

Agenda

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 17 February 2026**

Time: **2.00 pm**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260239 or e-mail Henry.Merricks-Murgatroyd@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor Ed O'Driscoll**
Vice-Chairperson **Councillor Frank Cornthwaite**

Councillor Bruce Baker
Councillor Helen Heathfield
Councillor Rob Owens
Councillor Roger Phillips
Councillor Diana Toynbee

Agenda

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	5 - 12
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of any councillor nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.	
4. MINUTES To receive the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9 September 2025.	13 - 18
HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5.00 pm on Wednesday 11 th February 2026. Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk . Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted. Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the council.	
7. TOURISM IN HEREFORDSHIRE To review the governance and delivery structures, impact in inclusivity of the Destination Management Plan, and future decisions and policy stance.	19 - 50
8. WORK PROGRAMME 2025/6 AND 2026/7 To consider the draft work programme for Herefordshire Council's scrutiny committees for the municipal years 2025/6 and 2026/7.	51 - 118
9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 15 th April 2026, 14:00 pm.	

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You have a right to:

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

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Bus maps are available here: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/78/bus_maps

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.



Guide to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is a statutory role fulfilled by councillors who are not members of the cabinet.

The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

Council has decided that there will be five scrutiny committees. The committees reflect the balance of political groups on the council.

The Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee consists of 7 councillors.

Councillor	Party
Bruce Baker	Conservative Party
Frank Cornthwaite (Vice-Chairperson)	Conservative Party
Helen Heathfield	The Green Party
Ed O'Driscoll (Chairperson)	Liberal Democrats
Rob Owens	Liberal Democrats
Roger Phillips	Conservative Party
Diana Toynbee	Independents for Herefordshire

Scrutiny functions

The committees have the power:

- (a) to review, influence policy or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (d) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area
- (f) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the council with respect to the discharge of those functions. In this regard crime and disorder functions means:
 - (i) a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and

- (ii) a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - (iii) a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area
- (g) to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised or to be consulted by a relevant NHS body or health service provider in accordance with the Regulations (2013/218) as amended. In this regard *health service* includes services designed to secure improvement -
- (i) in the physical and mental health of the people of England, and
 - (ii) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness
 - (iii) and any services provided in pursuance of arrangements under section 75 in relation to the exercise of health-related functions of a local authority.
- (h) to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area.
- (i) To track actions and undertake an annual effectiveness review

The remit of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

- Talk Business programme, advice and support
- Development investment plans - town, market town, rural, Hereford City
- Hereford Enterprise Zone
- Higher education development
- Adult and community learning programme
- Apprenticeships
- Fastershire programme
- Digital connectivity
- Heritage, culture and tourism
- Social value procurement policy
- Planning
- Licensing
- Regulatory
- Capital highway maintenance, asset management and infrastructure repair
- Council housing
- Statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers

Who attends scrutiny committee meetings?

- Members of the committee, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson.
- Cabinet members, they are not members of the committee but attend principally to answer any questions the committee may have and inform the debate.
- Officers of the council to present reports and give technical advice to the committee.
- People external to the council invited to provide information to the committee.
- Other councillors can attend but can only speak at the discretion of the chairperson.

Minutes of the meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 2.00 pm

Committee members present in person and voting: **Councillors: Bruce Baker, Frank Cornthwaite (Vice-Chairperson), Elizabeth Foxton, Ed O'Driscoll (Chairperson), Roger Phillips and Diana Toynbee**

Others in attendance:

G Dando	Chief Operating Officer - Resident Services	Herefordshire Council
R Evans	Regional Manager (West Midlands)	Active Travel England
F Horton	Transport Planning Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
H Merricks-Murgatroyd	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
Councillor P Price	Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure	Herefordshire Council
D Thornton	Democratic Services Support Officer	Herefordshire Council
D Webb	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	Herefordshire Council

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

72. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

74. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

75. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 8)

Documents containing questions received from members of the public and the responses given, plus supplementary questions and their respective responses were published as an appendix to the minutes.

76. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from councillors.

77. LOCAL WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN SCRUTINY REPORT

The committee considered a report on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. The Transport Planning Services Manager presented that:
 - a. The plan will be used to create a priority list of projects that officers will progress for design and delivery over the coming years and will work with external partners to ensure that the work they are doing reflects what the council wants in relation to local cycling and walking infrastructure. It also helps to unlock national funding as having an LCWIP allows the council to be a higher-rated council and provides more opportunities for grants.
 - b. As part of the papers, the technical note is the basis of the LCWIP and provides the thinking behind the LCWIP.
 - c. The public have been consulted with 1,713 unique visitors to the consultation page and 761 contributions with 340 subscribed for future updates.
 - d. The main projects supported in the consultation were routes from residential areas in to the city.
 - e. The next step of the LCWIP is to go to Cabinet to gain approval and once that is achieved, part of the Cabinet recommendation is to give approval to the Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services and the Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure to prioritise the list of routes to be delivered.
2. In response to a question about what the political imperative is for driving the LCWIP forward, the Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure noted that there is no political imperative of it than if there is any need or want to move forward infrastructure projects, there has to be the basis of a plan to draw down the evidence to support any bids or applications made. It was noted that without these plans, bids will be unlikely to be successful for grant funding.
3. The Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the five most popular improvements that the public are asking for are: quiet lanes, highway route upgrades, junction safety upgrades, traffic calming, and footway improvements. Accordingly, these priorities are taken into account when determining the allocation of funding.
4. The Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services noted that active travel funding is already available. With an LCWIP in place, the council is hopeful that its grading will improve, thereby increasing the likelihood of securing additional funding.
5. In response to a question about other LCWIPs and whether it would have been good practice to have had an implementation strategy at this stage, Rhiannon Evans (Active Travel England) noted that it is helpful to have one in relation to a capability assessment which is calculated on three things: 1. Leadership; 2. Network plans; and 3. Delivery.

6. In response to a question regarding the rating system, Rhiannon Evans (Active Travel England) explained that all local authorities in England are assessed on a scale from 0 to 4, with Herefordshire currently rated at level 1.
 - a. The assessment is based on three key criteria: (1) Leadership – the strength of policies and the presence of members who actively support active travel; (2) Network Plans – commitments to LCWIPs and the funding of project pipelines; and (3) Delivery – the extent of infrastructure delivered using ATF funding.
 - b. This is important as it is linked to the amount of funding received as well.
7. The Chief Operating Officer – Resident Services added that officers are currently developing the implementation strategy and prioritisation plan. Once completed, it will be uploaded to the council's website and presented again to the scrutiny committee at a future meeting. It was noted that the aim is to have this work finalised before Christmas.
8. In response to a question about the implementation strategy and the prioritisation list and their differences, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the prioritisation list will provide all of the routes identified and consulted on in Herefordshire. The implementation strategy is a short-term plan of what is being designed and being built on the assumed funding over the next couple of years. Both are considered as separate documents.
9. In response to a question about greenways, the Transport Planning Services Manager acknowledged that the wording in the technical report is unclear. In the actual plan, which will be presented to Cabinet, further detail on greenways will be included. Officers are working closely with landowners to ensure their concerns are respected. While greenways will be supported, the council's main priority remains infrastructure within its own network.
10. In response to a question regarding the equality duty and its low impact rating, the Transport Planning Services Manager clarified that this report is limited to a priority list and technical overview. In contrast, the Cabinet paper provides a different equality rating and includes more detailed wording on how equality considerations will be improved.
11. In response to a question about mistakes in the technical report, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted these would be corrected.
12. The Transport Planning Services Manager confirmed that LCWIP will be subject to six-monthly updates to ensure priorities remain current and responsive to community feedback.
13. Committee members welcomed this approach and stressed the importance of clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for active travel. Officers noted that KPIs in the Local Transport Plan could be extended to cover walking and cycling, with scrutiny recommendations feeding into their development.
14. The Transport Planning Services Manager added that smaller-scale schemes (e.g. crossings, pavements, drop kerbs, 20mph routes) would be prioritised in the early years, particularly around schools, to enable short car journeys to shift to walking or cycling. Larger infrastructure projects were acknowledged as longer-term, requiring external funding, and would therefore be less frequent.

15. The Transport Planning Services Manager agreed that safety is a central priority. All new schemes will undergo safety audits, although some rural routes may not be fully compliant with national design guidance (LTN 1/20) due to physical constraints.
16. In response to a question about how market towns and rural areas would benefit alongside Hereford, it was confirmed that dedicated funding had been set aside for rural areas.
17. The Transport Planning Services Manager noted that over 700 responses had been received during the consultation. While some expressed opposition to prioritising walking and cycling over car travel, many called for more ambitious interventions than those initially proposed.
18. In response to a question about whether the priority list be included in the implementation list before Christmas, the Transport Planning Services Manager confirmed it would be.
19. In response to a question about how the success of the plan will be measured, the Transport Planning Services Manager noted that the council has a strong monitoring network which monitors walking, cycling, and car usage.
20. Committee members stressed the need to address accident hotspots, poor junction design, and potholes, noting that incidents not reported to the police should also be considered. It was advised that upgraded monitoring equipment using AI was being deployed to capture near-miss and actual collision data.

Resolved:

1. **Ensure that the performance indicators monitoring the success of the Local Transport Plan include indicators showing reduced collisions, reduced emissions, and greater take up of walking and cycling as a mode of transport.**
2. **Ensure that any targets in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are Specific, Measurable, Agreed (or Achievable), Realistic, and Time Bound.**
3. **Publish the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan implementation plan, prioritisation list and programme of work by the end of 2025.**

78. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee considered a report on Public Involvement in Housing Development Task and Finish Group – Terms of Reference.

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer introduced the proposal to agree a terms of reference for a task and finish group, noting that housing development is a matter of high public concern and that the group would provide an opportunity for scrutiny to contribute positively to policy development.
2. The group will comprise 5–7 councillors, excluding Cabinet Members. Membership will be open to all councillors, not limited to committee members.

3. Expressions of interest will be invited following agreement of the terms of reference, with work to take place over approximately nine months and a final report expected by May 2026.
4. Concerns were raised about the relationship between the emerging local plan and NDPs, with members emphasising the need to ensure NDPs retain a meaningful role. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer acknowledged this and agreed to make reference to NDPs within the objectives of the group.

Resolved

That:

- a) **The committee agree the terms of reference for the proposed task and finish group.**

79. WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented the draft work programme for the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

The principal points of the subsequent discussion are summarised below:

1. It was noted that the task and finish group would be the committee's primary piece of work over the coming months.
2. It was suggested that the committee allow time to shape the group's programme of work before finalising the wider work programme.
3. A review of the work programme in mid-October was suggested, to be followed by confirmation of priorities at the committee's scheduled November meeting.

Resolved that:

That:

- a) **The committee agree the draft work programme for Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as appendix 1, which will be subject to ongoing review, as the basis of their primary focus for the remainder of the municipal year.**
- b) **The committee note the forward plan attached as appendix 2 and identify any opportunities for collaboration or alignment of work.**

80. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 4 November 2025, 14:00 pm

The meeting ended at 3.32 pm

Chairperson



Tourism in Herefordshire

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 17 February 2026

Report by: Director for Growth

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

The Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee would like to review the governance and delivery structures, impact in inclusivity of the Destination Management Plan, and future decisions and policy stance.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee note the background information included in the report.**

Alternative options

None – this is a background paper to inform the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Key considerations

1. Tourism plays a critical role in the Herefordshire economy. The visitor economy in Hereford was valued at £773m in 2024 and employs just under 8000 FTE people. The county's outstanding natural environment, heritage, culture and locally distinctive food and drink, provide the basis for a strong and growing visitor offer. Tourism also plays a key role in raising awareness of the county as a place to live, work, study and invest, highlighting the quality of life that Herefordshire has to offer.
2. Tourism marketing and development in Herefordshire is primarily led by [Herefordshire County Business Improvement District Ltd](#). A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Roger Allonby, Nadine Kinsey, Tel: 01432 260330,, email: Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk,
nkinsey@herefordshire.gov.uk

partnership within a defined geographic area, in which designated local businesses pay an additional levy on top of their business rates to fund initiatives that enhance the local environment and economy. These initiatives provide services that go above and beyond those delivered by local authorities. Typical BID-funded projects include marketing and promotional activity, business support, regeneration and public realm improvements, and a range of environmental schemes.

3. In November 2021, a ballot was held with eligible tourism and independent retail businesses across Herefordshire, excluding Hereford City Centre, which is already subject to a separate BID. 124 businesses voted in the ballot and 103 of those businesses voted in favour of forming a countywide BID with a combined rateable value of £3,884,400. Eligible businesses now pay a 2% levy on business rates (collected by Herefordshire Council on behalf of the HCBID) to implement the five-year business plan. The current five-year term is due to end in December 2026, and the BID Board are preparing to hold a ballot for a further five-year term in the Autumn of 2026.
4. Herefordshire BID is also the lead partner for the Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership, recognised by Visit England (a government agency) as the lead point of contact for tourism engagement and national and international marketing activities.
5. Herefordshire Council do not have a dedicated tourism function. However because tourism is a key sector in the county's economic strategy, a range of council services contribute to the county's tourism offer such as Growth Hub business support and grants, public realm improvements, maintaining public rights of way, public transport, licensing, and the museums service.

Herefordshire County BID

6. The Herefordshire County BID (HCBID) Board is a volunteer-led governing body made up of business leaders from across the county, representing a broad range of sectors and geographic areas. The Board provides strategic oversight, ensures strong governance, and guides the delivery of the HCBID Business Plan on behalf of levy-paying businesses. Board members work alongside the HCBID's core operational team, which includes the Chief Executive, Business Liaison Manager, Project Officer, and Marketing Manager, to oversee performance, monitor financial management and approve key decisions that support the county's visitor economy and business environment. The Board plays an active role in shaping marketing, destination development, business support initiatives, and long-term economic priorities for Herefordshire.
7. HCBID has continued to deliver strong, strategically aligned activity across the visitor economy. HCBID have seen accelerated growth in brand recognition both regionally and nationally through all of the marketing campaigns that have been delivered and internationally through the Herefordshire Film Office and Hamnet, launched new digital tools to showcase rural Herefordshire, and a strengthened programme of business support via SEEDL training and Place Support Partnerships business savings scheme.
8. Visit Herefordshire is managed and funded by HCBID, and the brand continues to play a central role in raising the profile of the County, driving visitor demand, and supporting the success of Levy Payer businesses. The Visit Herefordshire brand is a shared economic engine which, amplifies the County's story on a national stage, drives visitor behaviour, attracts new audiences, strengthens local business performance, and positions Herefordshire as one of England's most authentic, experience-rich rural destinations.
9. Achievements over the last 12 months include:
 - **Place Informatics Data and STEAM Report:** The **total economic impact rose to £773m** in 2024, an increase of 5.03% compared to 2023 with increases to 8.05m total visitor days and 3.05m overnight stays. Given the very challenging climate for tourism in 2024, including continued cost of living impacts and a wet summer, this represents an excellent result. By comparison, the national GB Tourism Survey results for West Midlands recorded a 14% fall in staying visits and a 10% fall in day visits, while rural destinations across England saw a 6% drop in staying visits and 18% decline in day visits.

- **Visit Herefordshire is a Strong, Credible and Recognised Destination Brand:** The Visit Herefordshire brand provides a unified voice for the county’s tourism offer. Through consistent imagery, messaging and storytelling, the brand: positions Herefordshire as an authentic, rural, high-quality destination; showcases the County’s food, drink, culture, landscapes, and experiences and helps visitors understand what makes Herefordshire distinctive. Consistent brand use across campaigns, PR, digital content, and national partnerships like VisitEngland builds trust and recognition which is vital in a competitive visitor market.
- **Herefordshire Film Office:** is a joint initiative between the HCBID and Herefordshire Council to attract film productions, support location scouting, and showcase the county as a high-quality filming destination. Working closely with industry partners inc. VisitEngland, Creative England and Filming in England to provide stunning locations, logistical support, and coordination for visiting productions. A major early success of the film office was securing filming for **Hamnet**. The launch has generated national and international attention, sparking what’s been described as the “Hamnet Effect.” This momentum has elevated Herefordshire’s profile as a film-friendly destination, opened new economic and tourism opportunities, and inspired dedicated promotional activity to attract “set-jettlers” and cultural tourists
- **Launch of the Visit Herefordshire OutdoorActive Partnership (2026):** Launched this year giving visitors and residents access to:
 - a comprehensive digital mapping and route planning platform; walking; cycling, riding, and long-distance trail routes across Herefordshire;
 - seamless GPS enabled exploration through the Visit Herefordshire app; and
 - enhanced visibility for businesses connected to outdoor and nature-based tourism.

This launch significantly strengthens Herefordshire’s appeal for active, adventure, and nature focused visitors. This area of tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism segments in the UK. The rollout of OutdoorActive will transform how visitors engage with our rural county. This powerful digital tool is expanding our reach to adventure-seeking audiences worldwide, providing rich mapping and route information, and encouraging deeper discovery of Herefordshire’s rural assets.

- **Major National Media Coverage:** Herefordshire appeared in leading outlets, journalist / influencer visits and curated media opportunities strengthening awareness of the county’s attractions and experiences through coordinated PR and digital activity. This collective promotion ensures levy payers benefit from high value visibility that would be prohibitively costly to achieve independently.
- **Growth of Seasonal Trails and Themed Activities:** Campaigns rolled out across all digital platforms, supporting year-round visitor interest to support footfall and overnight stays. Including Hamnet – Through Tudor Landscapes, Herefordshire Food Safari, and Dark Skies.
- **Engagement:** The Visit Herefordshire website and social media channels act as a powerful marketing engine for the county. Continued expansion following the strong performance of 2024, with improved engagement and richer storytelling aligned to LVEP themes: 385,000 users interact visit the website’s annually; 135,000 listing interactions were recorded in 2025, 17m google searches returned Visit Herefordshire in 2025; high performing pages include the business directory, What’s On, See & Do and itineraries. Social media results and user

engagement continue to grow year on year. These channels put levy payer businesses in front of high intent audiences looking for places to eat, stay, shop, and explore.

