

Agenda

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday 21 September 2026**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **Conference Room 2 - 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, please call Simon Cann, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 260667 or e-mail simon.cann@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson	Councillor Louis Stark
Vice-chairperson	Councillor Justine Peberdy
	Councillor Elizabeth Foxton
	Councillor Robert Highfield
	Councillor Nick Mason
	Councillor Rob Owens
	Councillor Richard Thomas

Agenda

Pages

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.

4. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2026.

9 - 14

HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS

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Full details about asking questions and the deadlines at public meetings can be found here: [constitution of the council](#).

Guidance for questions being submitted for scrutiny [can be found here](#).

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. TRANSFORMATION OF THE ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

To provide the committee with an overview of the transformation of the economy and environment directorate.

[Papers to follow]

8. BUS AND PASSENGER SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

To provide the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee with the final report of its Bus and Passenger Services Task and Finish Group.

15 - 50

9. WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme for the committee.

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 2 December 2026, 10am

51 - 102

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- 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.
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- 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
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The seven principles of public life

(Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Minutes of the meeting of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee held at Conference Room 2 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Wednesday 17 June 2026 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Louis Stark (chairperson)
Councillor Justine Peberdy (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Elizabeth Foxton, Robert Highfield, Daniel, Nick Mason, Rob Owens and Richard Thomas

In attendance: Councillors Dan Hurcomb (Cabinet Member Local Engagement and Community Resilience), Elissa Swinglehurst (Cabinet Member Culture and Environment).

Officers: Shona Butter (Principal Public Rights of Way Officer), Simon Cann (Committee Clerk), Steve Hodges (Group Manager - Flood Risk Management), Danial Webb (Statutory Scrutiny Officer), Rosanna Willmott (River Help Officer, *virtual attendee*).

162. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received.

163. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There had been no named substitutes.

164. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

165. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

166. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

167. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from members of the council.

168. LAND USE MANAGEMENT

The report was taken as read and the item was opened up to committee members and attendees. The key points of the discussion are detailed below:

1. Members asked whether the council paid sufficient attention to land use across the county and whether it maintained a clear record of how land was being used. Officers explained that while detailed mapping existed through the Environment Agency, the council itself mainly tracked broad trends such as changes from pasture to arable land. Because farming practices change year to year, there was no fixed or complete inventory, but there was general awareness of major shifts and their implications.
2. The committee questioned what powers the council had over land use and whether it could control how landowners managed their land. The response clarified that the council had very limited direct powers. Its role was mostly to influence through advice, engagement, and partnership working, only stepping in with enforcement where land use caused clear harm to public assets such as roads, drainage systems, or public rights of way.
3. Members enquired what the council was doing, in practice, to monitor harms arising from land use. Officers responded that the focus was less on monitoring land use itself and more on identifying its impacts. This was done through inspections, reports from the public, and local knowledge, with intervention occurring when issues such as flooding, runoff, or obstructions arose.
4. Members asked what more could be done to prevent problems before they occurred rather than reacting afterwards. Officers and Cabinet members highlighted work on engagement and education, including partnerships with organisations like the NFU and CLA, as well as initiatives such as the River Conference, natural flood management schemes, and farm-level environmental support. These efforts aimed to influence behaviour early, although they depended on voluntary cooperation.
5. The committee queried how engagement with farmers and landowners currently operated and whether it was sufficient. Officers explained that there were established channels such as the Herefordshire Rural Hub and Farm Herefordshire partnership, which acted as key routes for disseminating advice and encouraging good practice. However, it was acknowledged that engagement had its limits, particularly with those who were less willing to participate.
6. The committee asked about the costs associated with maintaining the public realm and how much was spent overall. The response stated that approximately £6.5 million was spent annually, covering roads, rights of way, trees, and infrastructure. Historically, only a small proportion of this had been directed toward preventative work, although this was now increasing.
7. Turning to enforcement, members asked whether the council's current approach was effective and consistent. The response acknowledged weaknesses in the system, noting that while a process existed -- from informal discussion through to potential legal action -- it did not always progress as intended. Cases could stall before reaching formal enforcement, which reduced the deterrent effect.
8. Members asked why enforcement often failed to progress. Officers and cabinet members explained that this could be due to resource constraints, complex legal processes, or breakdowns in the escalation process. In some cases, issues were partly resolved informally and never formally recorded, giving the impression that enforcement was weaker than it might actually be.

9. The committee asked whether enforcement should distinguish between accidental or negligent behaviour and deliberate wrongdoing. In response, there was broad agreement that it should. It was suggested that enforcement policy ought to differentiate between such situations, applying stronger action in cases of wilful non-compliance.
10. Members questioned whether the existing enforcement policy was fit for purpose. Officers confirmed that the overarching policy, last reviewed several years ago, would benefit from an update, particularly to make it clearer and more consistent in how decisions are made and applied.
11. In relation to enforcement costs, members asked whether pursuing legal action was financially worthwhile. Officers explained that enforcement could be expensive and time-consuming, with no guarantee that costs would be recovered. This was one reason why the council prioritised prevention and early engagement wherever possible.
12. The committee raised questions about what happened when cases did proceed to legal action. Officers explained that such cases could be lengthy, complex, and costly, and even when successful they did not always deliver a complete resolution.
13. The committee enquired why there had been so few prosecutions relating to public rights of way. The response clarified that most issues were resolved before reaching court, often through direct negotiation with landowners. However, it was also acknowledged that poor data made it difficult to assess the true extent of enforcement activity.
14. The committee questioned whether reporting systems for public rights of way were adequate. Officers responded that improvements had been made, including more precise location tools and better data access for parishes, but acknowledged that data quality and consistency presented an ongoing challenge.
15. Members asked whether enforcement powers were used sufficiently in relation to rights of way. The response highlighted differing views: officers suggested the approach was broadly in line with other authorities, but councillors expressed concern that stronger action could sometimes be needed.
16. Members enquired about how effective early intervention was. Officers reported that approximately 90% of cases were resolved at the initial stage through direct contact and negotiation, demonstrating the importance of building good relationships with landowners.
17. Members asked about the council's responsibilities for infrastructure on public rights of way. The response clarified that the council was generally responsible for bridges and some signage, contributes partially to gate and stile replacement, but did not maintain all infrastructure elements.
18. Regarding sustainable farming, members asked what the council was doing to support more environmentally responsible practices. Officers outlined a range of initiatives including carbon audits, nutrient management work, and trials to improve soil health, all aimed at supporting farmers to adopt more sustainable methods.
19. The committee asked whether the council had any regulatory role in farming practices. The response made it clear that regulation sat with national bodies

such as the Environment Agency. The council's role was supportive and advisory, rather than regulatory.

