resources.

The increasing demand for temporary accommodation has been a critical factor underpinning the decision. The number of households requiring support has risen significantly over recent years, alongside escalating costs driven by shortages in social housing, high private sector rents, and wider cost-of-living pressures. The use of nightly paid accommodation had placed substantial financial strain on the council, with costs far exceeding sustainable levels. This scheme has therefore been viewed as a necessary intervention to provide a more cost-effective and stable housing solution while supporting the council's statutory homelessness duties.

Broader policy and community considerations had reinforced the decision. The proposal had aligned with national and local priorities to reduce homelessness, eliminate inappropriate temporary accommodation for families, and support the resettlement of vulnerable Afghan families. By increasing the supply of suitable housing and supporting integration outcomes, the scheme is being designed to deliver long-term social and economic benefits for residents and the wider community.

12: Purchase of flats for temporary accommodation

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

In May, the Cabinet member for Adult Health and Wellbeing to the decision to approve the purchase of four one-bedroom flats in Hereford City along with a small allowance for associated costs such as legal fees and surveys. The properties are intended to be used as temporary accommodation.

This decision ensures the council's can carry out its statutory obligations to prevent and relieve homelessness, whilst also alleviating some of the pressures arising from increasing demands, more generally, for temporary accommodation. The number of households requiring support has risen significantly over recent years, both locally and nationally, driven by factors including a shortage of social housing, high private rents, and wider cost-of-living pressures. This in turn placing growing strain on Hereford City's existing temporary accommodation provision.

Financial considerations were also central to the decision. The council has become increasingly reliant on Bed & Breakfast and hotel accommodation, which is both expensive and limited in supply. The high nightly costs of such placements creates significant and ongoing financial pressure, with housing benefit only partially offsetting these costs. Purchasing and managing council-owned accommodation is as a more cost-effective and sustainable solution over the longer term.

This decision addresses rising demand and enables the council to increase its supply of suitable, good-quality temporary accommodation while reducing reliance on high-cost emergency options. This approach also provides more stable and appropriate housing outcomes for residents in need

13: Housing Delivery Update

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

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

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.

Since my last report, in March, we have held a second housing summit. It was a positive discussion where we considered how we can continue to work together to meet the county's critical need for social and affordable housing.

The challenges remain the same with over 2,000 people registered on HomePoint and rough sleeping increasing following the closure of the winter shelter. There has also been a decrease in the supply of private rental properties, following the introduction of the Renters Rights Act, as previous landlords have decided to no longer rent out properties given the changing requirements/ restrictions.

Within this context the following actions were identified as priorities:

1. **Bringing forward council-owned land for housing** – constructive discussions have taken place with two Registered Providers (RPs) following the first summit; bringing forward the first sites on Merton Meadow will be an area of continuing focus.
2. **Homes England grants** – Homes England would like us to submit a portfolio of sites that require grant funding. They will consider and constructively explore whether they can approve an overarching allocation to enable the council to bring sites forward more rapidly.
3. **Duchy landholdings** – the Duchy of Cornwall is looking to sell 20% of their landholdings to enable the development of affordable housing on remaining land. It was agreed that the council would follow up with the Duchy estate as to what opportunities there may be in Herefordshire.
4. **Empty Properties** – There are 186 empty properties owned by the RPs across the county. It was agreed that we will proactively work together to bring these properties back in to use as soon as possible.
5. **A joint work programme** – To drive forward future joint working it was agreed that we would establish a joint work programme. The agreed initial areas of joint working are;
 - a. **Empty Properties** – as above, a programme to bring the 186 properties back on line as soon as possible
 - b. **Homes England** – work with HE to secure funding, invite to them to the next meeting
 - c. **Housing delivery programme** – to include all council owned sites, RP led development and all live and any stalled Housing Developers sites
 - d. **Local plan going forward** – ensure the RPs are fully engaged in the development of the Local Plan
 - e. **Devolution** – to identify asks in terms of future powers and funding we would like to support social and affordable housing.

Housing Delivery

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.

365 new affordable homes have been delivered since 1 April 2025, with 95 of these provided as general needs accommodation during the current financial year to date.

External Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4 grant funding secured by Strategic Housing (£2,899,500 capital grant and £22,548 revenue grant) is expected to support the delivery of 20 homes in total. This will include 5 units of general needs temporary accommodation and 15 units for Afghan resettlement. The temporary accommodation will be purchased and managed by Herefordshire Council to help meet increasing homelessness demand. The resettlement accommodation will be purchased and managed by Registered Providers.