- **Visit Herefordshire Website developments:** Significant improvements in content; digital mapping integration including outdoor trails; points of interests; multilingual content; immersive features; What's On pages; directory listings; itineraries; newly developed themed content; structure, user engagement, website functionality leading to increased traffic and engagement.
- **Market Towns and Rural Grant Funds awarded:** Over the past 12 months grants have been awarded for the following projects: Late Night Shopping events in Ledbury, Ledbury, Bromyard, Kington and Visit Leominster website developments, Ledbury town map design & distribution ; Ross-on-Wye Christmas Light installations, Destination Bromyard quarterly magazines; Kington and Leominster advertising campaigns; Leominster antiques trail promotion, Herefordshire Pilgrim Way signage improvements; Herefordshire Trail map development and signage.
- **Herefordshire Cultural Partnership:** HCBID has partially funded the creation of a refreshed Herefordshire Cultural Strategy that is in line with the Herefordshire Destination Management Plan's 10-year strategy, ensuring the County's economic strategies align.
- **Visit Herefordshire Tourism Conference 2025:** brought together tourism businesses for a full day of industry insights, skills training, and networking. It featured presentations from VisitEngland, updates on the new Destination Management Plan, and practical breakout sessions. The event highlighted strategic opportunities for growth, collaboration, and improved visitor experiences to 150 Visitor economy Professionals in Herefordshire.
- **Visit Herefordshire Tourism Awards:** Celebrating excellence, with 84 outstanding tourism businesses shortlisted for their innovation and quality. One of Herefordshire's largest industry events, the awards recognised top performers across 16 categories, with winners progressing to the national Awards. In 2025 Herefordshire secured one silver and two bronze awards at the VisitEngland *Awards for Excellence*. The ceremony strengthens pride in the sector and showcases Herefordshire nationally.
- **Learning Hub:** Ongoing access to SEEDL's free skills development, with strong participation across customer service, digital skills, leadership and compliance. In 2025, 1437 Live Courses and 762 On Demand Courses were completed. *Get Fully Booked:* Developed and launched 11 new marketing training courses in partnership with *Get Fully Booked* to support Herefordshire tourism businesses.
- **Place Support Partnership:** providing free cost saving advice and guidance and has now identified over £352,000 worth of cost savings for tourism businesses.
- **Increased Business Engagement:** regular market town drop ins; workshops and specialist support sessions have been delivered leading to stronger, more frequent two-way communication with levy payers
- **Showcasing the county at key events:** Raising Herefordshire's profile at high-footfall consumer shows, aligning with target audiences.

- Continued LVEP programme delivery, partnerships, and improvements in destination coordination
 - Further development of Herefordshire Film Office , building on the “Hamnet Effect”
 - Expansion of the outdoor active platform with additional routes, mapping content, and business integration
 - Development of dedicated weddings and conference campaigns on the Visit Herefordshire website to market these sectors and attract new audiences
 - Preparation for the 2026 HCBID ballot, including: comprehensive business engagement, consultation on priorities for the next five-year term; development of the new business plan to shape the future of HCBID and our visitor economy
11. With the launch of the Visit Herefordshire LVEP Destination Management Plan (DMP) in April 2025, HCBID has focussed projects and investments on long-term growth outcomes, improving the visitor experience and creating tangible value for our levy payers. The year has brought new initiatives, major product launches, and significant milestones that reflect our ongoing commitment to raising the profile of Herefordshire as an outstanding rural destination.
12. The Visit Herefordshire Destination Management Plan (DMP) (2025–2035) was developed as a core requirement of achieving LVEP status and as a long-term strategic framework for growing and managing the county’s Visitor economy. Its creation was shaped by national expectations set by VisitEngland/VisitBritain and by local priorities identified through HCBID / Herefordshire Council leadership, business engagement, and partnership working.
13. There are several drivers for the plan being developed.
- LVEP accreditation requirements: As part of the national LVEP programme, destinations must demonstrate strong governance, clear strategic direction, and integrated planning through a formal DMP
 - Need for long-term, countywide coordination: The DMP provides a shared 10-year roadmap covering marketing, product development, infrastructure, skills, data, sustainability, and business engagement. It brings public and private partners together around one strategy
 - Stronger alignment with national visitor economy priorities: The DMP connects Herefordshire’s ambitions with emerging England-wide strategies, VisitEngland guidance, and national brand positioning
 - Extensive business and stakeholder consultation: Consultation involved workshops, business interviews, engagement sessions, and cross-border discussions (e.g., with Shropshire, Worcestershire, Cheshire and Welsh borders) to ensure the plan meets sector needs and regional opportunities
 - Development of a shared long-term vision: The plan sets a common destination vision for 2025–2035, outlining how Herefordshire will grow as a sustainable, distinctive rural destination with strong national visibility
 - Creation of a detailed action plan and marketing strategy
 - Oversight by the LVEP Advisory Board: The Advisory Board provides leadership, scrutinises delivery, and ensures the DMP aligns with countywide economic growth priorities
14. In Summary, the Destination Management Plan was developed to provide a strong, evidence-based, collaborative and nationally aligned framework for the next decade. It positions Herefordshire for growth, supports levy paying businesses, strengthens its brand, and connects the county to national strategies, funding and partnerships.
15. LVEP: A major strategic benefit for levy payers, delivering improved countywide coordination, destination data use, and strategic focus across marketing, product development, and business engagement. The strength of the Visit Herefordshire brand contributed directly to the County achieving (LVEP) status, a nationally recognised accreditation that: unlocks access to VisitEngland

toolkits, training and development; enhances potential for future government funding; brings expert regional development support directly into the county and increases Herefordshire's standing within England's Visitor economy network.

16. Launch of Herefordshire Destination Management Plan (April 2025) in conjunction with Herefordshire Council and VisitEngland: Delivered a clear, LVEP-aligned strategic roadmap for the development of Herefordshire's Visitor economy over the next 10 years, providing long-term direction across marketing, product development, infrastructure and business engagement, and targets our primary markets of "active explorers", "cultural explorers", and "curious families".
17. LVEP status was pursued to:
 - To elevate Herefordshire's national profile and gain recognition as a high-performing destination
 - To secure access to VisitEngland toolkits, expertise, training, marketing support, and major national initiatives that were not previously available
 - To enable better data use, countywide coordination, and strategic leadership of the Visitor economy
 - To improve eligibility for significant national grant funding and strengthen bids for large-scale projects
18. The core aims of the LVEP are to:
 - Boosting Herefordshire's profile as a top rural visitor destination
 - Growing the visitor economy to over £1 billion by 2035
 - Delivering the Destination Management Plan to coordinate long-term development
 - Increasing visitors, overnight stays, and spend through quality, sustainability, accessibility and local pride
 - Strengthening business support, skills development, and commercial opportunities for levy payers
 - Using data effectively to track trends, measure impact, and guide interventions

Community impact

19. The visitor economy and independent retail are key local sectors both in terms of direct employment, as well as creating and promoting a high-quality place for people to live, work, study and invest. The total economic impact rose to £773m in 2024, an increase of 5.03% compared to 2023 with increases to 8.05m total visitor days and 3.05m overnight stays. Given the very challenging climate for tourism in 2024, including continued cost of living impacts and a wet summer, this represents an excellent result. By comparison, the national GB Tourism Survey results for West Midlands recorded a 14% fall in staying visits and a 10% fall in day visits, while rural destinations across England saw a 6% drop in staying visits and 18% decline in day visits.
20. The Council's County Plan 2024 to 2028 states that 'Herefordshire has a rich cultural heritage and boasts a varied environment. Who we are, our sense of place, and our landscape, villages, high streets, town centres and rural areas are all deeply intertwined'. The County Plan also states that 'We are committed to working alongside partner organisations to grow the tourism economy'.
21. The continuation of HCBID will contribute to the council's Corporate Delivery Plan 2025/2026 Objective 'Work with our partners and businesses to facilitate growth across the county' through the following Key Deliverables: Support County Business Improvement District (BID)/Visit Herefordshire to increase the economic impact of tourism across the county to achieve the following milestones:
 - Support the establishment of the Local Visitor Economy Partnership
 - Support the partnership to develop the Herefordshire Destination Management Plan
22. Herefordshire's 2050 Economic Plan commits to: 'Promote the county through a place marketing strategy, building on our strong visitor economy offer and the work of the Hereford Business Improvement District (BID) and Herefordshire County BID' and 'Develop a cohesive tourism offer

across our city, network of towns, villages and rural areas, building on our Market Town Investment Plans’.

Environmental impact

23. HCBID/ Visit Herefordshire are strengthening the county’s commitment to environmental responsibility and green tourism by embedding sustainability throughout the Destination Management Plan and wider tourism activity. The work promotes regenerative tourism principles, encouraging businesses to adopt practices that enhance local ecosystems, communities, and cultural landscapes. This includes developing nature-based trails, improving access to outdoor recreation, and publishing immersive digital content that supports responsible exploration of Herefordshire’s countryside.
24. National media features, such as coverage in Green Traveller Magazine, National Geographic and the Guardian further highlight the county’s growing reputation for environmentally conscious travel. In addition, Visit Herefordshire proudly runs the Regenerative Tourism category within the Visit Herefordshire Tourism Awards, directly linked to the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence, helping to recognise, celebrate, and elevate businesses leading the way in sustainable and regenerative tourism.

Equality duty

25. As this is a background paper for Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee and not a council decision, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, the following equality considerations should be taken into account when making a decision about this activity:
 - a. Visit Herefordshire has a dedicated Accessibility page on its website
 - b. HCBID lists walks without stiles and publishes maps with walks that can accommodate electric mobility vehicles
 - c. Visit Herefordshire also has information and links to Blue Badge Parking Information, Public and Accessible Toilet Facilities and Shopmobility
 - d. The HCBID Board and Operational Team have drop-in clinics all over the county, including rural areas, to ensure they are accessible to all members
 - e. The HCBID is continually striving to make their services more inclusive and have a statement on their website that reads *‘We want this guide to Herefordshire to welcome all, be accessible and provide clear access information. It is a work in progress, and we welcome feedback and additional information which could be featured here’*

Resource implications

21. Herefordshire council pay an annual levy payment to the BID of £13,795 per annum, as the car parks held by the council are liable for the business rate levy.
22. The HCBID have also successfully applied in previous years for £125,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding administered by the council.
23. There are no further revenue implications for the council.

Legal implications

24. The relevant legal provisions for this decision can be found in the council’s constitution, www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution.

Risk management

As mentioned in paragraph 1. Herefordshire Council does not have a dedicated tourism function and should HCBID not be successful if its next ballot there will be a significant gap in tourism provision in the county.

<u>Risk / opportunity</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>
<p>Risk The HCBID ballot is unsuccessful, resulting in a gap in service delivery, countywide promotion and support for the tourism sector.</p>	<p>Should the HCBID ballot be unsuccessful, there is no alternative option available which would generate the equivalent level of funding required to support the breadth and scope of the projects being delivered by the HCBID to enhance the county's overall tourism offer.</p> <p>The HCBID Board will actively consult with the HCBID businesses to ensure they are committed and supportive of the projects within the proposed Business Plan. By deciding to vote 'Yes' in the next ballot, the council is demonstrating its support for the BID proposals and</p>
<p>Risk BID is formed but fails to deliver the Business Plan</p>	<p>If the HCBID ballot is successful, it will be managed by the HCBID Company (which already exists and is nearing its first term). The council has a director appointment on the Board. The council also has the right to veto under Regulation 12 of the BID regulations.</p>
<p>Opportunity £1bn tourism economy by 2035</p>	<p>The HCBID has the ability to attract income from levy paying businesses, however, through the LVEP, Visit Herefordshire and DMP work, there is the potential to increase the tourism economy in Herefordshire up to £1bn by 2035.</p>

Consultees

Herefordshire County BID have jointly developed the paper for CCSC and will attend the meeting.

Appendices

Herefordshire Destination Management Plan.

Background papers

None

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

HEREFORDSHIRE

Destination Management Plan 2025-2035

On behalf of
Visit Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

Partnership Building. Place Shaping. Growing Sustainably





Executive Summary

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) sets out the roadmap for growing Herefordshire’s visitor economy over the next ten years, from 2025 to 2035.

The Visit Herefordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (comprising Herefordshire County BID, Hereford BID and Herefordshire Council) will sit at the heart of this drive to grow our tourism sector. Positive and productive partnerships will be critical to delivering on the targets, including close collaboration and coordination with public agencies, private businesses, charitable organisations and neighbouring destinations.

It’s a turning point for Herefordshire as a destination. The county’s independent spirit, dynamic tourism sector, agile approach and determination to succeed will be fully harnessed to bring about transformational change to benefit our communities.

THE VISION

To cultivate a vibrant tourism sector in Herefordshire, which:

- Offers distinctive and unforgettable visitor experiences;
- Stays true to the essence of Herefordshire as a place;
- Generates diverse employment opportunities;
- Benefits our local communities and safeguards our environment and heritage;
- Is focused on increasing visitor numbers, particularly overnights, prioritising those who are inclined to spend with our local retailers and service providers.

THE TARGETS

PHASE 1 FOUNDATIONS		<p>YEARS 1 & 2 (2025 & 2026) Building the foundations, delivering quick wins, embedding a new model of partnership-working and piloting collaborative tourism marketing and development projects.</p>
PHASE 2 REALISATION		<p>YEARS 3, 4 & 5 (2027-2029) The visitor economy will start to benefit from the initial delivery of this plan. The opening of the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery will be of particular importance as the spotlight will be shining on the county during this period.</p>
PHASE 3 CAPITALISATION		<p>YEARS 6, 7, 8, 9 (2030-2034) Accelerated economic growth.</p>

Contents

SECTION 1: Working together to drive sustainable growth of our visitor economy

1.1 The Contextual Landscape: County and UK	10
1.2 Methodology	12

SECTION 2: Tourism today in Herefordshire

2.1 Destination Performance - Herefordshire in Numbers	16
2.2 Drilling down - Visitor Numbers (Hereford city & Market Towns).....	18
2.3 Benchmarking - Hereford with Lincoln, Shrewsbury, Chester, Worcester (2024).....	19
2.4 On the horizon	20
2.5 Anniversary dates.....	21
2.6 Positive Partnerships	22
2.7 Spotlight on Accommodation.....	23
2.8 Visit Herefordshire - Website and Engagement.....	25
2.9 The Thought-Leaders’ Viewpoint.....	26
2.10 SWOT Analysis	28

SECTION 3: Vision & Targets

3.1 Destination Herefordshire: The Proposition.....	35
3.2 Exploring the Proposition	36
3.3 Target Markets	39

SECTION 4: Priorities for Action

Key Priorities.....	42
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Delivering the DMP	43
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ACTION PLAN

Please note, aligned to this Destination Management Plan, there is a separate Action Plan, detailing priorities, timings and responsibilities. To request more information on the Action Plan please contact: diane@herefordshirecountybid.co.uk

TARGETS	ECONOMIC IMPACT	VISITOR DAYS	VISITORS - OVERNIGHT STAYS	FTE JOBS*
Current (2023)	£735m	8m	890,000	8,014
PHASE 1: FOUNDATIONS 2025 & 2026	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	Static
PHASE 2: REALISATION 2027 - 2029	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+3% p.a.
PHASE 3: CAPITALISATION 2030 - 2034	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+5% p.a.

Priority 1: Embed partnership working & advocate for the visitor

Agree and embed new models of partnership working to enable the effective delivery of this DMP, including regular review and updating of this document. Fully engage with the shared vision and focus on building a strong profile for both the LVEP and the visitor economy sector. Advocate for the visitor in all related decisions and projects such as town planning and transport infrastructure. Collect the right data to support benchmarking and support decision-making.

Priority 2: Grow the volume of overnight visitors

Overnight visitors make double the contribution to our visitor economy. More accommodation, particularly hotels, is required to facilitate this growth, alongside strong year-round reasons to visit, including new bookable experiences.

Priority 3: Strengthen and extend the renaissance of Hereford

Realise the potential for Hereford to be the jewel in our crown, by partnering with stakeholders to progress place shaping efforts from a tourism perspective and maximise the impact of investments such as the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery and extension of the National Trust's Weir Garden. Promote Hereford as a historic, green, riverside city with a thriving, contemporary experience. Look ahead to future initiatives which would enhance the city's visitor offer.

Priority 4: Reinforce the distinctive destination brand and identity

Make the most of limited resources by achieving recognition for Herefordshire across a small number of uniquely engaging differentiators. Marketing activity will centre on three-night stays, with themed seasonal itineraries and promotional partnerships used to inspire bookings.

Priority 5: Drive forward a regenerative approach to tourism

Make a significant contribution to the county's carbon zero, nature rich goals; extend a warm welcome to all and ensure tourism acts as a force for good in our local communities.

Priority 6: Nurture our people and businesses

Galvanise the enthusiasm and creative thinking of the sector and provide tailored training and support to strengthen our distinctive visitor offer. Facilitate upskilling, networking and sharing of best practice amongst our providers, alongside taking action to ensure the visitor economy has access to employees with the right skills and mindset.

Priority 7: Get the basics right

Focus in the first instance on transport and infrastructure services, ensure Herefordshire is easy to explore by car, public transport and on foot.

Foreword from VisitBritain

As the national tourism board for England, we are pleased to endorse this Destination Management Plan for Herefordshire.

We were delighted to award Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status to Visit Herefordshire in 2024. Since then, the LVEP has worked closely with partners and consulted widely to create this 10 year plan, with a vision to create a thriving and growing tourism sector with a focus on place shaping, good jobs, benefiting communities and the environment.

It is great to see Herefordshire moving forward with this strategic plan in its first year of being an LVEP. A key recommendation of the Government response to the de Bois Review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in England was the creation of the Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) programme.

Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit and strong governance can drive place shaping and shift local and wider perceptions of the place which can contribute to local pride. Well run destinations can also attract new investment, increase income and create new jobs. The LVEPs work closely with us at VisitEngland and are at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape supporting its cohesion and growth in a more inclusive, accessible and sustainable way. The programme is going from strength to strength as the number of LVEPs increases, representing nearly all England.

We look forward to working with the Visit Herefordshire LVEP and their partners to help realise the ambitions set out in this strategy.

Andrew Stokes OBE England Director, VisitBritain



SECTION 1

Working together to drive sustainable growth of our visitor economy



Working together to drive sustainable growth of our visitor economy

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a joined-up vision and plan of action designed to significantly and sustainably grow Herefordshire's visitor economy over the next ten years.

Extensive research, collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders, tourism providers, policy-makers, thought-leaders and visitors has informed the shape and scope of the plan, alongside a review of comparative destinations. Over the next decade, it is robust, energetic and committed partnerships that will be critical to its success.

Our Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) will sit at the heart of this drive to grow our tourism sector. But everyone needs to play their part if we are to succeed. Public agencies, private businesses and charitable organisations alike are invited to partner, coordinate and work together to ensure this shared roadmap achieves our aligned objectives and aspirations.

There is collective ownership of this plan and collective responsibility for its delivery, which will be managed and overseen by the Visit Herefordshire LVEP Advisory Board comprising representatives from Herefordshire County Business Improvement District (BID), Hereford Business Improvement District (BID), Herefordshire Council and VisitEngland. The DMP is predicated on the basis of taking action, working collaboratively, pooling resources and committing to high quality brand promotion which brings in visitors with a propensity to spend. As circumstances change over the next ten years, this plan will be a living document, flexing and refining as required but always driving forward the sustainable growth of our visitor economy.

It is a hugely positive and exciting time for Herefordshire. As an emerging destination there is plenty to do and many opportunities to seize but only small budgets. To date, Visit Herefordshire has done things in its own idiosyncratic way, eschewing rural generics in favour of developing and promoting a destination with unique, authentic appeal. It will be the county's true independent spirit, dynamic tourism sector, agile approach and determination to succeed which will bring about transformational change. Through working together within the county, as well as with neighbouring destinations and partners, Herefordshire can firmly find its place on the visitor map.





LEARNING FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS: LVEP GOVERNANCE

To ensure strong governance foundations for the Greater Lincolnshire LVEP, a LVEP Strategic Steering Group and a DMP Working Group were established. The role of the Strategic Steering Group was initially to secure LVEP accreditation and then to monitor the DMP and works programme. It brings together Councillors with local policy influence with relevant representatives of the private sector.