20. Members queried whether work on climate change and river pollution should be treated separately. Officers and cabinet members responded that the two were closely linked, with many farming practices delivering benefits to both, making separation difficult and arguably unnecessary.
21. The committee enquired as to how best practice was communicated to farmers. The response highlighted established networks such as the Rural Hub, NFU, and other partnerships as effective channels, although reaching less engaged landowners remained a challenge.
22. The committee asked whether activities such as flood management, farming practices, and infrastructure protection were brought together into a single risk management approach. Officers acknowledged that while coordination exists, it was largely informal and not captured within a single, structured framework.
23. Members asked whether there should be a more coherent and formalised risk strategy. Officers accepted this as a potential improvement, while noting the complexity of coordinating multiple teams and external organisations across a constantly changing landscape.
24. The committee asked about collaboration with external bodies such as the Environment Agency. Officers confirmed that joint working did take place, but noted that enforcement capacity at a national level was limited, and that effective action often depended on reporting and collaboration.
25. Councillors asked whether natural flood management schemes were effective. The response confirmed that they could be highly beneficial, but progress depended on voluntary participation by landowners and the availability of funding.
26. Members queried whether there were opportunities to work with other organisations, such as canal trusts, to support flood mitigation. Officers indicated that while there had been some engagement, this was not currently a major area of activity, but could be explored further.
27. The committee asked whether the council could challenge national policies that may not suit local conditions. The response suggested that while specific issues could be raised, influencing national policy was difficult, and progress was more likely to be made through dialogue and targeted engagement rather than direct challenge.

At the conclusion of the debate the committee discussed and agreed the following recommendations. That:

- 1. That Herefordshire Council should consider ways to better signpost landowners to schemes to support engagement and education with regard to their land management responsibilities**
- 2. With interested partners, the executive should develop a plan for facilitating and enhancing its current work, including the promotion of land use management, to reduce the risk to the public realm.**
- 3. That the public rights of way team review and amend their reporting framework so that it better reflects the process that they follow**

4. **That the executive review current enforcement practices with all relevant partners and agree a co-ordinated and consistent approach to enforcement, to strengthen action against those with land use management responsibilities who do not comply.**

169. BUS SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

The Chair of the task and finish group provided the committee with an update. The key points are detailed below:

1. Limited funding was a primary constraint on improving services, despite clear ambition and capability within the council and among some operators. Alongside this, poor data availability -- particularly from commercial bus operators -- limited the council's ability to assess performance, compare services or make informed decisions.
2. Community transport played a vital role beyond mobility, delivering social connection and health benefits. While these services were relatively low cost due to volunteer involvement, their capacity was limited. The group supported strengthening their role and representation in decision-making, while recognising that traditional cost measures underestimated their wider value.
3. The group had examined home-to-school transport, including steps to reduce reliance on costly taxi provision. A detailed case study of the subsidised Route 66 was being undertaken to assess usage, costs and contract terms, as it provides accessible data not available for most commercial routes.
4. Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes often had high costs and low passenger numbers, with a high national failure rate. However, some successful examples showed potential where targeted appropriately, particularly in rural areas, and this option remained under consideration.
5. The government's free bus travel scheme for under-16s presented both challenges and opportunities. Operator participation could be limited due to administrative burdens, and the group was exploring ways the council could provide short-term financial support. The scheme was also seen as an opportunity to gather valuable data to support future funding bids.
6. The council should prioritise trying to increase its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding allocation, as comparable authorities received significantly more. Achieving this would require stronger data collection, clear evidence of ambition, and delivery of low-cost improvements such as service pilots, updated policies, and progress on decarbonisation.
7. The transition to greener bus fleets was constrained by operator resources. One potential solution was a leasing model, where the council owned vehicles and operators ran them, helping to overcome financial barriers to investment.
8. The county's rural geography and low population density significantly limited service viability and funding potential. This context underpinned the group's pragmatic approach and would be central to explaining its recommendations.
9. The group would complete its final review, agree recommendations, and engage key decision-makers before submitting its report for September 2026. The focus would be on producing practical, deliverable actions to improve the council's ability to secure funding and strengthen bus services within existing constraints.

170. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee discussed its work programme, this included planning future items on:

- Carbon management, including whether the council can achieve net zero and/or net negative emissions.
- The role of carbon capture, particularly given the county's rural characteristics.
- A rail strategy review, covering improvements to existing infrastructure and potential new rail links.

Resolved: The committee agreed to hold a work programme planning session at the earliest convenient opportunity.

171. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Monday 21 September 2026, 10am

The meeting ended at 13:00

Chairperson



Title: Bus and Passenger Services Task and Finish Group - Final Report

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 21 September 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

To provide the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee with the final report of its Bus and Passenger Services Task and Finish Group.

Background

1. The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee agreed as a priority for its work programme to set up a task and finish group to scrutinise bus and passenger transport services in Herefordshire. The group's work programme has been completed, and concludes with an agreed final report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

Meeting objectives

2. To note the final report of the Bus and Passenger Services Task and Finish Group.
3. To agree the group's recommendations to the executive.

Report information

4. At its meeting on 16 December 2025, the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a task and finish group to scrutinise bus and passenger transport operations and strategy in Herefordshire.
5. The review sought to examine:
 - a. How Herefordshire Council currently uses its powers and responsibilities to shape bus provision.
 - b. How other rural authorities deliver passenger transport.
 - c. Whether funding is being used effectively.
 - d. Delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
 - e. The effectiveness of Enhanced Partnership arrangements.

- f. Opportunities arising from the Bus Services Act 2025.
 - g. Cross-county and cross-border connectivity.
 - h. The role of the Marches Forward Partnership.
 - i. Community transport opportunities.
 - j. Demand Responsive Transport opportunities.
 - k. Future funding and delivery models.
6. The group's final report to the committee is attached as Appendix 1. The report makes a number of recommendations for the committee to consider:
- a. **Strengthen Public Transport Data and Evidence**
The council should strengthen the collection, analysis and sharing of transport data across the passenger transport network, making full use of existing fleet technology, real-time vehicle tracking and ticketing systems to improve performance monitoring, compliance management and evidence-based decision-making. This should include information on passenger demand, reliability, punctuality, subsidy levels, rural travel patterns and SEND transport pressures, enabling greater accountability, more effective targeting of investment and stronger long-term transport planning.
 - b. **Strengthen the Enhanced Partnership**
The Enhanced Partnership should develop a more structured approach to performance monitoring, accountability and data sharing, and should include structured engagement with Community Transport Providers as part of partnership discussions and future accessibility planning. Regular reporting and agreed performance measures will help support evidence-led decision-making, collaborative problem solving and continuous improvement across the network.
 - c. **Improve Passenger Information and Minimise Service Disruption**
The council and operators should improve real-time information, disruption communications, timetable information and digital journey-planning tools. Highway works should be planned and coordinated to minimise impacts on bus reliability and ensure passengers receive clear and timely information during service disruptions. Establish a single, council-led point of contact for passenger feedback, complaints and service suggestions to improve accountability, identify recurring issues and provide greater oversight of network performance.
 - d. **Timely BNAP Integration**
The council should ensure that future transport contracts, network planning and investment decisions align with the requirements of the Bus Network Accessibility Plan and actively involve disabled passengers and community transport providers in its development.
 - e. **Improve Integration Between Bus and Rail Services**
The council should work with bus and rail operators to improve connections at interchange points, particularly Hereford, Leominster and Ledbury stations, through better timetable coordination, passenger information, wayfinding and journey planning. Improved integration will make public transport more convenient and attractive for longer journeys.
 - f. **Strengthen and sustain not for profit operators including those licensed as community transport operators**
The council should recognise not for profit operators as a strategic component of Herefordshire's passenger transport network by strengthening its representation within the Enhanced Partnership, ensuring meaningful involvement in Bus Network Accessibility Plan development and wider accessibility planning, maintaining appropriate financial support, and supporting long-term organisational sustainability through fleet renewal, volunteer development and capacity building. Community transport should be fully integrated into wider transport planning as a key contributor to accessibility, social inclusion and independent living.

g. Develop a Long-Term Integrated Transport Strategy as part of the daughter documents of the Local Transport Plan

The council should prepare a long-term strategy for passenger transport that brings together network development, rural mobility, integration across transport modes, accessibility, decarbonisation, technological innovation, funding, governance and regional collaboration. The strategy should provide a clear framework for future decision-making, investment, workforce challenges, vehicle flexibility and alternative operating models, ensuring that Herefordshire's transport network remains sustainable, inclusive and responsive to future opportunities and challenges.

h. Adopt an Evidence-Led Approach to Rural Mobility Innovation

The council should explore more appropriate supply to rural transport and other emerging rural mobility solutions only where there is clear evidence of passenger demand, value for money and compatibility with existing transport provision. Any future initiatives should be subject to robust evaluation.