To date, offers have been accepted on two five-bedroom properties, with a further 3 offers made on additional properties. All acquisitions remain subject to Red Book valuation and RICS survey to ensure value for money.

An additional Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government funding allocation has enabled the purchase of four one-bedroom flats in Hereford – these will be used as temporary accommodation. Alongside this is the delivery of a further four one-bedroom flats in Ross-on-Wye. Internal funding has also enabled the creation of four flats in Hereford city through the refurbishment and conversion of a former three-bedroom Council-owned property.

Prevention remains at the heart of the Housing Service's work. By intervening early, officers help residents resolve housing difficulties before they become crises, through practical support, mediation, debt advice, tenancy sustainment and financial assistance.

This approach helps people remain in their homes, protecting family stability, employment, education and wellbeing. It also reduces costs to the Council, as preventing homelessness is significantly more cost-effective than providing emergency accommodation and statutory homelessness support.

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

14: Change and transform the organisation to be fit for the future and deliver the efficiencies required

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Continue to invest in the property assets of the council to ensure they are maintained and decrease the burden on revenue repair works

This year we will: Deliver the programme of projects

In April, the Cabinet Member Community Services and Assets approved the drawdown and expenditure of £3.223 million of capital funding to deliver a programme of property improvement works across the Council's estate between 2026/27 and 2028/29. The programme includes planned maintenance and improvement projects to corporate and commercial buildings, ensuring

that properties remain safe, compliant, operational and fit for purpose. The investment is intended to support service delivery, protect the value of Council assets and maintain income generated from the Council's commercial property portfolio.

The decision also approves a programme of works at Council-owned care facilities used to provide residential care and support services. These works include essential repairs, improvements to fire safety measures and other upgrades required to maintain safe and effective care environments and support compliance with regulatory requirements.

Additional funding has been approved for adaptation works to a Council-owned property that will be used to deliver an overnight short breaks and outreach service for children with disabilities. The improvements will help ensure the property is accessible and suitable for children with complex needs, supporting the Council's statutory responsibilities to provide respite services for disabled children and their families.

15: School Transport Operating Model (formerly known as Pilot Programme for School Transport Operating Model)

Stated Delivery Plan Objective: Change and transform the organisation to be fit for the future and deliver the efficiencies required

This year we will: Complete the review of home to school transport to mitigate increasing costs through a new delivery model

In March, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure approved a pilot programme to deliver some school transport routes through Hoople, Herefordshire Council's arms-length trading company. The pilot forms part of the council's wider school transport transformation programme and is intended to test whether transport can be provided more efficiently and at a lower cost to meet the needs of eligible children and young people.

The programme has been developed in response to increasing demand and rising costs associated with home-to-school transport, particularly for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Analysis undertaken by the council indicates that some of the most expensive transport routes could be delivered more cost-effectively through Hoople, potentially reducing costs while maintaining service quality, safeguarding standards and reliability.

The pilot will initially introduces a number of routes – these will be closely monitored and evaluated. The council aims to assess whether greater control over route planning, vehicle utilisation, driver recruitment and staff training can improve efficiency and resilience, while providing a positive experience for children, young people and their families. The model is also intended to reduce reliance on external transport providers and create a more sustainable long-term approach to delivering school transport.

The pilot will be subject to ongoing monitoring of its financial performance, operational effectiveness, safeguarding compliance and customer experience. The findings will be used to inform future decisions on the longer-term delivery of school transport services.

Other Decisions Taken by Cabinet and Cabinet Members

16: Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027

In March Cabinet agreed the 2026/27 Delivery Plan. The plan, which is a constitutional requirement, sets out what actions the council will take to achieve the priorities of the Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28.

Delivery Plan progress is monitored through quarterly performance and budget reporting to Cabinet, reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team, annual service plans, and individual performance reviews. The 2026/27 Delivery Plan includes both outstanding actions from 2025/26 and new deliverables to support the Herefordshire Council Plan priorities of People, Place, Growth, and Transformation.

17: High Needs Budget 2026/27

In March, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People agreed the Council's High Needs Budget for 2026/27. This budget funds support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those requiring alternative provision. The budget is funded through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which local authorities must use to meet their statutory responsibilities for SEND provision and specialist educational support up to the age of 25.

Demand for SEND services continues to increase across Herefordshire, with rising numbers of children and young people requiring specialist placements, top-up funding, post-16 support and independent school provision. Although the council's High Needs funding allocation has increased for 2026/27, the increase largely reflects the incorporation of existing grants into the funding formula rather than additional funding to meet growing demand.