The role of the DMP Working Group was to create an ambitious vision for the county's visitor economy and to co-develop a new delivery framework that underpins the DMP delivery and LVEP criteria. It is composed of Assistant Directors and Senior Local Authority Managers with budget/resource responsibility from the public sector, and strategic private sector business representatives. Both of these groups are overseen by the Destination Lincolnshire Board of Directors.

1.1 The Contextual Landscape: County and UK

This DMP builds on the foundations laid over the past five years. In 2020, funds from the Marches LEP were made available via Herefordshire Council to stimulate tourism across the county. The sector had been neglected for some considerable time. Starting from scratch, huge headway was made in a short space of time. Informed by fresh insight into the county's visitor assets and target audiences, a new brand identity and marketing plan was created. In parallel, engagement with the sector was prioritised. The result: a series of impactful marketing and PR campaigns which excited media and visitors alike, exceeding all agreed KPIs.

Herefordshire County BID was established to take on the Visit Herefordshire mantle, funded by levy payers and further grant support, principally through the county's Shared Prosperity Fund allocation. At the city level, Hereford BID has been representing the interests of its levy payers since 2015. Their new business plan has tourism as one strand.

Following the de Bois Review of destination management (published September 2021), the Government tasked VisitEngland with creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). They are designed to provide strong local leadership and governance in key tourism destinations, as well as working to shared priorities and targets.

The Visit Herefordshire LVEP was created in April 2024 with the intention of managing and progressing a joined up approach to the county's tourism. The LVEP application was submitted by Herefordshire County BID and Herefordshire Council. Having achieved official recognition by VisitEngland, the LVEP is now committed to transforming the county's visitor economy, working in partnership with town councils, tourism providers and key organisations such as National Landscapes, National Trust and English Heritage. Structures for managing this new partnership-working are currently being established. Each LVEP is responsible for producing a DMP, against which progress can be evaluated.

READY FOR THE FUTURE

It is noted that VisitEngland is piloting Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs) which bring together several LVEPs. If this approach is successful, then Herefordshire already has the required LVEP accreditation to progress discussions in this direction.

Marches Forward Partnership (Herefordshire, Powys, Shropshire and Monmouthshire Councils) has commissioned an evaluation of the potential for tourism across the area with 'March the Marches Tourism Feasibility 2025'. Initial findings are promising and a perfect example of a cross-borders initiative, which might attract financial support and the benefit of joined up promotional collateral.



1.2 Methodology

In-depth consultation with tourism providers, partners and thought-leaders has informed this plan, alongside business and visitor surveys, relevant research and drawing on the past five years' experience of marketing Herefordshire as a destination.

The generation of the plan has been managed by the LVEP Working Group.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

One-to-ones were conducted with a series of thought-leaders in the field from academics and entrepreneurs, through to travel journalists.

GROUP CONSULTATIONS

A combination of online and in-person consultations were used to gather views and aspirations. The programme of activity featured an open-invite 'big picture' online session, plus five themed online consultations. In addition, dedicated discussions were hosted for town councils and tourist information centre teams; the Herefordshire County BID board; and attendees at the County BID's Golden Valley Roadshow.

ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATIONS

Over fifteen consultations were held with key stakeholders including Herefordshire Council (various departments), Hereford City BID, Stronger Hereford (Town's Fund), Hereford Cathedral, Accessible Herefordshire, Dark Skies Herefordshire, Herefordshire Ramblers and Herefordshire Council's rights of way team (PROW), Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, National Trust, National Landscapes, Historic Cities and Heritage Lottery Fund.

LVEP SURVEYS

An online survey was circulated to our tourism providers, using the core questions specified by VisitEngland as well as additional questions of interest. An online survey was also sent to Visit Herefordshire subscribers, using the VisitEngland LVEP questionnaire framework.

DESK RESEARCH REVIEW

Included the following reports:

- VisitEngland's LVEP Growth Plan Herefordshire 2024 -2025 (August 2024), The Influence of Film & TV Locations on Visits to the UK, (July 2024), England Visitor Attractions 2023 report (July 2024), The Value of the Purple Pound summary, Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses, Developing a Wales/England Border Tourism Proposition
- 2023 STEAM Report for Herefordshire
- 2024 Place Informatics reports
- Review of website and social traffic
- Tourism trends from The Sykes Staycation Index 2024, Revfine.com, Skyscanner Travel Trends 2025, The Canopy & Stars Glamping Market Report 2025
- City & County Strategies and plans: Herefordshire Council's 2050 Big Economic Plan; Herefordshire Festival & Events Strategy 2025; Hereford BID 2025 - 30; Visit Herefordshire Review of Marketing Campaigns & Strategic Action Recommendations 2023; The Herefordshire Sustainable DMP 2018 - 2022; Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy; preview of Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2025
- Review of Herefordshire's status in travel guides and in media coverage
- Review of literature available at TICs
- Review of comparative destinations LVEP structures and DMPs
- Review of Marches Forward Partnerships 'March the Marches' Tourism Feasibility Study 2025

N.B. In relation to county-wide strategies, the DMP captures some of the outcomes in relation to the visitor economy, but it will be the role of the LVEP to fully consider and support these strategies in detail.



“

There are pockets of ancient countryside which are very attractive.

”

Visitor Survey 2025

SECTION 2

Tourism Today in Herefordshire

Herefordshire is located on the border between England and Wales, within easy reach by both motorway (M50 & M5) and train. It has proximity to large centres of population such as Cardiff, Bristol, the West Midlands, and the North West, all within 2 hours. Indeed Ledbury to the east of the county is just two and a half hours from London.

It's a rural county with the city of Hereford in the centre, surrounded by five historic market towns. The visitor offer is very much about 'the sum of many parts', whilst the rural nature of the county creates a real sense of feeling a world away.



5 Independent Market Towns

Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Kington, Ross-on-Wye



8 Long Distance Walking Trails

3,400km of footpaths and bridleways



2 Natural Landscapes & a Neolithic Tomb

Wye Valley and Malvern Hills, plus Arthur's Stone which is a millennium older than Stonehenge



Contemporary Food & Drink Scene



Black & White Villages

Cycling & driving trail



Rural Tourism

From farm stays to visits to cider and wine producers



11 National Trust Places, 83 Castles and Motte & Baileys



Signature Festivals

Including Ledbury Poetry Festival, Three Choirs, Hay Festival and Lakefest



Hereford Cathedral

Home to iconic Mappa Mundi and Chained Library, plus one of four surviving 1217 copies of The Magna Carta (periodically on display)



Historic City

Home to the world's only Museum of Cider.



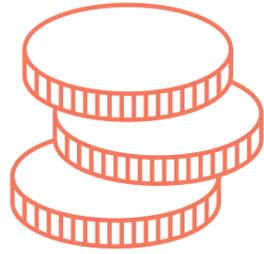
The population of the county is set to increase (particularly in Hereford, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye) as significant housing development projects reach completion. The Herefordshire Joint Needs Assessment (HJSNA) 2024 summary, published January 2025, is guarded in estimating the likely growth in population for the county. 'Unofficial' projections predict a 3% growth over the next decade to reach 193,600 by 2031 (lower than the 6% national average). However, this could be greater given the housing target of 27,260 new dwellings between 2021 and 2041. The proportion of 'Aged 65+' is set to grow from 26% in 2021 to 33% in 2041 with a parallel reduction in those 'under 16'. The significant increase in population could support growth of the visitor economy, however an older age demographic may place pressure on labour supply.

However the growth in population will positively impact the local economy and itself be a driver of further visitor numbers. Likewise, it extends the potential to embed a sense of local pride.

2.1 Destination Performance - Herefordshire in Numbers

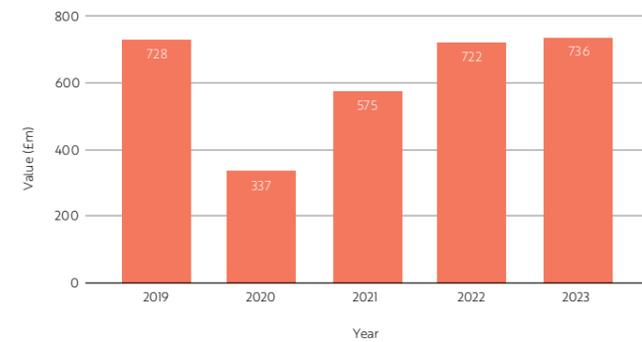
VALUE OF TOURISM TO
HEREFORDSHIRE IN 2023

£736
MILLION

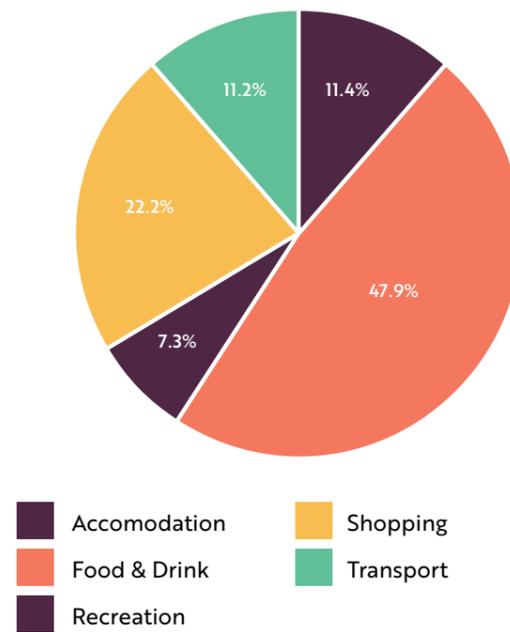


Taking account of inflation, almost exactly 2019
pre Covid level

Value of Visits (£m - indexed to 2023)



DISTRIBUTION OF
ECONOMIC IMPACT 2023



8
MILLION

visitor days from
5.9 MILLION
visitors

5 MILLION DAY VISITORS

Of the overnight visitors (900k) ...

598,000

stayed in paid accommodation
(average stay duration 3.43 days)

291,000

stayed with family and friends



68%

of visitors are day visitors

32%

are staying visitors

Value Per Visit - 2023

Day visitor average spend

£47

is much lower than staying
visitors average of

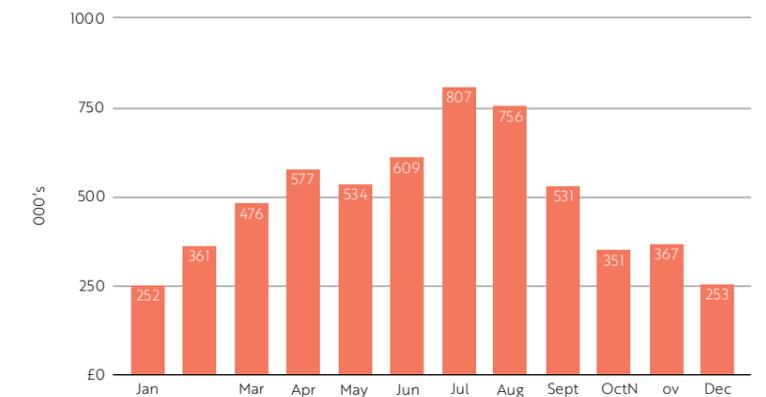
£266

Staying visitors average stay is

3.43
DAYS

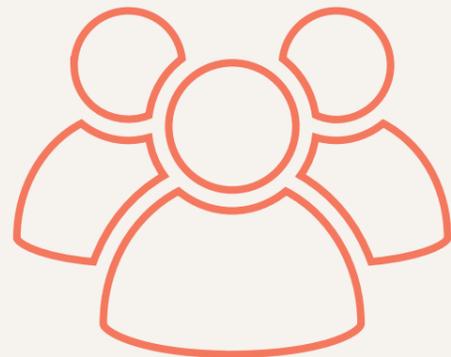
(a little above UK average
of 3.1 days)

Visitors by Month - 2023



TOURISM JOBS (FTE)

8,014

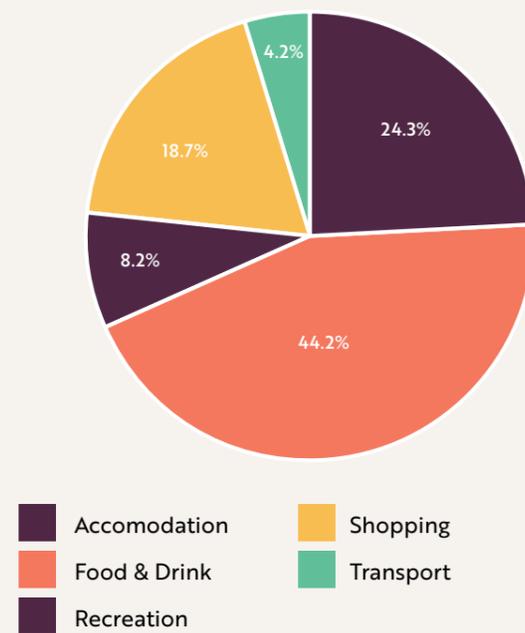


(2019 equivalent was 7,587)

That's 16% of all FTE jobs

(Source: Nomis)

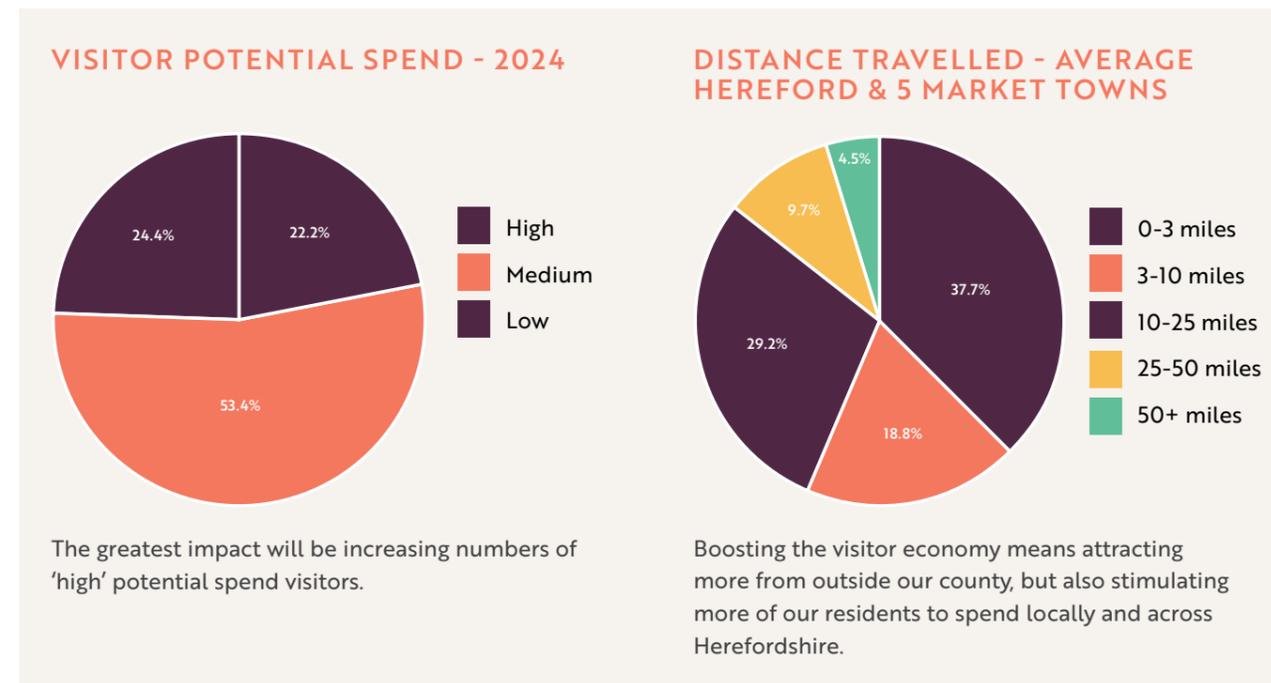
DISTRIBUTION OF
EMPLOYMENT - 2023



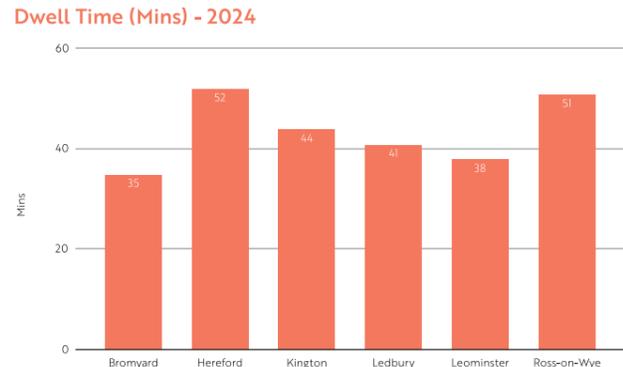
The visitor economy impacts a substantial
number of sectors, businesses and lives.

2.2 Drilling Down - Visitor Numbers (Hereford City & Market Towns)

This data is from Place Informatics. It allows us to assess visitor numbers and origins for Hereford and each of our market towns. 'Visitors' include those living in or close to our county borders as well as 'tourists'.



We skew towards an older demographic.



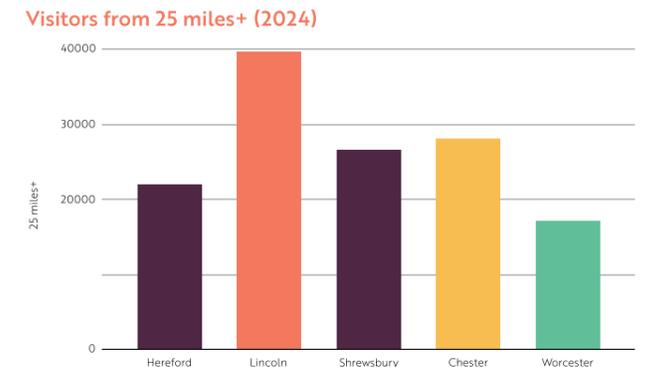
Ross-on-Wye's dwell time is impressive. What lessons can we share across our county?

2.3 Benchmarking - Hereford with Lincoln, Shrewsbury, Chester, Worcester (2024)

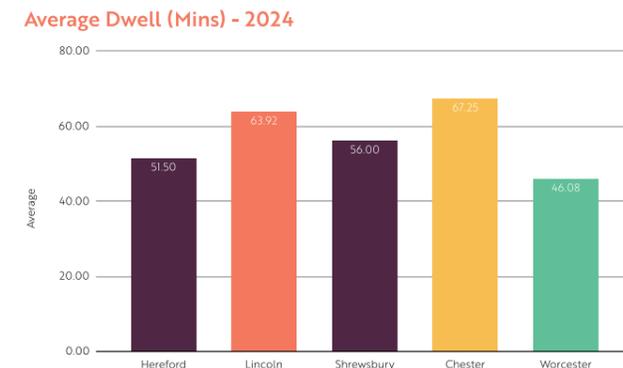
Source: Place Informatics, 2024



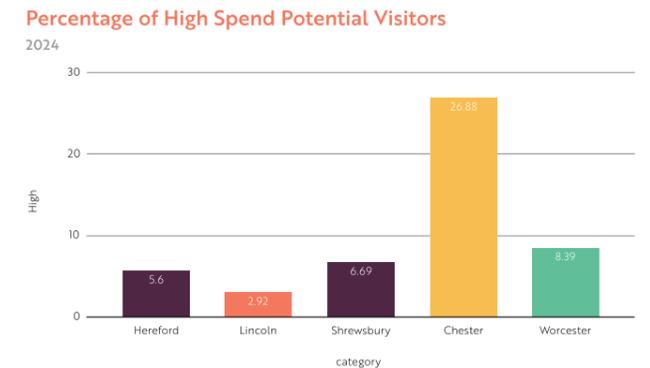
Assessing numbers against similar offers (but recognising Hereford's population is lower).