Consultees

7. The groups and people consulted by the task and finish group are included in the group's final report, which is attached as Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Bus and Passenger Services Task and Finish Group - Final Report

Background papers and resources

None identified

BUS AND PASSENGER SERVICES

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

BUS AND PASSENGER SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Chair's Foreword



Public transport is more than a means of getting from one place to another; it is a fundamental requirement to access opportunity, independence and social connection for people across Herefordshire. For many residents, particularly those living in rural communities, older people, young people and those without access to a car, buses and community transport are essential lifelines. They enable access to work, education, healthcare, shops, social activities and wider regional opportunities. When these services falter, the effects are felt immediately and deeply.

The task and finish group was established to look at how well Herefordshire's transport system is meeting the needs of our communities. Over several months, group members engaged with operators, community transport providers, council officers, neighbouring authorities and residents. They examined the pressures facing the network, the opportunities created by recent investment, and the structural challenges that continue to limit reliability, accessibility and long-term sustainability.

We found a system that is improving, but still fragile. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding has delivered visible benefits, including new services, Sunday provision and upgraded infrastructure. Partnership working has strengthened, and community transport continues to provide exceptional social value. Yet long-standing issues remain. Rural isolation, rising SEND transport costs, limited commercial viability, inconsistent data, constrained powers over commercial operators, and the impact of congestion and roadworks all place significant pressure on the network. These challenges cannot be solved through short-term interventions alone.

The group's recommendations reflect the need for a more strategic and integrated approach to the network. We must strengthen data provision and accountability, improve integration between bus, rail, community transport and school transport, and ensure that passenger information is clear, accessible and reliable. We must prioritise buses in infrastructure planning, maintain strong partnership working, and prepare for future legislative changes. Above all, we must adopt a long-term strategy that recognises the realities of rural transport and supports sustainable mobility for all residents.

I would like to thank all members of the task and finish group, the officers who supported our work, and the operators, advisers and community organisations who contributed their time and expertise. Their insights have been invaluable.

Cllr Justine Peberdy
Chair, Bus Services Task and Finish Group

Table of Contents

Chair's Foreword	2
Task and Finish Group Members	4
Acknowledgements	5
Terms of Reference	7
Existing Powers and Responsibilities	8
Existing and Future Funding	9
The Enhanced Partnership	12
Data and Performance Management	14
Opportunities Created by the Bus Services Act 2025	16
Other Local Authorities	18
Cross-Border Connectivity and The Marches Forward Partnership	20
School, SEND and Social Care Transport	22
Community Transport	23
Future Transport Opportunities	25
Conclusions	27
Recommendations	29
Glossary	31

Task and Finish Group Members



Cllr Justine Peberdy - Chair

Cllr Justine Peberdy is the Green Party councillor for Ledbury West. She serves as Vice-Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee and is Chair of Herefordshire Local Access Forum. She has a professional background in arts, heritage and project management with an interest in sustainable transport, accessibility and rural connectivity issues.



Cllr Polly Andrews

Cllr Polly Andrews is the Liberal Democrat councillor for Widemarsh and currently serves as Chairperson of the Licensing Sub-Committee. She has represented residents on Herefordshire Council since 2011 and brings extensive experience of local government and community service.



Cllr Robert Highfield

Cllr Robert Highfield is the Conservative councillor for Castle Ward. He serves on the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee.



Cllr Nick Mason

Cllr Nick Mason is the unaligned Councillor for Weobley, representing a large rural ward in north-west Herefordshire. He is a member of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee and is actively engaged in local issues including transport, road safety, flooding and rural infrastructure.



Cllr Richard Thomas

Cllr Richard Thomas is the Conservative councillor for Wormside Ward, representing a predominantly rural area in south-west Herefordshire. He serves on the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, Planning and Regulatory Committee and the Scrutiny Management Board.



Cllr Rebecca Tully

Cllr Rebecca Tully is the Green Party councillor for Bishops Frome and Cradley and serves as Vice-Chairperson of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. Elected in 2024, she has more than 25 years' experience in teaching, training and community development, having worked with the NHS, voluntary organisations, local authorities and community groups.

Acknowledgements

The Bus Services Task and Finish Group wishes to formally express its sincere appreciation to all those who generously contributed their time, insight, and expertise throughout this review.

Name	Role	Organisation
Martin Allen	Councillor	Worcestershire County Council
Natalie Amos	BSIP and Enhanced Partnership Manager	Herefordshire Council
Tim Barnes	Chair of the Herefordshire Community Transport Forum	Community Action Ledbury
Simon Cann	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
Gemma Dando	Chief Operating Officer - Resident Services	Herefordshire Council
Danny Douglas	Public Transport Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
John Hobbs	Corporate Director, Economy and Environment	Herefordshire Council
Ffion Horton	Transport Planning Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
Beki Hoyland	Councillor	Gloucestershire County Council
David Land	Head of Transport and Access Services	Herefordshire Council
Craig Lewis	Transport Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
Les Lumsdon		Rail and Bus for Herefordshire
Cllr Philip Price	Cabinet member for Transport and Infrastructure	Herefordshire Council
Clare Stone	Director	Buses4Us
Danial Webb	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	Herefordshire Council
Jonathan Woodward	Transport Officer	Herefordshire Council

Introduction

Herefordshire is one of the most rural unitary authorities in England and faces significant challenges in providing affordable, reliable and accessible public transport. The Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-2028 identifies poor transport connectivity as a major challenge affecting access to employment, education, healthcare, tourism and economic growth.

Public transport provision in Herefordshire has been shaped by long-term demographic, economic and societal changes that have contributed to a sustained decline in bus patronage over recent decades. Department for Transport data shows that local bus passenger journeys in Herefordshire fell from over 3 million journeys per year in 2009/10 to just over 2 million by 2018/19, with passenger journeys per head of population declining by 46% between 2009/10 and 2019/20. This reduction reflects not only changes within the transport network itself but also wider societal trends, including increased car ownership, changing patterns of employment, the growth of online shopping, greater remote and hybrid working, and the challenges of maintaining viable services across a large and sparsely populated rural county. While recent investment through the Bus Service Improvement Plan has helped improve and protect parts of the network, the long-term decline in bus use demonstrates the scale of the challenge facing public transport in Herefordshire and highlights the need for a sustainable and integrated approach to future transport provision.

The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee therefore established a task and finish group to examine bus and community transport provision across the county.