As a result, the proposed High Needs Budget requirement for 2026/27 is £50.9 million, while available funding is significantly lower, leaving an anticipated in-year funding shortfall of £25.7 million. However, there continues to be a mismatch between the cost of meeting statutory SEND obligations and the funding provided through the national system.

Herefordshire's cumulative DSG deficit has continued to grow in recent years due to sustained overspending within the High Needs Block, driven by increasing demand and the legal requirement to provide appropriate support regardless of the level of funding available.

18: Appointment of an external transformation partner for Community Wellbeing Directorate

This decision agreed a proposal that an external specialist partner be procured to support the Community Wellbeing Directorate in identifying and designing transformation activity to deliver sustainable, recurrent savings over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period. Delegated authority was to be granted to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to manage the procurement process and award the contract. This approach was intended to complement the £7.3m savings already committed for 2026–2027 and to ensure further savings could be identified and delivered in subsequent years.

The decision was driven by the significant financial pressures facing the council and the scale of the Community Wellbeing Directorate's budget and responsibilities. The Directorate was required not only to deliver substantial savings in the immediate financial year but also to contribute further savings in later years of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. It was recognised that identifying additional efficiencies of this scale would be challenging without external expertise, particularly given increasing service demand and the complexity of adult social care.

The proposed approach involved a two-phase model. Phase 1 comprised a 12-week diagnostic exercise, focused primarily on adult social care, to identify opportunities to manage demand, improve productivity, and design services around the needs of residents and carers. Subject to demonstrating sufficient, sustainable savings, Phase 2 would involve implementation over 12–18 months, with the external partner supporting delivery while also developing internal capability to sustain improvements. The commercial model reduced financial risk through a contingent fee structure linked to realised savings, with only a fixed fee payable if the council chose not to proceed beyond the diagnostic stage.

In reaching this decision, it was emphasised that the diagnostic phase would identify deliverable and sustainable savings, but any proposals would be subject to further assessment and approval before implementation. A future key decision would determine whether to proceed to Phase 2. The alternative option of taking no action was rejected on the basis that it would be unlikely to deliver the required level of additional savings without specialist support, thereby undermining the council's financial strategy.

19: Justice for Tenants (JFT) – Renters' Rights Act 2025: Housing Enforcement, Civil Penalties and Housing of Multiple Occupancy Licensing

In May, the Cabinet member for Adult Health and Wellbeing approved a new enforcement framework for the private rented sector in preparation for the Renters' Rights Act 2025. This included adopting updated enforcement and civil penalty policies, standardising House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence conditions, and agreeing to enter into a support contract with Justice for Tenants (JFT). JFT is a non-profit organisation dedicated to raising standards for renters, empowering tenants through knowledge, and strengthening enforcement against rogue landlords and agents., subject to legal review. This decision puts the council in a position to meet its new legal duties and to apply housing standards consistently and effectively across all wards.

The new legislation introduced a stronger duty on councils to take action where there are breaches and placed greater emphasis on civil penalties. The Council's existing policies had been developed under an older, more discretionary approach and no longer fully met these requirements. Adopting the JFT framework provides a clear, structured and nationally recognised approach, helping to ensure decisions are transparent, consistent, and more robust if challenged.

This approach also reduces operational and legal risks. The JFT model aligns policy, enforcement practice and licensing conditions helping to avoid inconsistencies and supports officers in making defensible decisions. The decision creates benefits for residents and the wider community and contributes to improving housing standards, protects vulnerable tenants, and ensure fair treatment of responsible landlords. By strengthening enforcement and increasing confidence in regulatory activity, the new framework will deliver a more effective and reliable housing service.

20: Introducing a Herefordshire Councillor Ward Fund Grants Scheme

In May, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, approved the introduction of a new Herefordshire Councillor Ward Grant Scheme, giving each ward councillor an annual budget of £1,000 to support community groups, local projects and initiatives within their ward. The scheme is intended to increase councillors' ability to respond directly to local needs and support activities that contribute to the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Under the scheme, local community groups will be able to apply for funding through a simple application process. Councillors will have delegated authority to decide how their allocation is spent, funding projects that deliver local benefits and support community wellbeing. Councillors will also be able to combine their allocations to support projects that span more than one ward area.

The scheme aims to encourage greater local participation in community-led initiatives and strengthen the link between councillors and the communities they represent. By providing members with a small discretionary budget, the council hopes to support grassroots projects that might otherwise struggle to access funding.

To ensure accountability and transparency, all grant decisions will be recorded and linked to the council's agreed priorities and policies. Democratic Services will support the administration of the scheme and publish quarterly reports showing how ward grant funding has been allocated across the county.