Credible incoming visitor numbers but perhaps learning opportunities from Lincoln?



Credible dwell time, but scope to extend to compare favourably.



A key measure. We need to enhance our proposition to attract more high spend potential visitors.

VISITOR ORIGINS (BY REGION)

The table below shows the percentage of visitors from UK regions. Interesting to see how relatively important the South West is to Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye, while for Leominster and Ledbury the West Midlands is more dominant than it is for others. Numbers beyond the regions shown (e.g. London, the North West, South East etc.) are negligible.

% Visitors by Region (2024)



Visitor origins vary for each of our main towns. This may impact on our promotional targeting.

2.4 On the Horizon

PROJECTS & INVESTMENTS

Hereford is benefiting from significant investment, with a series of projects underway which will strengthen its offer, particularly its credentials as a green city. These new projects will help make Hereford an increasingly attractive proposition for visitors.

- 1 Transformed Castle Green Pavilion to open, featuring striking riverside cafe and enhancing use of this area for events - 2025.
- 2 Launch of annual Military History Festival, on Castle Green, driven by a Board including Hay Festival experts - September 2025
- 3 Work to be completed on new Hereford Transport Hub - 2026
- 4 Creation of a wetland nature reserve (close to Hereford Transport Hub) as well as other blue/green corridors with enhanced visitor access - 2026
- 5 Huge expansion of National Trust Weir Garden from 3.5 acre garden to a 65-hectare valley which is wildlife-rich and extends public access, including walking path connection with the city centre and increasing visitors by 50%+ in year 1 - 2026.
- 6 Hereford Shirehall with new library, exhibition space and community hub to open - autumn 2026
- 7 Opening of new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery to include permanent display of The Herefordshire Hoard and contemporary interpretation of the county's unique story, within a passiv-haus building - 2028
- 8 Restoration of Bartonsham Meadow as a flagship urban nature reserve linked to the city centre - ongoing
- 9 The development of over 400 new inner city homes on Merton Meadows in Hereford, bringing a range of residential opportunities to the heart of Hereford. Alongside the housing development, Herefordshire Council is exploring the potential for more hotel accommodation in the city and wider county. - completion tba

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the county, more modest investments are being made in pubs with rooms situated in or near market towns, including, Hop Pole and Royal Oak in Bromyard, The Riverside in Ross-on-Wye and The Feathers in Ledbury. Meanwhile, Ledbury has also secured funding of c£259k for a John Masefield project. Finally, a new art gallery is proposed at Hellens Manor, near Ledbury, to display a special collection of paintings, with a multi-purpose building intended for events, outreach and environmental programmes.

There is no doubt the bulk of foreseeable investment will be in Hereford. However, the commitment of the DMP is to leverage the improved city offer to signpost to the broader attractions of market towns, rural scenery and activities and high-quality accommodation and food & drink providers.



2.5 Anniversary dates

There are a number of key dates over the next ten years which can be leveraged as a rallying call for both destination marketing and development activities.

- 2025
 - 50th anniversary of the Wye Valley Walk
 - 900th anniversary of Leominster Priory (celebration of Romanesque Sculpture)
- 2026
 - 1350th anniversary of the diocese of Hereford (predates the foundation of England) in 676 AD (early medieval period)
 - 30th anniversary of Ledbury Poetry
- 2028
 - 300th Three Choirs Festival (will be hosted by Hereford)
 - 150th anniversary of the birth of poet John Masefield
- 2029
 - 25th anniversary of the Herefordshire Trail
- 2030
 - 700th anniversary of murder of 1st Earl of March, Roger Mortimer
 - 260th anniversary of William Gilpin taking the Wye Tour
- 2031
 - 60th anniversary of Offa's Dyke Path
- 2034
 - Centenary of Elgar's death
- 2035
 - Centenary of Alfred Watkins' death (Member of the Woolhope club, pioneer of ley lines and modern photography)

2.6 Positive Partnerships

A wide range of organisations are either actively involved in (or directly impacting) the tourism sector. There is great scope to forge partnerships with groups to explore new opportunities. This is a mindset our LVEP will foster.

On a sector-by-sector basis, they include:

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Herefordshire Cultural Partnership, National Trust, English Heritage, Hereford Cathedral, Hereford College of Arts, h.Art, Wye Valley Makers, Churches Tourism Group, Town Councils

NATURE & AGRICULTURE

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, National Landscapes, Woodland Trust, CPRE Herefordshire, Dark Skies Herefordshire, Farm Herefordshire, The Rural Hub

FOOD & DRINK

Herefordshire Food Alliance, Ledbury Food Group, Town Councils

TRANSPORT

Great Western Railway, Transport for Wales, West Midlands Railway, bus companies, Daffodil Line, Herefordshire Council, Town Councils

WALKING

Public Rights of Way at Herefordshire Council, contractors (e.g. Balfour Beatty). Herefordshire Ramblers Association, Walkers are Welcome, Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, Mortimer Trailblazers

Cross-border activity will be particularly relevant in the future, with the opportunity to pool resources with neighbouring LVEPs and destination organisations with shared objectives, such as Marches Forward Partnership, Visit Worcestershire, Visit Shropshire, Cotswolds Plus, Monmouthshire, County Council, Powys County Council and Visit Wales.



2.7 Spotlight on Accommodation

STEAM REPORT 2019-2023 - FINAL HEREFORDSHIRE

Serviced Accommodation 2023	2023		Non-serviced Accommodation 2023	2023	
	Est.	Beds		Est.	Beds
Serviced Accommodation Total	267	4,469	Non-serviced Accommodation Total	295	11,492
+50 Rooms	6	1,013	Self-Catering	231	2,420
11-50 Rooms	43	1,709	Static Caravans/Camping	14	316
<10 Rooms	218	1,747	Touring Caravans/Camping	50	5,604

The 2023 STEAM data above highlights the greater proportion of non-serviced accommodation in the county reflecting the plethora of choice available, from barn conversions and treehouses to camping and caravan sites, as well as Airbnb properties. Herefordshire is a recognised hotspot for glamping and must continue to support farm diversification as well as explore the potential for a larger-scale glamping project. In parallel, small scale expansion of accommodation by pubs and restaurants should be actively encouraged.

Research suggests the most immediate challenge, and perhaps greater opportunity lies with hotel provision. The STEAM data tells only part of the story. There has been consistent feedback and evidence that hotel provision in the county is unable to meet demand, particularly at peak periods. This matter was raised during the consultations, in discussions with thought-leaders and in the 'March the Marches' consultancy report (2025). In Hereford, provision centres around independent hotels, namely Castle House and Green Dragon as well as chains including Premier Inn, Travelodge and, just outside the city, Warner Hotels. In all the market towns, except for Leominster, there are small hotels, for example The Feathers in Ledbury and The Royal in Ross-on-Wye. The opportunity for more diverse offerings to cater for the tastes and pockets of potential visitors, particularly at peak periods, needs to be better understood. Herefordshire Council is currently in the process of commissioning a hotel demand study to assess the gaps in provision and potential case for investment.

In the meantime, the dearth of hotel provision is impacting Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster particularly, the latter most of all as it has no operational hotel.

Town	Hotels	SUM of Rooms	Population	Visitor numbers (Place Informatics)
Bromyard	1	10	4,700	89,627
Golden Valley	1	10		
Hay-on-Wye	2	31	2,000	
Hereford	12	574	61,900	938,735
Kington	2	28	3,200	95,869
Ledbury	3	37	9,600	298,696
Leominster	0	0	11,900	304,122
Malvern	1	24		
Much Birch	1	21		
Ross-on-Wye	4	125	11,000	394,200
Symonds Yat, Whitchurch	3	70		
Grand Total	30	930		

A CLOSER LOOK: STAYING IN LEOMINSTER

The 2024 'Threads Through Creation' event at the Priory in Leominster attracted 19,000 visitors over a 6 week period with a noticeable uplift in spend in cafes in the town. The absence of hotels is likely to have at the least impaired the visitor experience and at worst reduced visitor numbers and spend. Similarly it must restrict the numbers staying in North Herefordshire to enjoy the Black and White Villages Trail, National Trust properties, popular gardens and cider-making attractions. Leominster has a greater population than Ledbury and almost equal visitor numbers which points to a likely commercial opportunity to plug the gap.

In Hereford, it has been encouraging to see the renaissance of the Green Dragon Hotel which has full occupancy in the main months. However, anecdotal evidence points to periods of the year where visitors have struggled to find vacancies in the city, resulting in escalating prices and potential frustration. There are plans for at least one new hotel in Hereford in the next 3 to 5 years and this will have a positive impact on visitor numbers. Ledbury has similar capacity issues but we understand that the Feathers Hotel is planning to expand its provision which again will be beneficial.

Feedback suggests that most hotels in the area are satisfied with occupancy levels both mid week (business) and weekends/school holidays with visiting families, walkers, golfers etc. There is however a marked difference in Symonds Yat which is reliant on visitors here to enjoy the scenery and the River Wye - they are more impacted by wet weather cancellations. They are susceptible to adverse weather forecasts, which is causing some concern for ongoing viability. Symonds Yat is a significant tourism area and likewise Golden Valley.

GROWTH OF GLAMPING: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HEREFORDSHIRE

The appetite for glamping continues to grow and evolve in response to current trends for 'one of a kind' stays, sustainable travel and wellness. Herefordshire's array of options ranges from 5-star treehouses to unique off-grid retreats with wood-fired saunas. There is real potential to expand the county's accommodation offer by creating more glamping sites which generate year-round income and make a valuable contribution to the wider visitor economy.

"Herefordshire really punches above its weight when it comes to glamping and, when you look at the properties in our portfolio, the county's creativity is virtually unparalleled."
Edward Busby, Crown & Canopy co-founder & partner and Canopy & Stars consultant



2.8 Visit Herefordshire - Website and Engagement

WEBSITE

Traffic (users) - 2024

355,648

- Bounce (including paid) 38.38% (41.15% mobile)
- 2.29 pages per session
- 2mins 48secs avg. session duration
- 8,717 PDF downloads
- 15.6M impressions in Google

SOCIAL

Traffic (users) - 2024



Views 447,207
Reach 961,800
Reach increased 332% (on 2023)
Link clicks Increased by 677% (on 2023)



Views 484,900
Reach 116,900
Content interactions & reach both increased by 100% (on 2023)

PROMOTIONAL SPEND

The Covid recovery grant was used to research and create new branding, website and promotional campaigns, including paid ads. Post funding budgets have been reduced and this has had some bearing on previous substantial website growth. Despite this organic traffic is up, reflecting depth of interesting content and SEO.



“
Lots of things to do,
great countryside
”

Visitor Survey 2025

2.9 The Thought-Leaders' Viewpoint

As part of the development of the DMP, interviews were conducted with a number of industry thought-leaders. They included academics, travel journalists, consultants in the hospitality sector, VisitEngland and other DMO personnel. There was a good degree of consistency in their remarks indicating that the industry as a whole is experiencing the same challenges across the country.

At the macro economic level:

- England as a tourism destination is experiencing negative pressure.
- Brexit has created issues around access and trade as well as affecting perceptions of the UK as more unwelcoming and somewhat gloomy.
- The expense and inconvenience of a separate visa regime is discouraging foreign tourists.
- The ongoing cost of living crisis, as well as the increase in both the national minimum wage and National Insurance contributions is having, and will likely continue to have, a negative impact on the sector in the short term.
- Skills shortages and perceptions of the industry as low paid and low skilled.
- Central government's inability to coordinate and fund the sector adequately, compared with European rivals.
- Concern that after the post Covid staycation boom, tourists are now more inclined to consider destinations abroad that offer guaranteed warm weather and relatively lower prices.

At the local level:

- Herefordshire is a large rural destination with a small ageing population, 30% of whom live in Hereford.
- It suffers from generic negative perceptions of English rural destinations, including: not enough to do, sameness, limited wet weather offer, poor night time economy, few large hotels and few ready-made packages, river pollution, final mile issues and lack of public transport solutions.

More specifically experts were keen to stress how important it is for emerging destinations like Herefordshire to "get the basics right" from the start, such as:

- A strong emphasis on keeping the public realm clean and tidy (right down to collaborations around individual streets).
- Matching activity and operating hours to actual footfall.
- Having a series of strong incentives for independent businesses to drive distinctiveness especially in retail and food and drink.
- Engaging constantly with transport providers to offer promotions that entice visitors to explore.
- Working together with neighbours on all sides, for example, joint itineraries that have broad appeal and benefit all partners.
- The role of the Council in supporting and facilitating growth through planning, sector support and coordination and providing data to potential investors to give them confidence in the destination.

Our respondents did however see a number of areas where Herefordshire could develop a unique and compelling offer:

- **Active Travellers:** Plenty of opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, wild swimming etc provided that the relevant infrastructure, such as EV charging points can be developed.
- **Medieval History:** The borderland location and the sheer number of castles and mottes and baileys make for a rich "Game of Thrones" type experience.
- **Agritourism:** With an established reputation for cider, beef, asparagus and potatoes, there is always food to celebrate and eat, as well as farm-based accommodation and a growing range of experiences.
- **Wellness and Wellbeing Trends:** The county has a number of excellent retreats with its uncrowded and unspoilt nature reinforcing its strong credentials in this area. Moreover, the relatively low population and lack of light pollution lends itself to dark skies experiences.
- **Religious Tourism:** A strong global trend and Herefordshire has a significant number of exceptional churches, some of which offer overnight accommodation.

More generally, there was recognition for the itineraries and destination stories already created, such as The Watkins Way and Cider Circuits. There is potential to develop other specialisms in growing areas such as single-sex tourism, screen tourism and experiential products. Examples of these experiences include stay on a cider farm, meet the cider maker, make the cider, taste the cider and then take it home. Finally, to be successful, the experts' advice is to focus on areas that will differentiate Herefordshire from other rural destinations and do a few things really well.



2.10 SWOT Analysis

Herefordshire has much to be proud of; travel writers, influencers, and most importantly, visitors, love what they find here. Our dynamic tourism sector consists of many interesting independent businesses. Yet, if Herefordshire is to further develop its visitor economy, there are a number of factors which will impact on potential growth as detailed below.

STRENGTHS

- Diverse sector with interesting, independent businesses
- Travel writers, influencers and visitors love our offer
- Central location, well-connected by rail and motorway
- Established festivals (e.g. Ledbury Poetry and Three Choirs)
- Reputation of Hereford Cathedral and Mappa Mundi
- Strong food & drink offer, including locally-made cider & wine and internationally reputed Hereford beef
- Border history, with many castles and churches
- Characterful market towns
- Bucolic countryside, remote and unspoilt feel, plus access to wildlife
- Long-distance walking trails including Wye Valley Walk, Mortimer Trail, Offa's Dyke Path, Herefordshire Trail
- Stalwart in the glamping sector

WEAKNESSES

- Emerging destination with relatively low domestic and international awareness
- Confusion with Hertfordshire
- Overreliance on day visits which generate less income
- Spread/volume of accommodation means certain key areas are weak
- Underdeveloped visitor offer in Hereford, alongside lack of profile and place-making as an historic city
- Poor transport connections between towns; cars tend to be a necessity due to rural location
- Lack of clarity regarding individual roles of tourism organisations which confuses providers
- High density of footpaths means condition can be poor
- Seasonality - many attractions close in autumn/winter
- Limited opportunities for wet-weather activities
- Sparse & ageing population across relatively large geography
- Travel guides do not recognise contemporary visitor offer
- Lack of taxi provision

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong sustainable story e.g. Council's net-zero targets, work to recover the Wye, regenerative farming
- Renaissance of Hereford thanks to Town's Fund investment, public realm improvements, more accessible green space
- LVEP status will enhance collaborative opportunities, such as the border proposition
- There is potential for both the devolution agenda and Destination Development Partnerships to further reinforce this partnership approach across a wider geography
- Increased on-screen profile with release of Hamnett in 2025
- Investment in historic hotels/pubs e.g. The Hop Pole (Bromyard)
- Growing interest in experiential tourism and dark skies tourism
- Joined up focus on festivals via Council strategy, plus new Military History Festival and Herefordshire Histories Festival
- Important 'anniversary' dates which can be leveraged in our marketing
- Growth in accessible walking routes and accommodation
- Digital approaches to tourism - getting ahead of the game
- Agritourism and farm diversification
- The county's links to the SAS reinforce our outdoor pursuits positioning

THREATS

- Negative perceptions regarding river pollution
- Blurring into oblivion as just another rural county if proposition is not truly distinctive
- Loss of festivals e.g. Nozstock, River Carnival, with others at risk, particularly those reliant on volunteers e.g. 'fallow' year for Beer on the Wye and Indie Food Festival
- Impact of climate change: Increased flooding and wet weather
- Potential change in legislation which would require self-catering properties to have Energy Performance Certificate, potentially at a minimum C rating. Will particularly affect older properties
- Increase in employers' National Insurance contributions and Minimum Wage levels will come into force April 2025, alongside a reduction in business rate relief extended to hospitality businesses
- Failure to embed productive partnership working model
- Competition from other destinations with bigger budgets/ resourcing
- New Cotswolds Outlet may divert a proportion of Herefordshire's potential visitors accessing via M5/M50
- Condition of public highways

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Based on the SWOT analysis, this table summarises the principal challenges and recommended responses.

Challenges & considerations	Response
Relatively low domestic and international awareness, coupled with decreasing budgets. Lack of impact has resulted in other destinations growing at our expense.	Need a strong, distinctive proposition focused on being very well known for a small number of things. Coordinated investment in marketing & PR is a must to keep Herefordshire front of mind.
Over reliant on day visits which generate significantly less income than overnights, coupled with a lack of accommodation.	Ensure marketing is targeted at the most valuable audiences with propensity to spend. Develop more experiences/itineraries with a view to occupying visitors for longer and find ways to increase quality bedstock.
Seasonality results in closure of many attractions over late autumn and winter, which impacts accommodation providers.	Opportunity to create out of season events and experiences which draw in our target markets throughout the year e.g. Wassailing.
Hereford sits at the heart of the county but its visitor offer has been left behind compared to similar cities.	Focused, collaborative place shaping and attracting investment to drive improvements and enable the city to reach its potential.
Many rural counties in the UK, potential to blur into oblivion.	The need for a distinctive proposition.
High density of footpaths, but variable state of repair, even on key routes.	Lobby for recognition of Public Rights Of Way team and for resources. Focus promotion and repair work on prioritised routes to ensure a positive experience.
As a very rural county with limited public transport (particularly poor connections between towns) cars are often a necessity.	Opportunity to attract EV drivers, provided charging infrastructure is in place.
The impacts of climate change are being felt through increased flooding and wet weather.	Look at wet-weather activities and also support regenerative tourism.
Fourth least populated county, also ageing population which impacts on recruitment and skills development	Work with partners to help young people explore tourism careers.