Terms of Reference

The review sought to examine:

- How Herefordshire Council currently uses its powers and responsibilities to shape bus provision.
- How other rural authorities deliver passenger transport.
- Whether funding is being used effectively.
- Delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- The effectiveness of Enhanced Partnership arrangements.
- Opportunities arising from the Bus Services Act 2025.
- Cross-county and cross-border connectivity.
- The role of the Marches Forward Partnership.
- Community transport opportunities.
- Demand Responsive Transport opportunities.
- Future funding and delivery models.

Evidence Gathered

The group received evidence from:

- Herefordshire Council officers
- Commercial bus operators/Enhanced Partnership
- Community transport providers
- Neighbouring authorities
- National guidance and legislation
- Passenger/resident feedback
- The Marches Forward Partnership
- Network user apps

The chapters that follow examine the council's existing transport powers and responsibilities, current funding arrangements, recent service improvements and opportunities for future development, before presenting the group's conclusions and recommendations.

Existing Powers and Responsibilities

The Herefordshire Transport Context

Herefordshire's public transport network operates within one of the most rural areas of England, where dispersed communities, low population density and long journey distances make it difficult to sustain frequent commercial bus services. The network is delivered through a mix of commercial bus services, council-supported routes, school and [Special Educational Needs and Disability](#) (SEND) transport, [community transport](#) and cross-border services, creating a complex system with multiple funding and operational arrangements.

Commercial vs Council Supported Services

The review highlighted the important distinction between subsidised and commercial bus services. Where Herefordshire Council provides financial support for a service, it can specify routes, timetables, vehicle standards, ticketing arrangements, reporting requirements and performance expectations through contractual agreements. These arrangements enable the council to monitor performance and exercise direct influence over service quality where public funding is provided.

By contrast, wholly commercial services operate within the deregulated bus market. Decisions relating to routes, fares, frequencies and service levels remain primarily the responsibility of operators, and the council's influence is largely limited to partnership working, infrastructure investment and constructive engagement. Oversight of operator performance is provided through the national regulatory framework administered by the [Traffic Commissioners](#).

This distinction is important because it shapes both accountability and the council's ability to intervene. Members found that the council possesses significant powers where services are publicly supported but has more limited influence over commercial operations. As a result, the effectiveness of partnership working and the availability of reliable performance information are critical to understanding how well the wider network is functioning and where investment can deliver the greatest benefit. As a result of these fundamental points, much of this report focuses on how the council manages the challenges of data analysis and partnership work to drive improvements to bus services at a time of declining patronage and short-term funding.

Existing and Future Funding

The group examined how passenger transport funding is used across Herefordshire and whether current investment delivers value for residents and communities.

The Economics of Rural Transport

The evidence demonstrated that many bus services providing substantial social and economic benefits are not commercially viable and require public subsidy. This reflects the realities of serving a predominantly rural county, where dispersed populations and longer journey distances increase operating costs and reduce passenger demand. Transport investment therefore supports access to employment, education, healthcare, retail services and social opportunities, benefits that are not fully captured by cost-per-passenger measures alone.

Funding Sources

Funding is drawn from a range of sources including the former Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), funding, the [Local Authority Bus Grant](#) (LABG), concessionary fare reimbursement, [community transport grants](#) and school transport budgets. The introduction of LABG marks a significant change to national bus funding arrangements, consolidating previous Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Local Authority [Bus Service Operators Grant](#) (BSOG) funding into a longer-term settlement for local transport authorities. Multi-year allocations through to 2029/30 provide greater certainty for service planning and investment than previous short-term funding arrangements.

BSIP Investment in Herefordshire

The group found that Herefordshire Council has been proactive in securing and delivering Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding to address long-standing transport challenges associated with rurality, geographic isolation and reliance on private car travel. The investment secured through BSIP has enabled improvements that would not have been achievable through the council's core transport budget alone.

BSIP funding has supported the introduction of new services and enhancements to existing routes, including the provision of Sunday services where none previously existed. It has also encouraged visitor use of the network. Members heard that these improvements have increased access to employment, education, healthcare, retail and leisure opportunities, particularly for residents without access to a private vehicle. In a rural county, even relatively modest improvements in service availability can have a significant impact on accessibility and social inclusion.

The review found that BSIP investment has also improved the overall passenger experience through upgrades to bus shelters, accessibility improvements at bus stops, the installation of 31 solar-powered real-time information displays and enhancements to digital journey-planning tools. These improvements have made public transport more visible, accessible and attractive, particularly for older people and passengers with disabilities.

Members welcomed the progress made but noted that passengers can still experience difficulties obtaining clear information during service disruptions, roadworks and temporary diversions. An agreed protocol across all operators and Herefordshire Council to advise passengers of disruptions to service would be beneficial. A single point of contact for feedback would also improve passenger experience and give Herefordshire Council oversight of the network's functionality.

The group concluded that BSIP funding has been used effectively and has delivered visible benefits across the network. However, many recent improvements have relied on time-limited external funding, creating uncertainty about their long-term sustainability. Members considered it important that the council continues to evaluate the impact of funded initiatives, strengthen its evidence base and target future investment towards interventions that deliver the greatest benefits for residents and businesses in the community. Maintaining recent improvements will require a long-term approach that aligns future funding opportunities with wider transport priorities and network development.

Recommendation: Improve Passenger Information and Minimise Service Disruption

The council and operators should improve real-time information, disruption communications, timetable information and digital journey-planning tools. Highway works should be planned and coordinated to minimise impacts on bus reliability and ensure passengers receive clear and timely information during service disruptions.

Establish a single, council-led point of contact for passenger feedback, complaints and service suggestions to improve accountability, identify recurring issues and provide greater oversight of network performance.

Moving from BSIP to LABG

Recent investment through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has delivered enhancements to bus services, passenger facilities, travel information and accessibility across the county. From 2026/27, BSIP funding will be incorporated within the new Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), a consolidated funding stream that combines previous BSIP and Local Authority Bus Service Operators' Grant allocations, providing greater flexibility and longer-term funding certainty for local transport authorities.

LABG allocations are determined through a national formula that reflects factors such as population, deprivation, rurality and accessibility rather than local authority performance. As a result, opportunities to influence future funding levels directly are limited. The key challenge is therefore to maximise the benefits of the funding available through effective planning, strong partnership working and robust, evidence-based investment decisions.

The flexibility offered by LABG presents opportunities to align investment with local priorities, including the support of socially necessary services, accessibility improvements, enhanced passenger facilities and the development of innovative transport solutions where there is a clear and demonstrable need.

The transition to LABG provides a more stable funding environment and an opportunity to move from short-term interventions towards longer-term network development. Achieving this will require stronger performance data, a clearer understanding of passenger demand and a strategic approach that aligns investment with accessibility, rural connectivity and wider transport objectives.

The Enhanced Partnership

The improvements delivered through BSIP funding did not occur in isolation. Their success has depended heavily on effective collaboration between Herefordshire Council, bus operators and other transport partners. Recognising that these relationships have been central to recent progress, the group examined the effectiveness of the Enhanced Partnership and the extent to which its governance arrangements support performance, accountability and continuous improvement across the network.

Purpose of Enhanced Partnership

An Enhanced Partnership (EP) is a formal statutory arrangement between a local transport authority and local bus operators, established under the Bus Services Act 2017. It provides a framework through which councils and operators work together to improve bus services, infrastructure and the overall passenger experience.

The EP is the principal mechanism through which Herefordshire Council and local operators collaborate to improve transport services across the county. It supports joint working on service planning, passenger information, infrastructure improvements, reliability, accessibility and the delivery of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) initiatives.