21: Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Subscription

Also in May, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services approved the renewal of Herefordshire Council's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Subscription (EAS). This decision ensures that the council has continued provision of the Microsoft software and cloud services that underpin the organisations' day-to-day operations. These services include email, Microsoft Office applications, Teams, Windows, device management, security tools and other digital systems that support the delivery of council services.

The decision authorised the award of a three-year contract to Phoenix Software Ltd to continue providing the specialist reseller and licensing management service required for the council's Microsoft licensing arrangements. This will enable the council to access public-sector pricing arrangements and secure fixed discounted pricing for the duration of the agreement, helping to deliver value for money.

The renewal does not introduce any changes to services provided to residents, businesses or visitors. Instead, it ensures continuity of the council's existing digital infrastructure and allows licensing levels to be reviewed annually so that the number of licences can be increased or reduced to reflect organisational needs. This will allow licensing arrangements to be managed efficiently and ensure that the council and Hoople continue to have access to the technology required to support their services.

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 27 February 2026 and 16 July 2026		Date Taken	Effective From
Cabinet Decisions			
Delivery Plan 2026/27		26/03/2026	02/04/2026
Risk Management Update Quarter 3 2025-26		26/03/2026	02/04/2026
Q3 2025/26 Budget Report		26/03/2026	02/04/2026
Q3 Performance Report		26/03/2026	02/04/2026
Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (formerly known as Local Walking Cycling Plan adoption)		26/03/2026	02/04/2026
Hereford Western Bypass Phase One – Assessment Criteria (formerly known as Hereford Western Bypass Phase One – Decision Criteria)		30/04/2026	08/05/2026
Carbon Management Plan 2026/27-2030/31		21/05/2026	29/05/2026
Q4 2025/26 Budget Report		21/05/2026	29/05/2026
Risk Management Update Quarter 4 2025-26		25/06/2026	02/07/2026
Q4 Performance Report		25/06/2026	02/07/2026
Cabinet Member Decisions			
Cabinet Member: Adult Health and Wellbeing			
Herefordshire Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031		30/03/2026	08/04/2026
Appointment of an external transformation partner for Community Wellbeing Directorate		30/03/2026	30/03/2026
Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4 - Grant Acceptance		13/05/2026	20/05/2026
Purchase of flats for temporary accommodation		15/05/2026	22/05/2026
Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026-29		10/04/2026	17/04/2026
Cabinet Member: Children and Young people			
High needs budget 2026/27		30/03/2026	08/04/2026
Property Services Estates Capital Building Improvement Programme 2026/29		12/06/2026	19/06/2026
Cabinet Member: Community Services and Assets			
Allocation of Basic Need Capital Grant for the Expansion of John Masefield High School and Weobley High School		26/06/2026	03/07/2026
Cabinet Member: Local Engagement and Community Resilience			

Appendix 2: Decisions – taken between 27 February 2026 and 16 July 2026	Date Taken	Effective From
Cabinet Decisions		
The New Public Realm Service – Depot Facilities	02/04/2026	11/04/2026
Highway Maintenance Plan	19/05/2026	27/05/2026
Cabinet Member: Transport and Infrastructure		
School Transport Operating Model (formerly known as Pilot Programme for School Transport Operating Model)	31/03/2026	09/04/2026
Cabinet Member: Finance and Corporate Services		
Introducing a Herefordshire Councillor ward fund grants scheme	31/03/2026	09/04/2026
Microsoft Enterprise Agreement subscription	18/05/2026	18/05/2026
Cabinet Member: Economy and Growth		
Strategic Housing: Three-year Capital Programme 2026/27- 2028/29	30/04/2026	09/05/2026
Cabinet Member: Roads and Regulatory Services		
Justice for Tenants (JFT) – Renters’ Rights Act 2025: Housing Enforcement, Civil Penalties and HMO Licensing	15/05/2026	22/05/2026

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. 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
- 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

Culture and Environment (Deputy Leader): Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst

- Deputise for the Leader in their absence.
- Cultural services which include:
 - Engagement with the Cultural Partnership
 - Implementation of the new Cultural Strategy
 - Interaction of culture with economic development and tourism
- 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 and Cultural services:
 - Parks and countryside
 - Leisure Services
 - Libraries and learning centre
 - Museum redevelopment
 - 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 24 July 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 motions listed at paragraph 6 are debated and determined by Council.