LEARNING FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS: PLACE SHAPING

The strategic vision and regeneration priorities for Chester are set out in the One City Plan. Built upon existing networks and established groups, five working groups - each chaired by a lead partner - are responsible for delivering the plan. For example, the 'Making Chester' group is central to the plan's success due to its remit which spans place-making, city centre reimagining and green spaces through to inward investment, skills and enterprise.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE: HEREFORD CITY

The challenges facing the city are not new. In 2017, Historic England published the Urban Panel Review Paper: Hereford which acknowledged *'what a fascinating historic city Hereford is and of the sheer quality of the buildings and townscape of its historic core'* whilst highlighting *'just how fractured much of the townscape around the City Walls had become, the large numbers of vacant or underused buildings... the continuing problems that traffic still causes... many elements of the Masterplan for the Edgar Street Grid area remain unrealised and the sense of arrival at the Station is just as poor as it ever was.'*

SECTION 3

Vision & Targets



Vision & Targets

THE VISION is to cultivate a vibrant tourism sector in Herefordshire that offers distinctive and unforgettable visitor experiences. We aim to stay true to the essence of Herefordshire as a place, generating diverse employment opportunities, benefiting our local communities, and safeguarding our environment and heritage. Our goal is to increase visitor numbers, particularly those who are inclined to spend with our local retailers and service providers. A crucial aspect of this vision is to boost the number of visitors who stay for more than one day. This Destination Management Plan (DMP) outlines the roadmap to achieving this success.

TARGETS

There are stepping stones to achieving the 10 year vision. Realistically we need to plan around a phased approach as follows;

PHASE 1 FOUNDATIONS



YEARS 1 & 2 (2025 & 2026)

Building the foundations, delivering quick wins, embedding a new model of partnership-working and piloting collaborative tourism marketing and development projects.

PHASE 2 REALISATION



YEARS 3, 4 & 5 (2027-2029)

The visitor economy will start to benefit from the initial delivery of the DMP. The opening of the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery will be of particular importance as the spotlight will be shining on the county during this period.

PHASE 3 CAPITALISATION



YEARS 6, 7, 8, 9 (2030-2034)

Accelerated economic growth.

“

Go to one of the last unspoiled corners of England and experience le terroir d'Angleterre.

”

Visitor Survey 2025

The targets we set will therefore be reflective of each phase. They also assume significant effort will be made to increase marketing budgets to allow investment in placing our messaging in front of target audiences who otherwise may stray to the many alternative LVEP regions with similarly enticing propositions.

TARGETS	ECONOMIC IMPACT	VISITOR DAYS	VISITORS - OVERNIGHT STAYS	FTE JOBS*
Current (2023)	£735m	8m	890,000	8,014
Phase - FOUNDATIONS	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	+3% p.a.	Static
Phase - REALISATION	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+5% p.a.	+3% p.a.
Phase - CAPITALISATION	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+8% p.a.	+5% p.a.

As context, more established destinations are targeting 5/6% p.a. growth

* FTE jobs - Static growth in Foundations phase recognises current economic pressures and the potential impact of N.I. increases and reduction in business rates relief

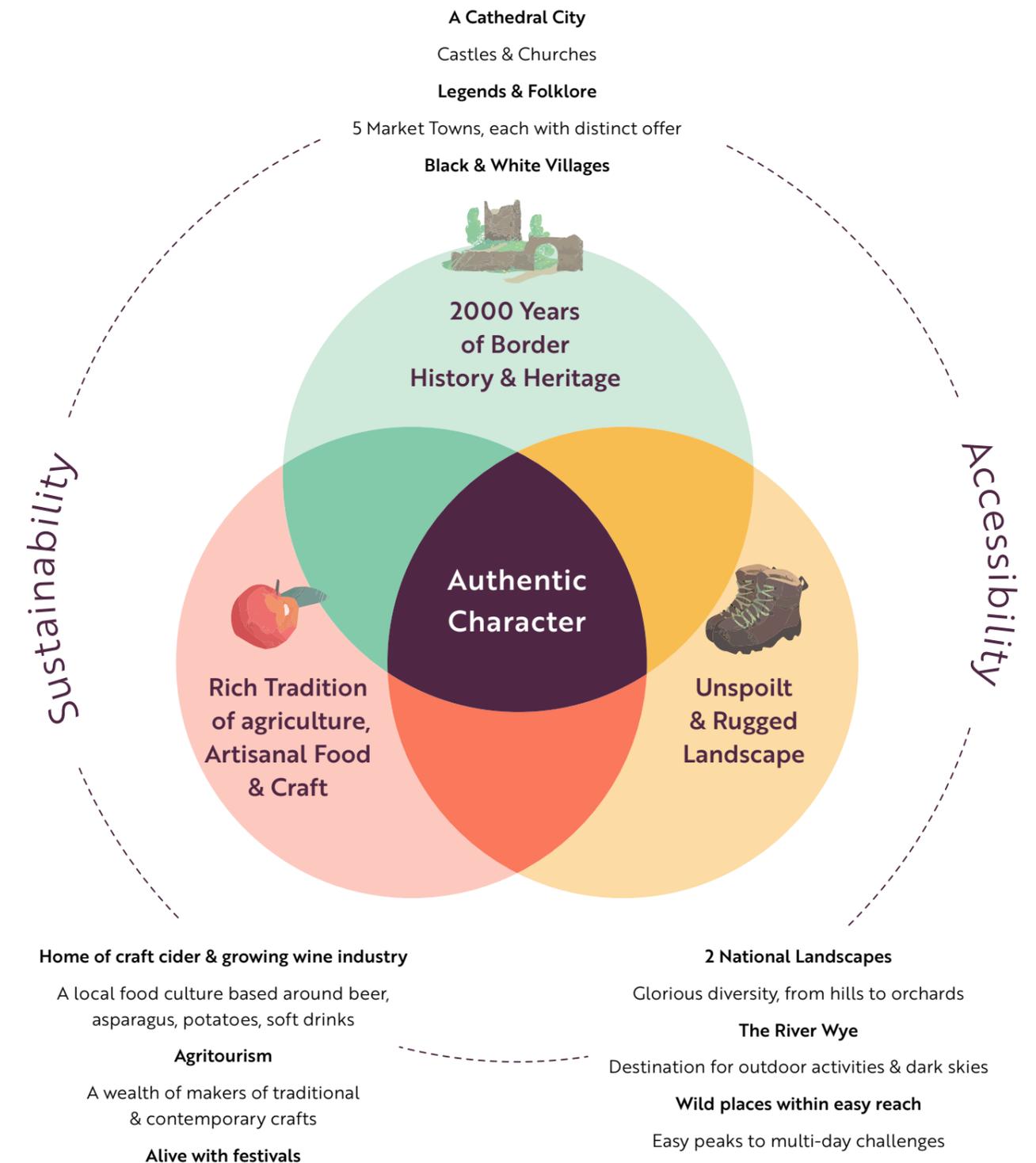
The principal measure for these uplifts will be STEAM, using the 2023 figures as our baseline. This data will be supported by business and visitor surveys conducted on a minimum annual basis, as well as regular reports from Place Informatics.

LVEP PARTNERSHIP GOAL

In addition, the LVEP's goal is to ensure a coherent, partnership-led approach to delivering the county's tourism development and marketing, with a focus on driving innovation and best practice.

3.1 Destination Herefordshire: The Proposition

To achieve our vision and targets, the need for a strong proposition is a given. Herefordshire has a real sense of place and a distinctive history, landscape and tradition of food and drink. The refined visitor proposition for 2025 onwards distills everything that makes Herefordshire special into three brand pillars. The county's authentic character sits at the very heart, with year-round cultural events, sustainability and accessibility threaded throughout.



3.2 Exploring the Proposition

Visit Herefordshire's three brand pillars are:

2000 YEARS OF BORDER HISTORY AND HERITAGE

- Unique borderland history, a place where power has been played and fierce battles fought, especially by the medieval Marcher Lords;
- Monuments to this past pepper the landscape, from castle ruins and tiny churches - many with Romanesque Sculpture - through to our iconic Cathedral and famed 'Black and White' half-timber architecture;
- Historic riverside city and five characterful market towns, packed with heritage buildings and atmosphere, as well as contemporary, independent places to eat and shop.

MISSION: For Herefordshire to become synonymous with the medieval era

Growth Opportunities:

- Drive city place shaping with a view to enhancing the display and interpretation of Hereford's heritage assets (e.g. light up city walls, permanent exhibition of Magna Carta);
- Progress the potential for a medieval event as proposed by Hereford BID and work with cultural partners to help bring the border story to life;
- Devise and develop Marcher Lords Castle Walk;
- Build on successes of Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, both on the route and in other areas, on foot and by bike;
- Consider further development of flagship driving route, The Watkins Way.

RICH TRADITION OF AGRICULTURE, ARTISANAL FOOD & CRAFT

- One of the world's largest cider apple growing and cider producing destinations. Home to a wealth of artisanal producers, as well as the household names of Westons Cider and Bulmers. Plus the only Museum of Cider;
- Hereford beef has an international reputation and modern-day 'exports' such as The Beefy Boys;
- Well-known for our asparagus, potatoes, soft fruit, as well as a growing wine and spirits sector;
- Many fantastic food producers and places to eat plus growth of agritourism experiences;
- Rich seam of makers and craftspeople, with opportunities to buy their work at markets, special events and open studios, or alternatively get hands-on with a learning experience.

MISSION: For 'the Home of Cider' be recognised as a top ten food & drink destination in the UK

Growth Opportunities:

- Guided experiences to taste ciders and meet the makers as well as new agritourism experiences;
- City centre cider-tasting experience;
- Celebrate our food & drink through a dedicated event or trail, which could also explore links with regenerative farming;
- Reinforce our artisan blacksmithing heritage by looking at potential for Hereford BID's Ferrous Festival to be taken forward in a new way.

UNSPOILT AND RUGGED LANDSCAPE

- Framed by peaks in every direction, with the Black Mountains in the west, Malvern Hills in the east, Hergest Ridge in the north and Symonds Yat in the south, complete with jaw-dropping views;
- Two National Landscapes and a gloriously diverse county with rolling fields, ancient woodland, orchards, hop yards, hills and valleys;
- Wye Valley is the birthplace of tourism in England, with Ross-on-Wye, Symonds Yat, Hereford and Hay-on-Wye acting as centres for canoeing and Stand Up Paddleboarding;
- Plenty to offer walkers: eight long-distance walking trails, including Wye Valley Walk, Offa's Dyke National Trail, Herefordshire Trail, Mortimer Trail and Three Choirs Way, plus countless short circular routes;
- Cycle routes such as Cider Circuits proved popular and cycling is a growth sector;
- Sense of being remote, surrounded by peace and quiet, is attracting wellness/retreats market;
- Access to diverse wildlife, from peregrine falcons to wild ponies;
- Herefordshire is recognised as a county with low light pollution and benefits from dark skies.

MISSION: For Herefordshire to excite outdoor adventurers as a new, undiscovered playground

Growth Opportunities:

- Promote activities across the scale, from easy peaks to extreme challenges;
- Enhance supporting infrastructure and services such as baggage transfer, luggage lockers alongside increasing the number of walk leaders;
- Raise awareness of dark skies potential and supporting providers.

GROWTH POTENTIAL OF AGRITOURISM

As a rural county, agriculture contributes a significant proportion of our GDP. It can also play an important role in developing further agritourism opportunities. Many farmers have already heavily invested in diversification initiatives whether accommodation related (e.g. catering cottages, camping or glamping) or product/service initiatives such as retail (Oakchurch and The Hop Pocket) or products as wide ranging as breweries, pubs, cider, liqueurs, apple juice, ice cream and vending machines. There is market potential to grow this service provision, not least as educated travellers look for avenues to make leisure stays more sustainable, and with a 'doing' angle to engage more directly in the countryside. 'Agritourism' is more than just staying on a farm, it encompasses all the learning, leisure or even working experiences visitors may enjoy, such as wine/vineyard tours, quad biking, horse riding, fruit picking and opportunities to do voluntary work. We need to partner with the agricultural community to explore this broader potential and facilitate new service provision and growing visitor spend.

UNDERPINNED BY:

Our Authentic Character

- The county's size and sparse population, along with its location on the border, surrounded by hills, creates a sense of truly getting away from it all;
- Herefordshire offers the 'real' rural experience rather than a curated one, it's a more earthy place, just like our rich red soil;
- Our people are genuinely friendly and true to our roots. Our tourism landscape is dominated by independent businesses which are really focused on giving visitors a wonderful experience in Herefordshire.

Year-Round Cultural Events & Festivals

- Across the year there are cultural events which appeal to a wide range of audiences and a series of established 'signature' events which help put Herefordshire on the map, these include Ledbury Poetry Festival, Bromyard Folk Festival, CMYK Festival of Print and Illustration, Ross Beer and Cider Festival, Lakefest, Malverns Classic Mountain Bike Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Hay Festival and events at the Three Counties Showground;
- However it must also be noted that there are challenges in the sector, such as a reliance on the goodwill of volunteers and also rising costs. As a result, in 2025 a number of regular festivals are having a fallow year or simply not returning;
- Cultural events are critical to addressing issues of seasonality as they create new reasons to visit at quieter points in the year. Cultural partners have expressed an appetite to develop the cultural tourism offer, which could include destination-wide thematic programming linked to the overarching brand proposition. For example, a creative interpretation of harvest time in September and October which could link with previous events such as Craft Cider Week and AppleFest. Likewise, the border story has resonance for many partners. Including National Trust and English Heritage;
- There is also the opportunity to work with the market towns, rural venues and attractions to maximise the impact of key events. For example, collaborative marketing, programming of fringe events and themed hotel packages.

Focus on Sustainability

- Green in every sense, from the landscape to the sustainability commitment of Herefordshire Council which has pledged to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030;
- Regenerative Tourism is the approach favoured by VisitEngland in terms of improving destinations for all and having a positive impact on both the local environment and our communities;
- Our tourism providers and partners are striving to make a real difference and there is an appetite to do more. There is a huge opportunity to learn from one another and to excel in this area.

Open to All

- Herefordshire is keen to welcome all visitors and to champion accessibility, from transport to tourism providers.

3.3 Target Markets

Herefordshire is relatively unknown and has modest resources. It must seize the opportunity to present domestic travellers with a 'new' staycation destination.

DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS

In 2024, 77% of Brits planned a staycation and for 42% of them their main break was a staycation. Herefordshire's core offer aligns with what many domestic travellers are seeking in a holiday destination. The Sykes' Staycation Index 2024 indicates their most popular destinations and the motivators for travel: Scottish Highlands for stunning scenery, Norfolk for nature and wildlife, Cumbria for walking. Likewise, Skyscanner Travel Trends 2025 says the top experiences determining travellers' destination choice are food (54%), the natural landscape (49%) and culture (44%).

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Lack of product and budget pressures make international markets a secondary priority. However, where possible, we will partner with VisitEngland and neighbouring LVEPs to run targeted activity. For instance, taking advantage of cost-effective opportunities to attend relevant events and exhibitions, particularly those aimed at small group tours in specific niches.

Focus themes will be Herefordshire's cider story, rich border history and church tourism, with the principal markets of interest being USA, France and Germany which are top for volume of visits and spend, according to VisitBritain. Anecdotally, many local providers have highlighted a noticeable increase in Dutch visitors so the Netherlands is also relevant to the county.

PRIMARY MARKETS (DOMESTIC)

Our core target markets are active explorers, cultural explorers and curious families.

Whilst Herefordshire welcomes all visitors, targeting is necessary to ensure that limited budgets are spent wisely. To this end, the primary markets represent those visitors most likely to enjoy a trip to the county.

Segment	Definition	Their needs
ACTIVE EXPLORERS	Aged 25+ solo travellers, couples and groups, through to seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for new places to explore on foot, by bike and by canoe • Keen to get off the beaten track • High quality accommodation and food & drink • Sustainable choices are a consideration
CULTURAL EXPLORERS	Aged 25+, solo travellers, couples and groups, through to seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to get a feel for local rural life, learn something new and to 'meet the maker' • Enjoy heritage, the arts and foodie experiences as well as independent places to eat and shop • High quality accommodation is essential • Sustainable choices are a consideration
CURIOS FAMILIES	Families with school-aged children (up to age 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for rural staycations with easy, family-friendly activities in nature • Interested in learning/educational experiences as well as sustainable travel • Distinctive accommodation such as safari tents is particularly appealing

GEOGRAPHICAL TARGETING

Informed by visitor data and regularly reviewed, the initial focus is on those regions which have shown both a propensity to visit, as well as propensity for a higher spend - see 2.0 Tourism Today. In addition, local residents and visiting friends & relatives will be embraced by promotional activity.

Train routes into the county are also relevant, particularly in relation to collaborative marketing projects. With stations in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Colwall, the county is currently served by Great Western Railway, Transport for Wales and West Midlands Railway, with direct connections to Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and London.

SECTION 4

Priorities for Action



To achieve the goals, we have identified the following key priorities:

Priority 1: Embed partnership working & advocate for the visitor

Agree and embed new models of partnership working to enable the effective delivery of this DMP, including regular review and updating of this document. Fully engage with the shared vision and focus on building a strong profile for both the LVEP and the visitor economy sector. Advocate for the visitor in all related decisions and projects such as town planning and transport infrastructure. Collect the right data to support benchmarking and decision-making.

Priority 2: Grow the volume of overnight visitors

Overnight visitors make double the contribution to our visitor economy. More accommodation, particularly hotels, is required to facilitate this growth, alongside strong year-round reasons to visit, including new bookable experiences.

Priority 3: Strengthen and extend the renaissance of Hereford

Realise the potential for Hereford to be the jewel in our crown, by partnering with stakeholders to progress place shaping efforts from a tourism perspective and maximise the impact of investments such as the new Hereford Museum & Art Gallery and extension of the National Trust's Weir Garden. Promote Hereford as a historic, green, riverside city with a thriving, contemporary experience. Look ahead to future initiatives which would enhance the city's visitor offer.

Priority 4: Reinforce the distinctive destination brand and identity

Make the most of limited resources by achieving recognition for Herefordshire across a small number of uniquely engaging differentiators. Marketing activity will centre on three-night stays, with themed seasonal itineraries and promotional partnerships used to inspire bookings.