Partnership Working in Herefordshire

Throughout the review, officers described engagement with operators as constructive and increasingly focused on solutions. Members heard that relationships have strengthened significantly in recent years, with greater collaboration on network changes, infrastructure projects and responses to operational challenges. This was particularly evident during discussions relating to roadworks, service disruptions and the implementation of BSIP-funded improvements.

Review Findings

The group found that the Enhanced Partnership is a significant strength within Herefordshire's transport arrangements. It has enabled stronger relationships between the council and operators, supported the delivery of network improvements and provided a constructive forum for addressing operational challenges. Members identified the role of the Enhanced Partnership in supporting operators to engage with government intervention schemes such as the Summer Bus Fare Offer and the £2 bus fare cap. The investigation also demonstrated that contractual arrangements for subsidised services provide a more robust foundation for performance monitoring and accountability than members had initially understood.

However, the full benefits of these arrangements will only be realised where performance information is collected consistently, routinely analysed and openly shared. As the council responds to future transport challenges and the opportunities created by the [Bus Services Act 2025](#), the Enhanced Partnership should evolve from a forum primarily focused on collaboration into one that combines collaboration with clear accountability, consistent performance reporting and evidence-led decision making. This will strengthen governance, improve transparency and support continuous improvement across the network.

Recommendation: Strengthen the Enhanced Partnership.

The Enhanced Partnership should develop a more structured approach to performance monitoring, accountability and data sharing, and should include structured engagement with Community Transport Providers as part of partnership discussions and future accessibility planning. Regular reporting and agreed performance measures will help support evidence-led decision-making, collaborative problem solving and continuous improvement across the network.

Data and Performance Management

The majority of routes in Herefordshire are subsidised giving Herefordshire Council an opportunity to improve data collection and compliance and build up a comprehensive picture of the whole network. In addition, officers explained that the council is already developing enhanced monitoring arrangements through the integration of ticketing, patronage, operational and financial datasets. This includes the use of [Smart Applications Management](#), (SAM) ticketing data and [Via operational information](#) to improve understanding of passenger demand, service performance, revenue generation and subsidy requirements. The group welcomed this work and considered it an important step towards a more evidence-led transport network. The [Bus Open Data Service](#) (BODS) provides data on fares, timetable, live vehicle location and patronage. There is concern that BODS is currently not accurately reflecting this data meaning that passenger information on platforms such as [bustimes.org](#) and real-time information (RTI) displays can be unreliable.

Contractual Accountability

As part of its investigation, the group also examined the contractual arrangements governing subsidised bus services and the extent to which these provide mechanisms for performance monitoring and accountability. Members initially experienced difficulties obtaining contract and tender documentation, limiting their ability to scrutinise service requirements and performance arrangements. However, the subsequent provision of sample contracts, tender information and contract award documentation enabled a more detailed assessment of current arrangements.

Data and Performance Monitoring

The documentation reviewed demonstrated that more recent subsidised contracts contain a number of requirements designed to support performance monitoring and accountability. These include obligations on operators to provide revenue and patronage data, detailed passenger information generated through electronic ticket machines, punctuality data and vehicle location information to support real-time passenger information systems. Operators are also required to use electronic ticket machines compatible with [Bus Open Data Service](#) (BODS) requirements and capable of supporting real-time tracking feeds.

The documents indicated that contracts provide for ongoing compliance monitoring by the council. Operators are required to provide requested information within defined timescales and compliance checks are expected to be undertaken throughout the contract period. Performance monitoring is supported through contractual conditions and service performance standards.

Whilst specific key performance indicators (KPIs) were not explicitly identified within the documentation reviewed, members considered that the requirement to provide punctuality, reliability, patronage and revenue data creates a strong basis for meaningful KPI development. The information available would allow the council to assess whether services are operating as timetabled, whether passenger numbers are changing and whether public subsidy is delivering value for money.

Procurement and Future Contract Design

Officers explained that existing procurement arrangements place significant emphasis on cost. Members heard that future contractual arrangements could place greater emphasis on quality outcomes, including passenger growth, network integration, accessibility and participation in national fare initiatives. The group considered that future procurement frameworks should seek to balance value for money with wider transport objectives.

Opportunities for Improvement

The review identified persistent challenges relating to data consistency, performance reporting and transparency. Information is not always provided in a standard format, making it difficult to compare services, evaluate interventions or assess the overall effectiveness of investment across the network. Members considered that this limits both strategic planning and effective scrutiny.

Recommendation: Strengthen Public Transport Data and Evidence

The council should strengthen the collection, analysis and sharing of transport data across the passenger transport network, making full use of existing fleet technology, real-time vehicle tracking and ticketing systems to improve performance monitoring, compliance management and evidence-based decision-making. This should include information on passenger demand, reliability, punctuality, subsidy levels, rural travel patterns and SEND transport pressures, enabling greater accountability, more effective targeting of investment and stronger long-term transport planning.

Opportunities Created by the Bus Services Act 2025

While the review identified opportunities to strengthen existing partnership arrangements, the wider policy landscape is also evolving. The introduction of the [Bus Services Act 2025](#) represents the most significant change to local bus governance in England for many years, providing local transport authorities with a wider range of powers to influence, manage and protect local bus networks. Key provisions include expanded franchising powers, stronger protections for socially necessary services, enhanced requirements relating to accessibility and data sharing, and the removal of restrictions on local authority-owned bus companies.

The Act removes previous barriers to franchising by making franchising powers available to all local transport authorities in England without requiring Secretary of State consent. This could enable authorities to exercise greater control over routes, fares, service standards and network integration where appropriate. The group recognised that franchising is unlikely to provide an immediate solution for Herefordshire, given its dispersed rural geography, relatively small passenger market and financial constraints. However, the availability of these powers provides an important future option should existing arrangements fail to meet community needs.

The Act requires enhanced partnership plans to identify socially necessary services and consider mitigation where service reductions or withdrawals would significantly affect access to employment, education, healthcare, essential services or social opportunities. Members considered this particularly relevant to Herefordshire, where some rural services generate relatively low passenger numbers but provide substantial social value and help reduce isolation. The new framework offers greater scope to identify and protect services that are essential to local communities.

The legislation also strengthens expectations around evidence-based decision-making by expanding powers to collect data on passenger demand, service performance, vehicle usage and operating costs. Given the recurring concerns identified throughout the review regarding data quality, performance reporting and visibility of commercial services, members considered these provisions a significant opportunity to improve strategic planning, accountability and investment decisions.

The Act introduces requirements for local transport authorities to publish a [Bus Network Accessibility Plan](#) (BNAP) and places greater emphasis on the needs of disabled passengers within transport planning and Enhanced Partnership arrangements.

Members considered these provisions increasingly important in light of Herefordshire's ageing population, growing mobility needs and reliance on community transport services. Members agreed that BNAP should be integrated into future network planning, contract management and partnership arrangements from an early stage.

The Act permits authorities to establish local authority-owned bus companies, further expanding the range of potential delivery models available in the future, although no evidence was presented that this would currently be appropriate for Herefordshire.

Implications for Herefordshire

The group found that the Bus Services Act 2025 does not remove the underlying challenges associated with rural transport provision, financial pressures or commercial viability. However, it provides a significantly stronger framework for protecting socially necessary services, improving accessibility, strengthening data and accountability arrangements, and giving local authorities greater influence over their networks.