Alternative options

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

Key considerations

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

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

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

Motion 1 – Building a Strategic Partnership between Herefordshire and Zhytomyr Oblast, Ukraine

(Proposed by Councillor Ed O'Driscoll, Seconded by Councillor tbc)

Council notes that:

1. Herefordshire has demonstrated its solidarity with the people of Ukraine since 2022 through the generosity of residents, voluntary organisations, businesses and public bodies.
2. Ross-on-Wye has signed a Friendship Agreement with the City of Ovruch in Zhytomyr Oblast, Hereford City Council has signed a Friendship Agreement with the City of Zhytomyr and several other Herefordshire communities are exploring similar partnerships.
3. A growing number of English county and unitary authorities have entered into Memoranda of Understanding with Ukrainian regions to foster long-term cooperation in areas including local government, education, culture, economic development, agriculture, healthcare and post-war reconstruction.
4. Zhytomyr Oblast is a natural regional partner for Herefordshire, reflecting shared strengths in rural communities, agriculture, environmental stewardship, heritage, tourism and community resilience.
5. HVOSS, through the Herefordshire Community Network for Ukraine, working in partnership with Herefordshire Council and many voluntary and statutory organisations, has an established and effective county-wide network supporting Ukrainian guests and developing friendship links between communities.

Council believes that:

1. Local government has an important role in fostering international friendship, democratic cooperation and mutual understanding.
2. A county-level Memorandum of Understanding would complement existing town and city friendship agreements by providing a strategic framework for wider collaboration.
3. Such a partnership should deliver mutual benefit through knowledge sharing, cultural exchange, educational links, economic cooperation and support for long-term recovery.
4. HVOSS is well placed to act as the Council's principal voluntary sector delivery partner, coordinating engagement with communities and partner organisations across Herefordshire, having well-established relationships in Ukraine through its staff team, who are themselves guests here from Ukraine and already making introductions and facilitating relationship-building.

Council resolves to request that the Executive:

1. Open discussions with the leadership of Zhytomyr Oblast with a view to developing a Memorandum of Understanding between Herefordshire Council and Zhytomyr Oblast based upon friendship, cooperation, mutual benefit and long-term partnership.
2. Recognise HVOSS, through the Herefordshire Community Network for Ukraine, as the Council's principal voluntary sector delivery partner in supporting the development of the partnership and coordinating engagement with communities, schools, businesses, cultural organisations, higher education, parish and town councils and the voluntary sector across Herefordshire.

3. **Allocate sufficient officer capacity and appropriate financial resources to facilitate the development and implementation of the partnership, including stakeholder engagement, translation and interpretation, exchange visits, partnership development and the pursuit of external funding opportunities.**
4. **Work with Hereford City Council, Ross-on-Wye Town Council and other town and parish councils developing links with communities in Zhytomyr Oblast to create a coherent county-wide partnership that complements existing Friendship Agreements and encourages further civic, educational, cultural and economic cooperation.**
5. **Produce a report within six months setting out the proposed Memorandum of Understanding, implementation plan, governance arrangements, resource requirements, opportunities for external funding and recommendations for the long-term development of the Herefordshire-Zhytomyr Partnership.**

Motion 2 – Securing Food Resilience in Herefordshire

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

Herefordshire is rooted in food production. The county has shown real joined-up, cross-party, cross-sector working and sits at the forefront of agroecological change. But farmers are under massive pressure - they are disproportionately more likely to be severely depressed than in other trades and facing financial hardship with 83,000 farming households in the UK estimated to be experiencing absolute poverty. This is still, to a great extent, hidden in our rural setting, though in our county food bank use has not diminished, with many recipients being working families. The national picture of food production is grim, with extreme weather disrupting growing conditions and the added risk of external supply chains for fuel and farm supplies being disrupted by global events. Herefordshire has the assets and the networks to respond positively to ensure a more secure food system and a county that all ages can make home.

This Council therefore resolves to request that the Executive:

1. **Support Sustainable Food and Farming: to secure food production and access for all in Herefordshire.**
2. **Deliver on the carried forward commitment made in the 25/26 delivery plan for a food resilience strategy drawing on the county's existing assets including the Rural Hub, the Food Alliance, and the Climate Adaptation Plan - and support a Food Partnership that has the institutional weight to enact that strategy.**
3. **Write to Government: Publicly support national measures needed to support both young and old to enter - and stay in - UK farming. Including writing to the Minister for Food Security describing how the 'Basic Income for Farmers' programme would do this here in Herefordshire and proposing our county as a candidate area**

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 currently no outstanding resolutions following the recent publication of executive responses; please access the recent decision containing executive responses through the following link:

[Executive responses to motions.](#)

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