Priority 5: Drive forward a regenerative approach to tourism

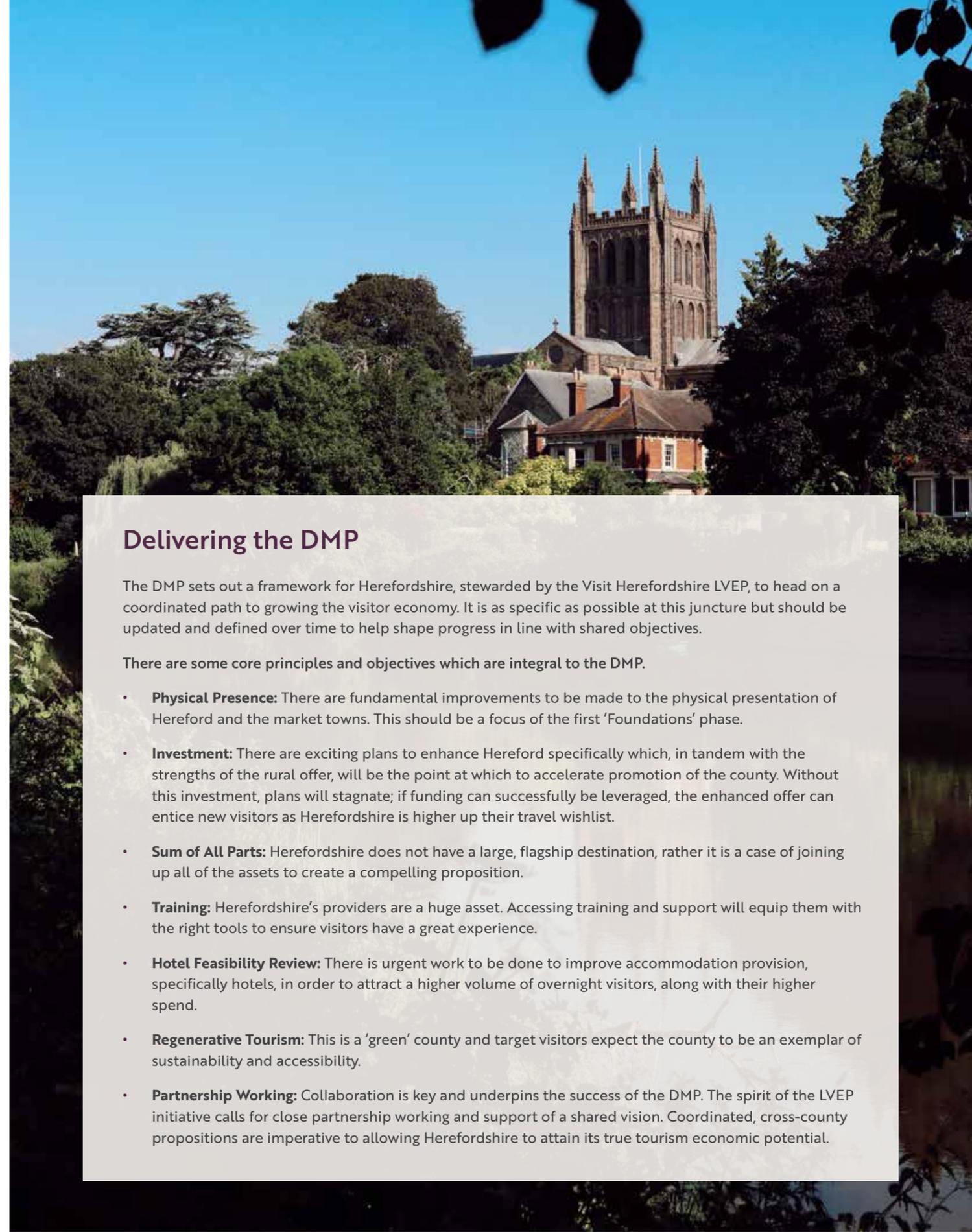
Make a significant contribution to the county's net zero, nature rich goals; extend a warm welcome to all and ensure tourism acts as a force for good in our local communities.

Priority 6: Nurture our people and businesses

Galvanise the enthusiasm and creative thinking of the sector and provide tailored training and support to strengthen our distinctive visitor offer. Facilitate upskilling, networking and sharing of best practice amongst our providers, alongside taking action to ensure the visitor economy has access to employees with the right skills and mindset.

Priority 7: Get the basics right

Focus in the first instance on transport and infrastructure services, ensure Herefordshire is easy to explore by car, public transport and on foot.



Delivering the DMP

The DMP sets out a framework for Herefordshire, stewarded by the Visit Herefordshire LVEP, to head on a coordinated path to growing the visitor economy. It is as specific as possible at this juncture but should be updated and defined over time to help shape progress in line with shared objectives.

There are some core principles and objectives which are integral to the DMP.

- **Physical Presence:** There are fundamental improvements to be made to the physical presentation of Hereford and the market towns. This should be a focus of the first 'Foundations' phase.
- **Investment:** There are exciting plans to enhance Hereford specifically which, in tandem with the strengths of the rural offer, will be the point at which to accelerate promotion of the county. Without this investment, plans will stagnate; if funding can successfully be leveraged, the enhanced offer can entice new visitors as Herefordshire is higher up their travel wishlist.
- **Sum of All Parts:** Herefordshire does not have a large, flagship destination, rather it is a case of joining up all of the assets to create a compelling proposition.
- **Training:** Herefordshire's providers are a huge asset. Accessing training and support will equip them with the right tools to ensure visitors have a great experience.
- **Hotel Feasibility Review:** There is urgent work to be done to improve accommodation provision, specifically hotels, in order to attract a higher volume of overnight visitors, along with their higher spend.
- **Regenerative Tourism:** This is a 'green' county and target visitors expect the county to be an exemplar of sustainability and accessibility.
- **Partnership Working:** Collaboration is key and underpins the success of the DMP. The spirit of the LVEP initiative calls for close partnership working and support of a shared vision. Coordinated, cross-county propositions are imperative to allowing Herefordshire to attain its true tourism economic potential.





Title of report: Work programme 2025/6 and 2026/7

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 17 February 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

All Wards

Purpose

To consider the draft work programme for Herefordshire Council's scrutiny committees for the municipal years 2025/26 and 2026/7.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee agree the draft work programme for Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee contained in the work programme report attached as appendix 1, which will be subject to monthly review, as the basis of their primary focus for the remainder of the municipal year.**
- b) **The committee note the work programme for the other scrutiny committees and identify any opportunities for collaboration or alignment of work.**

Alternative options

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

Key considerations

3. A fundamental part of good scrutiny is planning and agreeing a programme of work for the committee to undertake. A well-considered work programme:
 - a. identifies priorities for the committee's work that align with corporate and partnership priorities, as well as reflecting community concern;
 - b. ensures that each identified topic has clear objectives that focus the committee's work;
 - c. creates a timetable for the committee's programme of work so that the committee carry out its work at the optimal time; and
 - d. provides officers and partners with requirements for evidence that will support the committee in providing evidence-based scrutiny
4. To prepare this work programme, the committee chairs have met with officers of the council to identify potential priority areas of work for the committee. These priority areas have been scheduled within the work programme to ensure the committee considers topics when it is most useful to do so. A draft of this work programme has then been circulated to the council's corporate leadership team and other key senior directors, alongside committee chairs, for further comment and refinement.
5. The most recent work programme was published on 30 January 2026 and is attached as Appendix 1.
6. Attached as Appendix 2 to this report is the council's most recently published forward plan of key decisions.
7. Appendix 3 is a list of all recommendations made by Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in 2025.

Community impact

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

Environmental impact

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

Equality duty

10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This report contains no direct equality impacts. However the reports and issues that the committee will consider may have direct impacts. Reports arising from or supporting this work will outline the any associated equality impacts for committee consideration.

Resource implications

11. This report constitutes part of the typical function of this committee. Similarly, a programme of work undertaken by committee is an integral part of the council's 'business as usual'. There is

no resource implication in setting or agreeing a work programme. However agreed topics in the work programme, in particular any requests for bespoke research or the involvement of outside experts or community groups, may incur resource costs. These will be contained in any reporting or planning of agreed topics within this work programme.

Legal implications

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

Risk management

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

Consultees

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Herefordshire Council scrutiny work programme 2026
Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan
Appendix 3 – recommendations made by Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in 2025

Background papers

None



APPENDIX 1

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

February 2026

Below are the work programmes of Herefordshire Council’s five scrutiny committees and their six task and finish groups.

Work programmes are subject to change, with revised programmes agreed at the end of formal committee meetings.

Table of Contents

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	3
Committee work programme.....	3
Early help task and finish group.....	7
Tems of reference	7
Work programme.....	9
Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee.....	12
Committee work programme.....	12
Placemaking and public participation task and finish group	14
Tems of reference	14
Work programme.....	16
Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.....	18
Committee work programme.....	18

Bus and passenger services task and finish group	22
Work programme.....	23
Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.....	26
Committee work programme.....	26
Meeting the demand for adult social care task and finish group.....	29
Work programme.....	29
Scrutiny Management Board.....	32
Committee work programme.....	32
Inequality and social mobility task and finish group.....	34
Work Programme	34
Commercialisation task and finish group.....	37
Tems of reference	37

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Briefing

3 March 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
School Capital Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz Farr, Director of Education Quentin Mee

Committee Meeting

10 March 2026 **report deadline 2 March 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 4 March 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
ILAC inspection and action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review findings of the Ofsted inspection report and any associated action plan. Scrutinise arrangements to drive improvement following the inspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ofsted inspection report and action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tina Russell, Director of Children's Services Tori Lynch, Service Director, Corporate Parenting Rachel Gillot, Service Director, Early Help, Children in Need, and Safeguarding
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Briefing
24 March 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Home to school transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on work to develop a new home to school transport service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gemma Dando, Chief Operating Officer Liz Farr Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs Dr David Land, Head of Transport and Parking Craig Lewis, Transportation Services Manager

Committee Briefing
14 April 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Fostering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of fostering panel. Overview of key performance indicators Update on recommendations made July 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member briefing Feedback from foster families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natasha Newton, Service Manager Fostering, Adoption and Home Finding Teams Tori Lynch, Service Director, Corporate Parenting

Committee Meeting12 May 2026 **report deadline 1 May 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 7 May 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Neglect Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the definition of intention and unintentional neglect. Feedback on regional peer review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachel Gillott Natalie Solomon, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board Leanne Lowe, West Mercia Police
West Mercia Police: Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee briefing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PEEL inspection report and findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leanne Lowe Ruby Card, Service Manager MASH, ECHO & SAFE Rachel Gillott
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting22 July 2026 **report deadline 14 July 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 17 July 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Families First Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dawn Knight, Service Manager Early Help Lindsay MacHardy, Public Health Principal <i>Core members of the steering group</i>
Early Help Task and Finish Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review group findings and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final group report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting6 October 2026 **report deadline 28 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 2 October 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Alternative provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz Farr Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs
All Age access to play and open space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree terms of reference for a review of access to play and other open space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lindsay MacHardy Emily Garner
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Topics for possible future scrutiny

- Youth provision
- Participation strategy
- Housing

Early help task and finish group

Terms of reference

Background

Herefordshire's Early Help offer includes both universal and targeted services aimed at supporting children, young people, and families before statutory intervention is required. The offer includes:

- **Universal services:** Provided largely through Talk Community, voluntary and community organisations, schools, health, and public health-funded initiatives.
- **Targeted early help:** Led by the Early Help team within Children's Services, working directly with families who require structured support.

Key developments in this area in recent years include:

- Integration of Early Help into wider Children's Services through locality models.
- Introduction of Families First and Lead Practitioner roles.
- Recruitment of two new children's-focused community development workers within Talk Community.
- Partnership commissioning (such as with the PCC) to support local early intervention initiatives.

To build on these developments, work is underway to identify and address weaknesses in current practice, including:

- Persistent confusion around distinctions between universal and targeted Early Help.
- Limited public visibility of the Early Help offer and recent developments.
- Variability in provision and access across different localities.
- Pressure on schools to deliver Early Help without sufficient funding or infrastructure.
- Need for improved coordination between statutory and non-statutory partners.

Purpose

The group therefore aims to provide a constructive and collaborative space to:

- Recognise strengths in current Early Help provision.
- Identify good practice across different communities.
- Highlight gaps or inconsistencies in provision and the work in place to address them.

Scope of Inquiry:

In recognition of the broad and varied nature of early help available in Herefordshire, the group intends to carry out two distinct but closely interdependent streams of work:

- **Targeted Early Help and Families First**
 - Understanding the Families First implementation.
 - Exploring the role of lead practitioners.
 - Clarifying the role of schools and multi-agency collaboration.
- **Community and Universal Offer**
 - Mapping and showcasing local Early Help initiatives.
 - Exploring partnerships with Talk Community hubs, voluntary groups, parish and town councils.
 - Engagement around youth activities, access barriers (transport), and local innovation.

Work Programme

The group will determine its programme of work to meet the above objectives. This programme is likely to include:

- Local Appreciative Inquiry events in Hereford City and each of the five key market towns (Ross, Ledbury, Kington, Leominster, Bromyard), Supported by Talk Community and Children's Services.
- Case studies
- Meeting with families and professionals, individually and in focus groups

Proposed Timeline

- Summer 2025: Agree task and finish group, establish membership, agree programme of work
- Autumn 2025 to Spring 2026: Community engagement events, interviews, focus groups.
- Spring/Summer 2026: Reflection and analysis.
- Summer 2026: Presentation of findings and recommendations to Children and Young People Scrutiny.

Work programme

Targeted early help and Families First

- Recognise strengths in current Early Help provision.
- Identify good practice across different communities.
- Highlight gaps or inconsistencies in provision and the work in place to address them.

Objective	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Understand targeted early help - rationale and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of programme briefing note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thresholds of need ○ Current performance management ○ Current programme of activity 		November 2025
Overview of current Families First programme and targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with service managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Victoria Leader ○ Dawn Knight 		December 2025
Appraise current Families First programme and targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with team leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Victoria Roe – North ○ Jane Marshall – South – Ross ○ Chantelle Bennett – Central ○ Tracey Spencer – Central 		January 2026
Support for young carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with young carers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jane Marshall – South – Ross 		January 2026
Appraise locality-based targeted early help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with a locality team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Combine with a locality event 		January 2026
Working with schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neil Crawford 		January 2026

Commissioned early help services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Venture – commissioned service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hilary Thomas 		January 2026
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Community and Universal Offer

- Mapping and showcasing local Early Help initiatives.
- Exploring partnerships with Talk Community hubs, voluntary groups, parish and town councils.
- Engagement around youth activities, access barriers (transport), and local innovation.

Topic	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace – Ross-on-Wye	Danial Webb	13 Oct 25
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace - Hereford	Danial Webb	17 Nov 25
Overview of local early help initiatives	Early help marketplace - Leominster	Danial Webb	3 Dec 25
Evaluate the role of school community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with service manager, Quentin Mee Meeting with school counsellor/school support service 		Feb 26
Understand how midwives support young parents to be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with midwives 		Feb 26
The role of school nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with school nurses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emma.dewar@wvt.nhs.uk Wendy.Long@wvt.nhs.uk Nikki.Lawley@wvt.nhs.uk 		Mar 26
The role of health visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with health visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lyndsey McHardy “Best Start in Life” strategy 		Mar 26
Youth clubs overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of youth and sports clubs in Herefordshire Visit to youth club Meeting with youth club attendees 		April 26
Talk Community and co-ordination of support for universal community services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview community support carried out by Talk Community. 		April 26

Report to Cabinet

Topic	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Draft final report	Learning from above meetings		May 26
Agree final report	Draft report	Task and Finish Group	June 26
Present to Cabinet	Final report	Toni Fagan	July 26

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

17 February 2026 **report deadline 9 February 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 12 February 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Tourism and Destination Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the opportunity and value in developing a tourism strategy for Herefordshire Examine tourism strategies in similar local authorities Examine the role of cultural and heritage strategy in supporting development of tourism throughout the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be agreed Meeting with Herefordshire Business Improvement District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roger Allonby, Director of Growth Herefordshire DBID Tourism and destination management service
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

15 April 2026 **report deadline 7 April 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 9 April 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Broadband Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of coverage gaps and speeds, and work to address them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with businesses, schools, parish councils Public call for evidence Supplier business plans Ofcom policy Other evidence to be determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined

Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer
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Committee Meeting

7 July 2026 **report deadline 29 June 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 2 July 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Year of delivery – capital projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-year review of capital projects taking place in 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council capital programme Individual programme progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined
Public participation in planning task and finish group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the task and finish final report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task and finish group report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, Cabinet Member, Economy and Growth, Cabinet Member, Community Services and Assets, Cabinet Member, Roads and Regulatory Services, and Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure, all have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Additional Topics Proposed for Future Consideration

- Hereford City Masterplan
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Broadband

Placemaking and Public Participation task and finish group

Terms of reference

Background

Herefordshire is entering a significant period of growth and change. Delivering new housing, infrastructure, and services must strengthen local communities and reflect the county's distinctive rural character.

Research shows that while public involvement in planning is vital, engagement often remains procedural rather than meaningful. Many residents feel disconnected from decision-making, uncertain about how to participate, or unconvinced that their input makes a difference.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every local planning authority such as Herefordshire to publish a Statement of Community Involvement. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and resultant secondary legislation is likely to place greater emphasis on this statement with a proposed requirement for a local planning authority Community Involvement Scheme. This provides a timely opportunity to modernise Herefordshire's existing Statement of Community Involvement (January 2022), ensuring it reflects Herefordshire Council's 2024–2028 priorities for economic growth and community development.

This task and finish group will explore how Herefordshire can plan with its communities, ensuring that growth, infrastructure and environment evolve together in a fair, transparent, and creative way. It will then make recommendations to underpin the Council's new statutory engagement framework.

The aim is to move beyond statutory minimum consultation and create a culture in which residents look forward to new development as something they have helped to shape. Growth with, not to, communities.

Purpose

To identify and recommend practical, evidence-based measures for making community engagement in planning and placemaking more inclusive, accessible, and effective across Herefordshire. The group will:

- Examine best practice and innovative approaches to public participation.
- Advise on the update and replacement of the Statement of Community Involvement (2022) with a new Community Involvement Scheme (2026).
- Ensure that community voice and cultural engagement sit at the heart of the county's future planning system.

Objectives

- To understand current legislation and good practice in community involvement and evaluate how residents currently engage with planning in Herefordshire and identify barriers to participation.
- Review and learn from good practice in community engagement in other local authorities and with housing providers.
- Inform and help draft the replacement of the Statement of Community Involvement (2022) with a new Community Involvement Scheme (2026)
- Make recommendations to the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to deliver the above.

Scope

The task and finish group will focus on how communities are involved in shaping growth, not on what is built or where sites are allocated. It will not duplicate the work of the Housing Development Working Group or the technical drafting of the Local Plan.

Membership and Governance

- 5–7 elected members of Herefordshire Council (no Cabinet members).
- Up to two co-opted members with relevant expertise or community experience.
- Supported by officers from Democratic Services, Economy and Environment, and Communications.
- Reports through the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee, which will submit recommendations to Cabinet for formal response.

Expected Outputs

- A final report setting out
 - practical recommendations for improving public participation in planning and placemaking.
 - A proposed structure and content outline for Herefordshire’s new Community Involvement Scheme (2026), replacing the 2022 Statement.
 - Case studies and prototypes demonstrating innovative engagement methods suitable for rural and market-town contexts.

Success Measures

- At least five examples of national or local best practice reviewed.
- Two or more new engagement methods agreed or trialled.
- Clear, costed recommendations adopted within the 2026 Community Involvement Scheme.
- Cabinet adoption of group recommendations into council policy.

WORK PROGRAMME

Objective To understand current legislation and good practice in community involvement and evaluate how residents currently engage with planning in Herefordshire and identify barriers to participation.

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Understand current legislation and good practice in community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Overview of The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 Good practice guidance 		November 2025
Evaluate how residents currently engage with planning in Herefordshire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herefordshire Council Statement of Community Involvement. Interviews with housing associations and council planning officers. 		November 2025
Identify current barriers to participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with housing association, community groups and council planning officers. 		November 2025
GROUP MEETING		Henry Merricks Murgatroyd	November 2025

Objective Review and learn from good practice in community engagement in other local authorities and with housing providers.