Review Findings

For Herefordshire, the most immediate opportunities are likely to arise from enhanced partnership working, better use of data, stronger accessibility planning and more effective network management rather than large-scale structural reform. The council should continue monitoring implementation guidance and ensure its transport strategies, governance arrangements and data systems are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities created by the new legislative framework. The [Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan](#) (LTP5) provides the principal mechanism through which elected members can influence transport priorities and funding decisions. The group considered it important that transport strategy development and public transport investment remain subject to strong democratic oversight.

Recommendation: Timely BNAP Integration

The council should ensure that future transport contracts, network planning and investment decisions align with the requirements of the Bus Network Accessibility Plan and actively involve disabled passengers and community transport providers in its development.

Other Local Authorities

Although the Bus Services Act 2025 provides an important framework for future transport development, legislation alone cannot determine how successful local transport networks will be. The practical application of policy, funding and partnership arrangements remains equally important. To better understand what approaches may be effective in a rural context, the group considered examples of innovation and good practice from other authorities facing similar challenges.

The group reviewed evidence from a range of authorities facing similar challenges to Herefordshire. Whilst no authority operates in exactly the same circumstances, common themes emerged from the examples considered.

Worcestershire on Demand

Members considered the experiences of Worcestershire County Council, which has implemented a [demand responsive transport](#) (DRT) model through its [Worcestershire on Demand](#) service. Evidence suggested that this approach has enabled transport services to be delivered in areas where conventional fixed-route bus services do not exist.

Integrated Transport Models

The group also examined examples of integrated transport planning, including the [Transport for Cornwall Partnership](#), which brings together school transport, mainstream public transport and wider transport services within a coordinated operational model. This approach seeks to maximise vehicle utilisation, reduce duplication and improve value for money.

Applicability to Herefordshire

The review highlighted that there is no single transport model that Herefordshire can simply replicate. However, examples from elsewhere demonstrate that successful rural transport systems require flexibility, innovation and long-term planning.

The most important lesson identified by the group is that effective transport planning must be integrated across all forms of passenger transport rather than considering bus services in isolation.

A key lesson emerging from the evidence was that authorities achieving the most positive outcomes tended to demonstrate several common characteristics:

- Long-term transport strategies
- Strong performance management.
- Effective use of data.
- Greater integration across transport modes.
- Strong collaborative relationships with operators and neighbouring authorities.

Recommendation: Adopt an Evidence-Led Approach to Rural Mobility Innovation

The council should explore more appropriate supply to rural transport and other emerging rural mobility solutions only where there is clear evidence of passenger demand, value for money and compatibility with existing transport provision. Any future initiatives should be subject to robust evaluation.

Cross-Border Connectivity and the Marches Forward Partnership

The examples considered highlighted the importance of collaboration beyond administrative boundaries. Residents frequently travel outside Herefordshire for employment, education, healthcare, retail and leisure purposes. Visitors to Herefordshire also provide a buoyant market segment, e.g. the Hereford to Hay on Wye service. The group therefore examined the role of cross-border connectivity and regional partnership working in supporting an integrated transport network.

Cross Border Challenges

The evidence demonstrated that transport demand within Herefordshire does not align neatly with administrative boundaries. Residents routinely travel into Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Shropshire and Wales to access employment and leisure opportunities, education providers, healthcare facilities and transport interchanges. In practical terms, many residents experience transport as a regional network rather than a county network.

Evidence gathered during the review indicated that this creates particular challenges when transport planning remains largely organised around individual authority boundaries. Several examples emerged where services important to passengers cross multiple funding, governance or policy jurisdictions. Different reimbursement arrangements, service priorities and funding pressures can create barriers to integrated planning.

The review identified opportunities to improve:

- Cross-border bus connectivity
- Bus and rail integration
- Timetable coordination
- Regional transport planning
- Joint funding opportunities through the Marches Forward Partnership

Bus and Rail

The group considered that rail connectivity provides a particularly clear illustration of this challenge. Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster stations function as regional transport hubs, but bus and rail timetables are not always coordinated. Evidence presented to the members indicated that relatively small timetable changes could improve connectivity and increase the attractiveness of public transport for longer journeys.

The Marches Forward Partnership

Members further considered that the [Marches Forward Partnership](#) offers significant opportunities to support joint transport planning, shared research and demand analysis, collaborative funding bids, cross-boundary mobility pilots and strategic coordination of transport priorities.

Transport needs cannot be considered solely within county boundaries. Stronger regional collaboration will be essential to improving accessibility and connectivity for residents. The review found that transport is one of the policy areas most likely to benefit from genuine regional collaboration and that the Marches Forward Partnership could provide an important mechanism for delivering this ambition.

Recommendation: Improve Integration Between Bus and Rail Services.

The council should work with bus and rail operators to improve connections at interchange points, particularly Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster stations, through better timetable coordination, passenger information, wayfinding and journey planning. Improved integration will make public transport more convenient and attractive for longer journeys.

School, SEND and Social Care Transport

Throughout the evidence gathering process, one issue emerged consistently as both a financial challenge and a transport planning challenge: the rising cost and complexity of school, SEND and social care transport, with forecast expenditure of approximately £15 million on SEND transport alone, with a projected overspend of around £3 million in 2025/26. Given the scale of expenditure involved and its growing impact on the wider transport budget, the group considered it necessary to examine this area in more detail.

Published council financial reports consistently identify rising demand for SEND services and home-to-school transport as key budget pressures. These demand-led costs increasingly affect wider passenger transport planning and place additional pressure on available resources.

Current Reform Activity

The group recognises that home-to-school transport is currently undergoing significant transformation, including refreshed transport policies, procurement reform and wider service modernisation.

When meeting with transport officers, the group heard about opportunities for improved route planning, vehicle utilisation, scheduling and coordination across school transport, SEND transport, adult social care transport, community transport and mainstream passenger services. Evidence gathered from other authorities suggests that more integrated transport models can improve efficiency, maximise vehicle utilisation and reduce service duplication.

Members also noted opportunities to expand alternative transport approaches where appropriate, including greater consideration of Personal Transport Budgets and independent travel arrangements. Existing Herefordshire Council policy already supports these approaches in appropriate circumstances and recognises their potential benefits for both families and service sustainability.

The group also concluded that social care transport should not be considered separately from wider passenger transport planning. For example, community transport providers already undertake substantial numbers of healthcare and independent living journeys and play an important preventative role within the wider care system.

Review Findings

The review concluded that school, SEND and social care transport should form a central component of any future integrated passenger transport strategy, supported by stronger data analysis, coordinated planning and a whole-system approach to transport delivery.

Community Transport

The Role of Community Transport

Community transport providers deliver essential services for older residents, people with mobility difficulties, patients making healthcare journeys, and rural communities without access to traditional bus services.

Community Transport as Social Infrastructure

The review highlighted the importance of community transport. The group heard compelling evidence that community transport provides considerably more than a transport service. In many cases it represents a wider social support function that helps residents remain connected to their communities and maintain independence.

Impact and Outcomes

Data provided during the review indicated that around three-quarters of users are over the age of 75 and that between 60 and 80 per cent of journeys are health related. During 2025/26, community transport providers supported more than 32,000 passenger journeys across the county, with many journeys linked to healthcare access, shopping and independent living. This suggests that community transport plays a significant preventative role within the wider health and care system.