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Examine requirements for new Community Involvement Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft regulation and statutory guidance 		December 2025
Identify good practice in other local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review Site visit (if useful) 		January 2026
Identify creative engagement methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desktop search ideas such as including digital tools, easy-read and visual materials, short videos, and cultural or media partnerships. 		January 2026

GROUP MEETING		February 2025
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Objective Inform and help draft the replacement of the Statement of Community Involvement (2022) with a new Community Involvement Scheme.

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Work with officers to set new parameters and scope for the Community Involvement Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Community Involvement Scheme 	TBA	March 2026
Ensure inclusivity by improving reach to rural residents, younger people, working families, and under-represented communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Community Involvement Scheme 	TBA	April 2026
Recommend resourcing and governance arrangements to support sustained, meaningful participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with planning officers in a 'good' local planning authority Draft recommendations 		May 2026
GROUP MEETING			May 2026

Objective Make recommendations to the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Draft report to committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report 		June 2026
Draft report and recommendations to Cabinet (if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report 		July 2026

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

2 March 2026 **report deadline 20 February 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 26 February 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Waste Recovery Contracting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on establishment of new waste recovery contract. Update on roll-out of garden waste collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hobbs, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Active Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the relevant recommendations from the previous Scrutiny on Active Travel against the latest draft of the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWWIP). Examine the structure of LCWWIP for clarity and understanding by members and residents. Review the proposals for the prioritisation of Active Travel projects under the LCWWIP. Contribute to mechanisms to attract funding for and deliverability of the LCWWIP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft LCWWIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager Gemma Dando David Land, Head of Transport and Access Services
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

17 June 2026 **report deadline 9 June 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 11 June 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
<p>Land Use Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the operation of current council policy on enabling and enforcing appropriate land management and use (including riparian responsibilities) across the county; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to protect natural assets such as our rivers ○ to protect highway assets ○ for flood management ○ to facilitate landscape schemes, such as Wyescape through associated enforcement – including planning breaches. • To obtain data on the area of land subject to Catchment Sensitive farming (including regenerative farming) and how this is progressing. • To explore how the local authority can support adoption of sustainable farming methods. • To review the impact of the withdrawal of the Sustainable Farming Incentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway flooding data • Enforcement analysis • Current council planning regulation concerning land use management • Farmscoper decision support tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager • Kelly Gibbons, Development Management Service Manager • Environment Agency representative • NFU
<p>Work programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Economy and Environment and Cabinet Member, Environment, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Committee Meeting21 September 2026 **report deadline 11 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 17 September 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Transformation of the economy and environment directorate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the transformed leadership structure and how it is performing currently, in particular where responsibility for delivering on the Council's environmental priorities and targets, including net zero. Has embedding a commercial mindset impacted on the delivery of these environmental priorities and targets. Has transformation impacted on the overall resource dedicated to the environmental side of the directorate. Explore the case for a more distinct operational area for environmental matters under the Corporate Director. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hobbs, Corporate Director Environment and Economy
Buses and passenger services task and finish group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive the final report from the group and consider their recommendations, including testing the evidence on which they are based. To agree a set of recommendations to go forward from the committee to the executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair, buses task and finish group
Flooding task and finish group – terms of reference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree the terms of reference for a proposed task and finish group to scrutinise flood risk management and flood emergency responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task and finish terms of reference 	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting2 December 2026 **report deadline 24 November 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Rail Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives to be agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hobbs Ffion Horton

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roger Allonby• David Land |
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Bus and passenger services task and finish group

Work programme

Objective	Activity or information needed	Carried out by	Timeline
Initial review meeting		Task and Finish Group	July 2025
Create a central information repository	Setup Teams library and chat space	Simon Cann, Danial Webb	September 2025
Review Herefordshire Council's current powers and responsibilities.	Compile and provide overview of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing legislation in England and Wales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Transport Act 2008 ○ Transport Act 2000 ○ Bus Service Act 2017 ○ Bus Services (No. 2) Bill ○ Public Service Vehicle Regulations. • Overview of who is responsible for local transport in England (Commons library) • Any allied statutory guidance • Bus operator legislation and guidance. • How these apply in Herefordshire. 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos, task and finish group	Sep-Oct 2025
Review current passenger transport operations in Herefordshire and how they meet current and future need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous council bus service reviews (c. 2019) • For both commercial and community operators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Routes and frequency ○ Passenger numbers ○ Subsidy • Home to school transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current services provided ○ Current providers • SEND transport • Adult Social Care Passenger transport 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Sep-Oct 2025

Current local authority and regional funding	2025-2026 and medium-term funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsidised routes • community transport • other transport funding provided by the local authority 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Sep-Oct 2025
Review Meeting		Task and Finish Group	October 2025
Overview of current BSIP funding	Summary of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Bus Strategy • Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 Briefing on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of the £3.2m BSIP grant (2025–26) (£1.3m capital, £1.9m revenue) e.g., shelters, passenger experience, supported services • Progress in delivering funded projects and services • Their contribution to improved services Site visit to any BSIP-related capital project	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Nov-Dec 2025
Assess Enhanced Partnership performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the current enhanced partnership timetabling meets the objectives of the partnership. • Identify ways to apply learning from the group to new ways of meeting the objectives of the enhanced partnership. 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos, task and finish group	Nov-Dec 2025
Combining bus services with other transport services	Desktop research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current rail services and how they align with bus services Group meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail or other responsible authority 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Nov-Dec 2025
Explore cross-border and cross-county transport	Map and list of current cross-border services to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency • Operator • Funding (if applicable) Examples from other local authorities	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Nov-Dec 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See previous work looking at other local authorities • Identify opportunities for any cross-border service support 		
Review Meeting		Task and Finish Group	December 2025
Community Transport	<p>Site visit to a community transport provider</p> <p>Overview brief of Services in Herefordshire, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current services, routes and frequencies • Cost • Funding 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Jan-Feb 2026
Home to school and other resident transport	<p>Overview brief of home to school services in Herefordshire, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current services, routes and frequencies • Cost and funding <p>Meeting with Home to school co-ordinator</p> <p>Meeting with Transformation team</p>	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Jan-Feb 2026
Review Meeting		Task and Finish Group	February 2026
Examine how other rural local authorities provide sustainable services.	<p>Internet research – what do they do in other rural local authorities?</p> <p>Suggested workstreams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand Responsive transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ YorBus, CallConnect ○ Worcestershire on Demand Worcestershire County Council ○ The Robin (your bookable bus) Gloucestershire County Council • Use of powers of funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of enhanced partnerships – Oxfordshire, Cornwall ○ Branding • Integrating transport and social care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community transport ○ The role of third sector organisations 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Mar-Apr 2026

	<p>Site Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shropshire DRT – Shrewsbury • Social care focused visit 		
Bus franchising	<p>Overview of Bus Services Bill</p> <p>Overview of approach taken by other local authorities</p> <p>Meeting with consultants or another local authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the barriers to franchising in rural areas? • Is this an opportunity for Herefordshire to pursue? • Are there partnership opportunities with other local authorities? 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	Mar-Apr 2026
Review Meeting		Task and Finish Group	May 2026
Draft report and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft final report • Draft recommendations 	Simon Cann, David Land, Craig Lewis, Natalie Amos	May-June 2026
Present report to Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee		Task and Finish Group	June 2026

Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

11 February 2026 **report deadline 3 February 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 9 February 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider an update on progress to address the recommendations from the Care Quality Commission inspection of the trust Scrutinise development of the new trust strategy Consider work underway to develop neighbourhood health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust strategy 	Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

27 April 2026 **report deadline 17 April 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 23 April 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Shaping neighbourhood health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse how the health partnership identifies health needs in communities. Scrutinise provision of current and future neighbourhood health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood health bid Taurus Out of Hours GP service Worcestershire Council papers 	Attendees to be agreed

CQC Inspection of adult social care services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine findings of the recent CQC inspection of adult social care services. Scrutinise any action plan arising from the inspection findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CQC inspection findings Post-inspection action plan 	
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*The Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing and Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing, both have a standing invitation to the meeting.

Committee Briefing April 2026 (TBC)

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the work of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 	Kevin Crompton, Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board

Committee Meeting

27 July 2026 **report deadline 17 July 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 23 July 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work to develop a new joint strategic needs assessment for Herefordshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 	Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health
Health and Wellbeing Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 	Zoe Clifford

Committee Meeting

14 September 2026 **report deadline 4 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 10 September 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Right Care Right Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on work to deliver acute community mental health support in Herefordshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees to be agreed
Q2 Better Care Fund outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence to be agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees to be agreed
Meeting the demand for adult social care task and finish group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree draft report and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final task and finish group report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, task and finish group

Meeting the demand for adult social care task and finish group

Work programme

Objective To understand the extent of demand for adult social care services provided or commissioned in Herefordshire, and the likely change over time.

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
Understand Herefordshire's demographics and future demographic change	Demographic information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understanding Herefordshire</i> demographic data • <i>Future population of Herefordshire</i> report • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment report 	Charlotte Worthy/Herefordshire Research team	Dec 25-Jan 26
Understand the demand for adult social care in Herefordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Market Position Statement</i> • <i>Market Sustainability Plan</i> • Current rates of demand for adult social care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type of demand (domiciliary, residential, nursing) ○ Duration ○ Change over time 	Zakia Loughead	Dec 25-Jan 26
Compare demographic change and demand for adult social care compared to other local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop research comparison with 'statistical neighbours' 	Danial Webb/Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	Dec 25-Jan 26
GROUP MEETING		Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	February 2026

Objective To explore the drivers of increased demand for adult social care, and the capacity of the local authority and other care providers to meet it.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date

Increased complexity of demand from an ageing population	Site visit – supported housing provider Site visit – third sector organisation working with older adults		Feb-Mar 26
The nature of funding for social care	Briefing on social care funding	Zakia Loughead ASC finance team	Feb-Mar 26
The size and structure of the social care market in Herefordshire	Overview of social care market Meeting with care providers	Zakia Loughead	Feb-Mar 26
Lack of housing growth, and flatlining tax base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with Cabinet portfolio holders 		Feb-Mar 26
GROUP MEETING		Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	April 2026

Objective To identify strategies and work carried out by Herefordshire Council and partners such as housing associations and other organisations reduce demand for social care services, or to increase revenue to pay for services.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
Assistive technology	Visit to Technology Enabled Care Services (TECS) Team	TBC	May-Jun 26
Community based universal and targeted services	Meeting with Talk Community Meeting with third sector organisation Meeting with other community team in another local authority	Emily Lowe – Talk Community	May-Jun 26
Market shaping and support	Meeting – service director Meeting – care providers’ network	Commissioning	May-Jun 26
Supported living	Meeting – director for housing support Visit to supported housing	Hayley Crane	May-Jun 26

		A supported housing provider	
In-house services and the role of Hoople	Case study – Essex Meeting with Hoople		May-Jun 26
GROUP MEETING		Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	July 2026

Objective To make recommendations to the executive on steps that should be taken to reduce service demand and to increase revenue.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
Write draft report and recommendations	Draft report and recommendations	Task and finish group	August 2026
Agree draft report and recommendations with committee	Draft report and recommendations	Task and finish group	October 2026

Scrutiny Management Board

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

13 April 2026 **report deadline 1 April 2026** member briefing 25 March 2026 pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 9 April 2026

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the draft management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management Plan 	Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance
Q3 Budget scrutiny Q3 Performance monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the executive's proposed budget and medium-term financial strategy. To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget report Supplementary information as requested by the committee 	Cabinet members Rachael Sanders Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence
Work programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review work programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft work programme 	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

3 July 2026 **report deadline 25 June 2026** **member briefing 22 June 2026** **pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 30 June 2026**

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Inequality and Social Mobility Task and Finish Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive the report of the task and finish group. To agree any recommendations the committee as a result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task and Finish Group Report 	Task and Finish Group members
Q4 Budget scrutiny Q4 Performance monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the executive's proposed budget and medium-term financial strategy. To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget report Supplementary information as requested by the committee 	Cabinet members Rachael Sanders Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence

Committee Meeting

1 December 2026 **report deadline 23 November 2026** **member briefing 24 November 2026** **pre meeting lines of enquiry planning 27 November 2026**

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Q2 Budget scrutiny Q2 Performance monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the executive's proposed budget and medium-term financial strategy. To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget report Supplementary information as requested by the committee 	Cabinet members Rachael Sanders Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence

Long list of potential topics

- Social Value in procurement
- Working with the voluntary sector and others to help deliver services
- Review of the workforce strategy
- Supplier risk management
- Emergency Planning
- Annual review of effectiveness

Inequality and social mobility task and finish group

Work programme

Objective To define and understand the different dimensions of inequality (including but not limited to protected characteristics, rurality, socio-economic background and care experience) and social mobility in Herefordshire and the United Kingdom, including Herefordshire Council's understanding of inequality and social mobility.

Objectives	Evidence required	Responsible officer	Date
To define and understand the different dimensions of inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on different types of inequality, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wealth/income ○ Health ○ Rurality • Briefing on groups affected by inequality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protected characteristics ○ Military families • Overview of inequality as defined by other local authority scrutiny 	Danial Webb	Sep-Oct 25

To understand those dimensions that are particularly relevant to Herefordshire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-ward indices of deprivation • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment • Economic data 	Danial Webb and Charlotte Worthy	Sep-Oct 25
To test Herefordshire Council's understanding of inequality, how it prioritises different elements of inequality, and its priorities to tackle and reduce inequality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire Council Plan • Meeting with leader and deputy • <i>(should this be merged with the above?)</i> 	Danial Webb and Charlotte Worthy	Sep-Oct 25
GROUP MEETING		Danial Webb	November 2025

Objective To measure inequality and social mobility across the county and the different dimensions that impact on inequality and social mobility within the county and between Herefordshire and other parts of the UK.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
Collect and analyse relevant datasets pertaining to Herefordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-ward indices of deprivation • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment • Economic data TBC 		Nov-Dec 25
Comparisons with statistical neighbours			Nov-Dec 25
Housing inequality	Meeting with housing providers		Nov-Dec 25
Rurality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
GROUP MEETING		Danial Webb	January 2026

Objective To gather examples of local authorities and wider local partnerships meaningfully reducing inequality and/or meaningfully improving social mobility from across the UK and other countries.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
Examples from other scrutiny reviews	Other scrutiny reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope • Learning 		
Examples of other inequality and social mobility strategies	Other scrutiny reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope • Learning 		
Examples of evaluations of strategies and action plans			
Gather learning from those examples			
GROUP MEETING		Danial Webb	March 2026

Objective To identify the plans, strategies and actions deployed by the council to reduce inequality and improve social mobility, and the degree to which they are likely to or are actually reducing inequality and improving social mobility, and the degree to which they are not.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
GROUP MEETING		Simon Cann	April 2026

Objective To make recommendations to the executive on steps that should be taken to meaningfully reduce inequality and improve social mobility across the county.

Objectives	Evidence required	People to speak with	Date
Write draft report and recommendations	Draft report and recommendations	Task and finish group	May 2026
Agree draft report and recommendations with committee	Draft report and recommendations	Task and finish group	July 2026

Commercialisation working group

Terms of reference

Background

Herefordshire Council faces a potential funding gap of £27.3 million for the 2026-27 financial year, and further funding gaps in future years. The executive has already identified commercialisation as key to its transformation programme. The executive has also indicated that commercialisation and income generation will form part of the strategy to address the funding gap.

Commercialisation within local government represents both a financial opportunity and a cultural challenge. Commercialisation could deliver significant cost savings and income-generating opportunities but only as a result of cultural change. For example [guidance](#) from the Association For Public Service Excellence emphasises that commercialisation cannot simply be a reaction to budget deficits – it requires an embedded strategy, a commercial mindset within the local authority, clear governance, and a well-developed understanding of risk.

To assist the Cabinet in developing a budget to propose to council Scrutiny Management Board will undertake a working group of members investigating how the council could increase income in the short and medium term alongside greater commercialisation.

Initial recommendations will be provided informally to the Cabinet by the end of November,

Short- and Long-Term Opportunities

Short term: The working group will examine the opportunities of:

- reviewing and adjusting fees and charges,
- maximising income from council assets (such as property leases and car parks), or exploring asset repurposing or disposals.
- benchmarking against neighbouring authorities could identify under-priced services as well as gaining an understanding of work that has already been undertaken in this area and
- other opportunities for income generation

The working group will seek to understand the impact and the risks associated with any short term operations

Longer term: The working group will identify opportunities to increase income and to drive efficiency in future years across the life of the medium-term financial strategy including, but not limited to those opportunities presented by commercialisation.

Given the timescale the working group's recommendations, especially for future years may be quite high level. The working group will deliver the best-founded recommendations it can within the fixed (and tight) timescale.

Overall approach

We propose a three-stage approach

- Herefordshire council is already working on commercialisation and income generation. The working group will consider current plans and arrangements, challenge these and work with officers to identify areas that they may not have considered.
- The working group will also have regard to the impact of their proposals on local people and the risks that may be associated with them.
- If there is time the working group will also investigate the strategic issues relating to commercialization and make recommendations for the cabinet to consider.

The Working Group will also have regard to guidance and experience across the sector in regards to areas such as (not an exhaustive list):

- The purposes of commercial activity, namely the balance between maximising income (for example, through fees, charges, or property ventures), supporting broader social value and strengthening community resilience.
- How the council might operate in markets without distorting competition and maintaining fairness to local businesses-governance and risk management
- The cultural dimension, which cannot be overstated. Officers and members must share a mindset that sees prudent risk-taking as legitimate. Without organisational readiness – training, leadership commitment, and internal capability – commercial ambitions will fail.