Evidence gathered during the review suggested that if community transport services were no longer available, additional costs would almost certainly fall upon public services elsewhere, including adult social care, healthcare transport, social prescribing programmes and community wellbeing initiatives.

The review therefore reinforced the view that community transport should not be viewed simply as a low-volume transport provider but as an important component of the county's wider social infrastructure.

Sustainability Challenges

Challenges facing community transport include:

- Financial sustainability
- Volunteer recruitment
- Ageing fleets
- Governance and capacity issues

Evidence also demonstrated significant sustainability risks. Many organisations rely heavily on volunteers, ageing trustee boards and grant funding. Several providers highlighted succession planning, volunteer recruitment, governance capacity and organisational resilience as major concerns.

Accessible minibuses now frequently cost in excess of £100,000, creating substantial capital pressures for relatively small charitable organisations. Members concluded that long-term sustainability will depend not only on financial support, but also on strengthening governance arrangements, organisational capacity, volunteer pipelines and strategic integration with the wider transport network.

Community Transport in Future planning

The review found that community transport providers are increasingly recognised in Department for Transport legislation and should be viewed as a core and strategic component of Herefordshire's transport network rather than as a separate sector. The group considered that community transport should have a stronger voice within strategic transport governance arrangements and be heavily involved in shaping future BNAP planning.

Recommendation: Strengthen and sustain not for profit operators including those licensed as community transport operators.

The council should recognise not for profit operators as a strategic component of Herefordshire's passenger transport network by strengthening its representation within the Enhanced Partnership, ensuring meaningful involvement in Bus Network Accessibility Plan development and wider accessibility planning, maintaining appropriate financial support, and supporting long-term organisational sustainability through fleet renewal, volunteer development and capacity building. Community transport should be fully integrated into wider transport planning as a key contributor to accessibility, social inclusion and independent living.

Future Transport Opportunities

The transition from short-term funding mechanisms towards multi-year Local Authority Bus Grant funding provides an opportunity for longer-term transport planning and investment. Greater funding certainty enables the council and operators to consider strategic improvements rather than relying solely on short-term interventions.

Harnessing New Technologies

Advances in technology are creating new opportunities to improve network efficiency and passenger experience. Developments in real-time analytics, artificial intelligence, predictive scheduling, integrated ticketing, automated passenger information systems and intelligent traffic management have the potential to improve reliability and support more effective deployment of resources.

Members recognised the role of technology in supporting bus priority measures. The use of intelligent traffic signal systems and other highway technologies can help reduce delays and improve journey time reliability, particularly on heavily trafficked corridors.

Environmental Benefits

The transition to lower-emission and zero-emission vehicles will also remain a key consideration for future transport planning. Decarbonisation objectives should be pursued alongside accessibility, affordability and service sustainability to ensure environmental benefits are achieved without reducing transport connectivity for rural communities.

Supporting Young People's Mobility

Members recognised the importance of affordable transport for young people accessing education, employment, training, leisure opportunities and social activities. The group's discussions aligned strongly with the ambitions of Child Friendly Herefordshire, which seeks to improve opportunities and outcomes for children and young people across the county.

The proposed pilot to extend free evening and weekend bus travel for 16 to 19 year olds was identified as an example of how targeted transport initiatives may support social inclusion, educational participation and employment opportunities. Members emphasised the importance of collecting robust evidence from pilot schemes to assess impacts on passenger behaviour, accessibility and value for money. Such evidence can strengthen future business cases and support opportunities to secure external funding.

Future innovation should be guided by evidence, robust evaluation and clear passenger need.

Recommendation: Develop a Long-Term Integrated Transport Strategy as part of the daughter documents of the Local Transport Plan. The council should prepare a long-term strategy for passenger transport that brings together network development, rural mobility, integration across transport modes, accessibility, decarbonisation, technological innovation, funding, governance and regional collaboration. The strategy should provide a clear framework for future decision-making, investment, workforce challenges, vehicle flexibility and alternative operating models, ensuring that Herefordshire's transport network remains sustainable, inclusive and responsive to future opportunities and challenges.

Conclusions

The task and finish group found that Herefordshire's transport network provides an essential lifeline for residents, businesses and communities across the county, but faces significant and growing challenges arising from its rural geography, dispersed population, changing travel patterns and increasing demand for specialist transport services. Throughout the review, members heard consistent evidence of the importance of transport in supporting access to employment, education, healthcare, shopping and social opportunities, particularly for those living in more isolated rural areas.

Evidence gathered during the review demonstrated a strong commitment from Herefordshire Council, commercial operators, rail partners and community transport providers to maintain and improve accessibility despite operating within one of the most rural transport environments in England. Recent investment, partnership working and service improvements have strengthened elements of the network, while community transport continues to make a valuable contribution to reducing isolation and supporting independence for residents who may otherwise struggle to access essential services.

The review highlighted a number of positive developments, including improvements to bus services, passenger facilities, travel information and accessibility, alongside a growing recognition of the role that public and community transport can play in supporting wider economic, environmental and social objectives. Members also found evidence of constructive collaboration between transport providers and the council, creating a stronger foundation for future service development.

However, the review identified a number of strategic challenges that will require continued attention. These include the long-term sustainability of rural services, increasing demand for SEND and other specialist transport provision, the need to make best use of available funding, and the importance of maintaining accessibility for communities that may be at risk of transport disadvantage. The group also identified the need for stronger and more consistent performance information to support evidence-based decision making and enable clearer assessment of transport outcomes.

A recurring theme throughout the review was that passenger transport services continue to be planned, commissioned and managed through a number of separate systems. Bus services, rail, school transport, SEND transport, adult social care transport and community transport often serve similar communities and travel needs but are not always considered as part of a single, integrated transport network. Members concluded that greater coordination between these services could improve efficiency, enhance accessibility and deliver better outcomes for passengers.

The review also identified opportunities arising from the Bus Services Act 2025 and the transition to the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), which together provide a stronger framework for local transport planning, service development and accountability. While these changes do not remove the underlying challenges associated with rural transport provision, they offer additional tools and greater flexibility to support locally determined priorities and improve network resilience.

The group therefore concludes that the next phase of transport development in Herefordshire should focus on creating a more integrated, accessible and sustainable passenger transport system that is planned strategically around the needs of residents and communities. Delivering this ambition will require strong governance, effective partnerships, improved data and performance monitoring, enhanced regional collaboration and a clear long-term vision for the county's transport network.

Ultimately, transport should be viewed not simply as a means of moving people from one place to another, but as essential infrastructure that underpins economic growth, educational opportunity, access to healthcare, social inclusion, community resilience and quality of life. The recommendations contained within this report provide a framework for strengthening that role and helping to ensure that Herefordshire's transport system remains responsive, connected and sustainable over the coming decade.

Recommendations

A. Governance, Data and Performance

Recommendation: Strengthen Public Transport Data and Evidence

The council should strengthen the collection, analysis and sharing of transport data across the passenger transport network, making full use of existing fleet technology, real-time vehicle tracking and ticketing systems to improve performance monitoring, compliance management and evidence-based decision-making. This should include information on passenger demand, reliability, punctuality, subsidy levels, rural travel patterns and SEND transport pressures, enabling greater accountability, more effective targeting of investment and stronger long-term transport planning.

Recommendation: Strengthen the Enhanced Partnership

The Enhanced Partnership should develop a more structured approach to performance monitoring, accountability and data sharing, and should include structured engagement with Community Transport Providers as part of partnership discussions and future accessibility planning. Regular reporting and agreed performance measures will help support evidence-led decision-making, collaborative problem solving and continuous improvement across the network.