The scrutiny process must therefore explore how Herefordshire can build this culture safely, balancing entrepreneurial ambition with its statutory duty to protect public assets. It must also concern itself both with the immediate opportunities to increase income and the longer-term changes required to inculcate greater commercialisation.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



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

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

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

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

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

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

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead officer and lead cabinet member	Directorate	Notice of decision first published / ID	Issue Type and exemptions
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FORWARD PLAN FOR 6 February 2026 ONWARDS

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

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

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

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
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Cabinet decisions by date (Key and Non-key listed)

<p>Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026-29 To seek cabinet approval for Herefordshire Council to take receipt of the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) grant as a programme funded by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) between 2026-2029. The CRF replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF) and the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and will enable Herefordshire to work collaboratively with partners and communities at county and local levels to build long-term resilience, cohesion, and reduce the need for crisis support.</p>	<p>Cabinet 26 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member finance and corporate services Nikki Stroud, Talk Community Children and Families Lead <small>nikki.stroud@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>Non Key Open</p>
<p>Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (formerly known as Local Walking Cycling Plan adoption) To seek Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Local Walking and Cycling Plan</p>	<p>Cabinet 26 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager <small>ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Q3 Performance Report To report to Cabinet the quarterly outturn of key KPIs and progress against the Delivery Plan 2025/26.</p>	<p>Cabinet 26 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member corporate strategy and budget</p> <p>Jessica Karia, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence jessica.karia@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976</p>	<p>Corporate Support Centre</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>Non Key Open</p>
<p>Update on the Phase 2 Phosphate Mitigation Schemes To provide Cabinet with an update regarding the Phosphate Mitigation Wetland schemes</p>	<p>Cabinet 26 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment</p> <p>Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth, Gemma Dando, Chief Operating Officer, Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure, Susan White, Programme Manager Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk, gemma.dando@herefordshire.gov.uk, scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk, Susan.White2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260330, , , Tel: 01432 260070</p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Cabinet Member Decisions (Key and Non Key decisions)</p>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing					
<p>Extension of the council's Care Homes (Unified) Contract</p> <p>To approve the extension of the 'Care Homes Unified Contract (Residential and Nursing DPS Accredited List)' to 23rd Feb 2029. The current Contract is due to expire on 4th September 2026.</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Before 23 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Ros Murphy, Commissioning Manager, Community Wellbeing</p> <p><small>ros.murphy@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>NEW ITEM</p>	<p>KEY</p> <p>Open</p> <p>Urgent</p>
<p>To extend the council's current commissioned home care framework</p> <p>To approve an extension to the council's current commissioned home care framework for up to six months from 31 October 2026 to 30 April 2027.</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Before 2 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer</p> <p><small>sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p> <p><small>Tel: 01432 383734</small></p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>NEW ITEM</p>	<p>KEY</p> <p>Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Herefordshire Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 2031</p> <p>This is a five year statutory strategy to replace the 2020-2025 strategy. It sets out our approach to the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping in the county.</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 26 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>Robert Barnett, Housing Strategy Officer robert.barnett@herefordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to approve the 2026-2036 Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing April 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing</p> <p>David Collyer, Acting Consultant in Public Health: General Practitioner david.collyer2@herefordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Portfolio: children and young people</p>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Schools Budget 2026/27 To approve school forum's recommended budget proposals for school budgets, central school services and early years within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2026/27</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people 13 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095</p>	<p>Corporate Support Centre</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Holiday activities and food programme (HAF) 2026 - 29 To seek approval for Herefordshire Council to accept the ring-fenced grant from the Department for Education (DfE) and to use this funding to co-ordinate the delivery of free holiday clubs for children and young people in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, as well as those who meet the eligibility criteria for a discretionary place.</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people 23 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people Nikki Stroud, Talk Community Children and Families Lead nikki.stroud@herefordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>Non Key Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Local Authority school building maintenance works 2026 - 2028 (amended from 2030) To approve the proposed expenditure of capital grants for the school buildings maintenance works.</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people 25 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people William Merriman, Sufficiency, Planning and Capital Investment Manager <small>William.Merriman2@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p>	<p>Children and Young People</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
Portfolio: community services and assets					
<p>Letting on Unit 6 Maylord Orchards To seek approval to sign an agreement for lease and lease for Unit 6 Maylord Orchards to a national retailer.</p>	<p>Cabinet member community services and assets 23 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member community services and assets Ben Oakes <small>ben.oakes@herefordshire.gov.uk</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Part exempt Urgent</p>
Portfolio: economy and growth					
Portfolio: environment					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Adoption of the Dormington & Mordiford Neighbourhood Plan and the consequential updates to the countywide policies map</p> <p>To make the revised Dormington & Mordiford neighbourhood development plan (NDP) as part of the statutory development plan for Herefordshire and approve the consequential updates to the countywide policies maps.</p> <p>To fulfil the legal duty to make /adopt the revised Dormington & Mordiford neighbourhood development plan and update the countywide policies map as part of the statutory development plan for Herefordshire.</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment</p> <p>3 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment</p> <p>Siobhan Riddle, Acting Strategic & Neighbourhood Planning Manager</p> <p><small>sriddle@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260142</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>Non Key</p> <p>Open</p>
<p>Allocating the Climate and Nature Reserve Phase 2</p> <p>To Allocate the balance of the Climate and Nature Reserve for the delivery of projects which will positively impact the climate and natural environment of Herefordshire to the benefit of all who reside in the county.</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment</p> <p>27 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment</p> <p>Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager</p> <p><small>Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY</p> <p>Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Solar Car Ports at Plough Lane To approve the scoping and construction of solar car ports at Plough Lane</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment 20 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment Katie Ainsworth, Senior Project Manager, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager, Rosanna Willmott, Sustainability and Climate Change Officer <small>katie.ainsworth2@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk, rosanna.willmott@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192, Tel: 01432 261749</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Adoption of Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy To formally adopt the Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and accept associated government grant for delivery.</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment 17 April 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member environment Mandy Neill, Senior Landscape Officer, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager <small>mandy.neill@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192</small></p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Portfolio: finance and corporate services</p>					

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
Portfolio: local engagement and community resilience					
<p>The New Public Realm Service – Depot Facilities This report seeks approval to procure and undertake any necessary works to depot and other facilities as required to deliver the New Public Realm Service from 1 June 2026.</p>	<p>Cabinet member local engagement and community resilience 19 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member local engagement and community resilience Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786</p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
Portfolio: roads and regulatory services					
<p>Highway Maintenance Plan To update the Highway Maintenance Plan, which sets out the reasonable system of inspection and repair that will be deployed by the Council to ensure that it meets its duty to maintain all publicly maintainable highways.</p>	<p>Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 27 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786</p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
<p>Public Realm Services Annual Plan –2026/27 To confirm the annual plan of public realm works that will be delivered in line with capital and revenue budgets and in accordance with the Council’s Highway Asset Management Plan and Highway Maintenance Plan.</p>	<p>Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 28 February 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member local engagement and community resilience, Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Ed Bradford, Head of Highways and Traffic Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786</p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>KEY Open</p>
<p>Portfolio: transport and infrastructure</p>					
<p>Capability and Ambition Fund 2025/26 allocation The purpose of the report is to confirm what Herefordshire Council will deliver with the Capability and Ambition Fund grant</p>	<p>Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 2 March 2026</p>	<p>Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager, Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk, scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192</p>	<p>Economy and Environment</p>	<p>30 January 2026</p>	<p>Non Key Open</p>

Report title and purpose	Decision Maker and Due date	Lead cabinet member and officer contact(s)	Directorate	Date uploaded onto plan	Decision Type, exemptions and urgency
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APPENDIX 3

Recommendations made By Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in 2025

15 January 2025			
Local Transport Plan			
No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	As per a previous recommendation from Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee, environmental protection and enhancement needs to be better reflected throughout the high-level Local Transport Plan objectives and throughout its priorities for the transport network. This should reflect and align with our climate and ecological emergency declaration.	Accepted	<p>Throughout the LTP there is strong focus on the need to support and focus on the way the plan can align and support the environmental protection of the county. There are five core objectives listed in the LTP, one being “Tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. By creating a transport system that offers viable low emission options for most journeys and influences travel behaviours and decisions.”</p> <p>The plan identifies actions needed to be taken to achieve this objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of traffic travelling through the city centre. • Transition to less polluting types of propulsion through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Providing more Electric Vehicle charging points. o Roll out zero emission buses in Hereford city. • Support transition of freight to sustainable modes in the city centre. <p>Within the plan there are also Action Plans for Hereford City and the Rural areas/Market Towns within these there are 11 objectives to support the Council Plan priorities –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards reducing county and council carbon emissions, aiming for net zero by 2030/31 and work with partners and communities to make the county more resilient to the effects of climate change.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and maintain the transport infrastructure in a sustainable way and improve connectivity across the county. <p>Decarbonising maintenance Production of a Low Carbon Procurement Strategy</p> <p>Decarbonising maintenance Develop an approach to considering carbon in scheme design</p> <p>Decarbonising maintenance Reduce carbon emissions from street lighting</p> <p>Decarbonising maintenance Upgrade and enhance traffic signals</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Increased provision of public Electric Vehicle chargers</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Promote the use of peer-to-peer charging networks</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Regular update of Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy</p> <p>Digital Access</p> <p>Promote online services and digital accessibility</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Promotion of peer-to-peer charging networks</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Delivery of LEVI funded on street charge points in all market towns</p> <p>Transition to lower emission fuels Delivery of EV charge points in council car parks</p>
2	<p>The Local Transport Plan team to work with other rural local transport plan teams in England, as well as our neighbouring authorities, to build on best practice and an alliance of rural local transport plans to strengthen the case for rural transport to the government.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Since the Scrutiny meeting the council has filled the Transport Planning Service Manager post with an officer from a neighbouring rural authority and the remaining posts for the team are team are to be progressed through recruitment. There continues to be close links to neighbouring councils and other rural councils remains strong</p>

3	To provide the committee with a consultation strategy for the local transport plan, to include a timeline for the consultation and a list of consultees.	Accepted	Cllr O'Driscoll has been liaised with regarding the planned consultation for the LTP and future cabinet/full council meetings. Officers were not aware of the requirement to return to scrutiny prior to the consultation.
4	To ensure that any active travel projects are 'shovel-ready' for any funding that becomes available.	Accepted	Once the plan has been fully adopted it is anticipated that several priority projects will be identified and progressed through concept design, if funding is available. Progressing schemes to the colloquially referenced 'shovel ready' stage requires substantial external funding to be sought. .

Market Towns Investment Plans

No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Herefordshire Council to: Recognise that the market town investment plans are living documents with projects that are regularly reviewed and updated.	Accepted	Agreed
2	Herefordshire Council to: Work with town councils to review annually the list of projects in each of the market towns' investment plans.	Accepted	Agreed
3	Herefordshire Council to: Ensure regular communications between the council and Herefordshire's market towns.	Accepted	Agreed
4	Herefordshire Council to: Encourage town councils to engage with their rural hinterlands on their ambitions, thus strengthening the understanding and loyalty to their local service centre.	Accepted	Agreed

12 March 2025

Highways Winter Maintenance

No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Review and update the primary and secondary routes on the gritting network.	Accepted	Officers will complete a review of the gritting network and present their findings to the Cabinet Member for Roads and

			Regulatory Services. It is likely that any changes, if required, would not come into effect until the 2026/27 winter season.
2	Undertake an audit of the number and location of local authority-owned grit bins.	Accepted	Officers will discuss with Balfour Beatty Living Places as to how an audit can be undertaken of grit bins as they re-filled as part of the normal preparations ahead of the winter season.
3	Carry out comprehensive publicity to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of the commissioned professional weather services resulting from accurate forecasting.	Accepted	Officers will arrange for such publicity as part of the communications plan for the 2025/26 winter season.
Update on recommendations made by the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee			
No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Ensures that the statutory scrutiny officer drafts a cross-scrutiny committee protocol, to ensure timely responses with faster escalation as required to outstanding recommendations.	Rejected	Rather than draft a protocol, the scrutiny team have instead focussed on supporting officers to draft recommendations. There are currently no overdue responses to recommendations.

3 June 2025**Cultural Strategy 2019-29**

No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Herefordshire Council formally endorses the renewed Cultural Strategy 2025-2029 and the key findings of the 5th Sector report.	Accepted	Agreed, with clarification. Cabinet Member / Cabinet recognises the Cultural Strategy 2025–2029 and the 5th Sector report as externally led, sector-produced documents, developed through extensive engagement with cultural partners. In this context, endorsement means formal Council recognition of the strategy and report as valuable frameworks that can guide collaborative working, influence internal policy, and support external funding bids. Endorsement does not imply a commitment to deliver or fund every recommendation but

			confirms the Council's willingness to support and align with the shared vision set out.
2	Herefordshire Council to support Herefordshire Cultural Partnership to produce an implementation plan to deliver the renewed Cultural Strategy 2025-29.	Accepted	<p>Agreed, with clarification.</p> <p>Cabinet Member / Cabinet supports the development of an implementation plan to take forward the Cultural Strategy and recognises the importance of clear next steps and shared accountability. However, the Cultural Strategy is an Herefordshire Cultural Partnership-led (HCP) document, and it is appropriate that responsibility for the implementation plan also sits with the Cultural Partnership.</p> <p>The Council is willing to engage in the development of the plan, offer officer input, and help ensure alignment with council policy and delivery where appropriate.</p>
3	Herefordshire Council ensures there is a dedicated officer to work with the partnership to produce and deliver the strategy's implementation plan.	Accepted	<p>Partly agreed.</p> <p>Cabinet Member / Cabinet recognises the importance of officer capacity to support delivery of the Cultural Strategy and remains committed to contributing to its success. However, decisions regarding staffing and resource allocation are operational matters and sit outside the remit of Scrutiny Committee recommendations. Cabinet Member / Cabinet will review current capacity as part of wider workforce planning, including consideration of how best to support partnership working and strategy implementation across culture.</p>
4	Herefordshire Council to ensure the updated Cultural Strategy 2025-29 is reflected in economic development and health and social care service delivery, including the evolving Talk Community network.	Accepted	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>Cabinet Member / Cabinet recognises the value of embedding cultural priorities across wider council activity and will encourage further alignment where appropriate. Officers will explore opportunities to reflect the Cultural Strategy within</p>

			relevant service areas, including Economic Development, Public Health, and Talk Community. Recognising that integration will be dependent on respective service plans, capacity, and strategic fit.
5	Herefordshire Council highlight the Cultural Strategy 2025-29 to town and parish councils and encourage engagement and support for local initiatives.	Accepted	<p>Agreed in principle.</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of local engagement and welcomes opportunities for town and parish councils to support cultural activity. A targeted communication campaign could help raise awareness of the strategy and encourage participation at a community level. The Cabinet Member may wish to lead this as part of their engagement role.</p>
6	Herefordshire Council assist with the development and promotion of co-working and creative hub spaces for creatives to access shared resources and facilities to support development of new culture-based businesses in Herefordshire.	Accepted	<p>Agreed in principle</p> <p>The Cabinet Member / Cabinet supports the principle of co-working and creative hubs as valuable enablers of growth within the cultural and creative sectors. While the Council is not positioned to lead or fund such development directly, it is committed to working alongside the Economic Development team and external partners to identify opportunities, share information, and advocate for creative workspace provision where appropriate. This includes aligning with regeneration plans and the wider ambitions of the cultural and economic strategies.</p>
Local Transport Plan			
No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	That the draft Local Transport Plan is reviewed to ensure alignment with existing council plans and strategies.	Partly agreed	Partly agreed – ongoing review of alignment to future council plans and strategies
2	That the Local Transport Plan gives particular consideration to the needs of children and young people	Partly agreed	Partly agreed, the plan does consider the needs of all the transport users of the county therefore it is rejected that the plan would require amendment. However the engagement of the children and young people has been recognised by

			Officers and as discussed at scrutiny ways of engaging with them has been identified as an ongoing piece of work for all Transport Planning work and that is outside the LTP as regular engagement and support would give greater benefits to them rather than just focus on the LTP document
3	The duration of the Local Transport Plan is kept in alignment with the Local Plan and Transport Strategy to which it applies - namely 2016-2031.	Rejected	Reject, this does not provide any benefit to the county and would incur significant costs to the council to create a new plan in 6 years. The alignment of the Local Plan with the Local Transport Plan is not required by legislation nor is it a formal recommendation by government. As advised by officers at the meeting; throughout the development of the Local Plan there will be a continued review of the projects and recommendations needed in the Local Transport Plan which may result in a review and update of the LTP.
4	Herefordshire Council work to increase the number of residents taking part in the Local Transport Plan consultation as a matter of urgency, extending the consultation deadline to 30 June to all members of the public.	Accepted	Agreed, the public consultation will be extended until the 30 June.
5	The policy wording of the Local Transport Plan is tightened to ensure that it is meaningful and capable of being applied.	Rejected	Rejected – It is important to acknowledge that severity of wording is subjective however it is felt that the wording of the LTP does allow it to be meaningfully applied
6	The Local Transport Plan recognises the full extent of existing new developments, for example Ledbury, and the infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate this.	Partly agreed	Partly agreed – while the LTP will be fundamental in the development and decision making around infrastructure of new developments when a planning application is applied for, it is not a mechanism to resolve existing issues caused by previously built developments. However, as the new Local Plan is developed existing highway issues will be identified and recognised where any new development is recommended.
7	The Local Transport Plan should include targets for the implementation of active travel measures.	Agreed	Agreed

8	The Local Transport Plan recognises the inability of the power grid network to meet the needs of fast EV charging point.	Rejected	Rejected – the LTP is a transport policy document it is not an energy infrastructure plan and deviation into energy provision could over complicate and dilute the primary focus of the LTP which is transport. Officers developing and managing the LTP do not have access to detailed, real-time data on grid capacity or future demand forecasts to make such statements. Additionally, the LTP is a 16-year plan meaning such statement may quickly become outdated and inaccurate.
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8 July 2025**Gully Cleansing**

No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	To provide the committee with an update on the current mapping operation and to provide a date by which the mapping will be completed.	Accepted	Asset data was collected by Town and Parish Councils through the 2024/25 drainage grant, which has now concluded. Mapping of drainage assets continues on a day-to-day basis through the existing arrangement with Balfour Beatty Living Places and will carry on through the new Public Realm Contract, via Herefordshire Council officers and also the new provider from June 2026. It is not possible at this time to provide a date for when all mapping will be completed.
2	To consider early adoption of the upgraded mapping software before the new contract comes into force in June 2026.	Accepted	A basic interim solution is in use on our website at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/flooding-2/flood-management/3#gulliesmap . The upgraded mapping software has been included in the requirements for the new contract, which we expect to be mobilised from late January/February 2026. Once the mapping software is in place we will begin the process of adding known assets based on existing knowledge and data collected by Town and Parish Councils through the 2024/25 drainage grant.

3	To provide an update on the new maintenance schedule that anticipates heavier rainfall across the county with an expected publication date.	Accepted	Balfour Beatty Living Places is expanding its drainage service to include a more comprehensive programmed cleanse of all gullies on A, B, and C roads. This represents the pre-emptive element of our drainage works and complements the existing reactive gully cleaning service, which responds to issues identified through inspections or defect reporting. It also sits alongside our network rehabilitation service, which addresses gullies and drainage systems requiring more substantial intervention following inspections or reactive works. The new Public Realm Contract will see the creation of an annual cleansing programme become the responsibility of Herefordshire Council, which will then be issued to the new provider to complete. The service will also move to a risk-based approach, ensuring that those areas identified as being at risk from existing datasets or previous events are subject to more frequent cleansing.
4	To provide an update on the £2 million flood resilience grant.	Accepted	A PGC meeting is scheduled for 4 September to consider how the additional £2,055,000 investment in flood risk mitigation is proposed to be allocated. We intend to distribute the funding in line with the principles outlined in Herefordshire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, focusing on scheme delivery, scheme development, community support, and the use of technology.

9 September 2025

Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

No.	Recommendation	Accepted/Rejected	Response
1	Ensure that the performance indicators monitoring the success of the Local Transport Plan include indicators showing reduced collisions, reduced emissions, and greater take up of walking and cycling as a mode of transport.	Accepted	Agreed – officers will review the current LTP KPI's that relate to the LCWIP and include additional measures as indicated above

2	Ensure that any targets in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are Specific, Measurable, Agreed (or Achievable), Realistic, and Time Bound.	Accepted	Agreed – officer will review the document and ensure that the targets are given measures as prescribed above
3	Publish the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan implementation plan, prioritisation list and programme of work by the end of 2025.	Accepted	Agreed – the current stage of work for the project is prioritising the list of projects that have been identified pre and post consultation. Once this has been completed and once the external funding provided to us has been announced this autumn the programme of work will be completed and will be returned to Scrutiny Committee for review.