B. Accessibility and Passenger Experience

Recommendation: Improve Passenger Information and Minimise Service Disruption

The council and operators should improve real-time information, disruption communications, timetable information and digital journey-planning tools. Highway works should be planned and coordinated to minimise impacts on bus reliability and ensure passengers receive clear and timely information during service disruptions.

Establish a single, council-led point of contact for passenger feedback, complaints and service suggestions to improve accountability, identify recurring issues and provide greater oversight of network performance.

Recommendation: Timely BNAP Integration

The council should ensure that future transport contracts, network planning and investment decisions align with the requirements of the Bus Network Accessibility Plan and actively involve disabled passengers and community transport providers in its development.

C. Network Integration and Connectivity

Recommendation: Improve Integration Between Bus and Rail Services

The council should work with bus and rail operators to improve connections at interchange points, particularly Hereford, Leominster and Ledbury stations, through better timetable coordination, passenger information, wayfinding and journey planning. Improved integration will make public transport more convenient and attractive for longer journeys.

Recommendation: Strengthen and sustain not for profit operators including those licensed as community transport operators

The council should recognise not for profit operators as a strategic component of Herefordshire's passenger transport network by strengthening its representation within the Enhanced Partnership, ensuring meaningful involvement in Bus Network Accessibility Plan development and wider accessibility planning, maintaining appropriate financial support, and supporting long-term organisational sustainability through fleet renewal, volunteer development and capacity building. Community transport should be fully integrated into wider transport planning as a key contributor to accessibility, social inclusion and independent living.

D. Long-Term Planning and Innovation

Recommendation: Develop a Long-Term Integrated Transport Strategy as part of the daughter documents of the Local Transport Plan

The council should prepare a long-term strategy for passenger transport that brings together network development, rural mobility, integration across transport modes, accessibility, decarbonisation, technological innovation, funding, governance and regional collaboration. The strategy should provide a clear framework for future decision-making, investment, workforce challenges, vehicle flexibility and alternative operating models, ensuring that Herefordshire's transport network remains sustainable, inclusive and responsive to future opportunities and challenges.

Recommendation: Adopt an Evidence-Led Approach to Rural Mobility Innovation

The council should explore more appropriate supply to rural transport and other emerging rural mobility solutions only where there is clear evidence of passenger demand, value for money and compatibility with existing transport provision. Any future initiatives should be subject to robust evaluation.

Glossary

BODS	Bus Open Data Service	The Bus Open Data Service (BODS) provides bus timetable, vehicle location and fares data for every local bus service in England.
BNAP	Bus Network Accessibility Plan	A statutory plan required under the Bus Services Act 2025 to help local transport authorities assess and improve the accessibility of their bus networks for disabled passengers and other users with accessibility needs.
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan	A government-funded programme requiring local transport authorities to set out plans for improving local bus services and passenger experience.
BSOG	Bus Service Operators Grant	Government funding paid to eligible bus operators to help support the provision of local bus services.
DFT	Department for Transport	The UK Government department responsible for transport policy, funding and regulation in England.
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport	A flexible transport service that operates according to passenger demand rather than fixed routes and timetables.
EP	Enhanced Partnership	A statutory partnership between a local transport authority and bus operators designed to improve local bus services collaboratively.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	A measurable value used to assess the performance and effectiveness of services or activities.
LABG	Local Authority Bus Grant	Government funding allocated to local authorities to support local bus services and reduce service pressures.
LTP5	Local Transport Plan 5	Herefordshire Council's current local transport strategy, setting out long-term transport priorities and investment plans.
RTI	Real-Time Information	Live passenger information systems that provide up-to-date information on bus arrivals, departures and service disruptions.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	Refers to children and young people who require additional educational support and may be eligible for specialist transport provision.
SAM	Smart Applications Management	A ticketing and transport data platform used to support monitoring of patronage, revenue and service performance.



Title: Work Programme 2026-27

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Monday 21 September 2026

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Report purpose

The report:

- Provides the committee with a draft work programme for the committee, for approval.
- Provides the committee with a copy of the council's forward plan of key decisions to assist the committee in deciding its programme of work.
- Lists the recommendations made by the committee since January 2025, and any responses to these recommendations.

Background

1. 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.

Meeting objectives

2. To agree the committee's work programme.
3. To note the work programmes of Herefordshire Council's other scrutiny committees.

Report information

4. The most recent work programme was published September 2026 and is attached as Appendix 1.
5. Since the most recent work programme was published, it has become apparent that the terms of reference for the proposed spotlight review to look at flooding would not be ready in time for this meeting. This is reflected in the attached copy of the work programme, which

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
 Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, email: danial.webb@herefordshire.gov.uk

now proposes to look at the terms of reference for the spotlight review at the committee's next meeting in December.

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 the committee in 2025 and 2026.

Consultees

8. 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Work Programme September 2026 (revised – see paragraph 5 above)
Appendix 2 – Herefordshire Council Forward Plan 4 September 2026
Appendix 3 – Recommendations made by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee in 2025 and 2026.

Background papers and resources

None



SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

September 2026 – March 2027

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.

Please note that no meetings will be scheduled after March 2027 until after the 2027 Council elections have concluded.

Table of Contents

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee..... 4

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee..... 5

Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 7

Scrutiny Management Board..... 9

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

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

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Alternative provision - Review of capital programme relating to alternative provision. - Overview of existing provision.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement - Hilary Jones, Head of Additional Needs - Jane Morse - Commissioning
Children and Young People NEET - Impact of data updates on NEET average figures. - Overview of focussed service action plan with milestones.	Officer report	Liz Farr - Alexia Heath - Louise Tanner, Head of Learning and Achievement
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

10 December 2026 **report deadline 2 December 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC December 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Youth Strategy	Draft strategy	Tina Russell Hereford Rural Media Will Lindsey HVOSS Lindsay McHardy

11 March 2027 **report deadline 3 March 2027** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Fostering Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Tori Lynch - Natasha Newton
Participation strategy Objectives to be agreed	To be agreed	Suzanne Sims - Andrea Busk

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

22 September 2026 **report deadline 14 September 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC 2026

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Review of projects funded - Examine future funding opportunities	Overview of funded projects	Service Director, Economy and Growth
Public participation in planning task and finish group - Review final report - Agree report recommendations	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

27 January 2027 **report deadline 19 January 2027** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Year of delivery – capital projects End of year review of capital projects taking place in 2026.	- Council capital programme - Individual programme progress reports	To be determined

*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.

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

21 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 - 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.	- Officer report - List of environmental projects currently undertaken by Herefordshire Council.	John Hobbs, Corporate Director Environment and Economy
Buses and passenger services task and finish group - 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.	Final report	Cllr Justine Peberdy, Chair - buses and passenger services task and finish group

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

Committee Meeting

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

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Carbon Management in Herefordshire - Identify progress in carbon emission reduction within: - The council and - Herefordshire more widely. - Scrutinise quantitative and qualitative evidence to demonstrate progress. - Review the cost of carbon management programmes within the council and across the county.	- Fourth Carbon Management Plan - Cabinet paper (if available)	Richard Vaughan - Daniel Lenain - NFU representative - Country Land and Business Association
Rail Strategy - To test the ambition of the rail strategy - To establish progress to restore the Hereford-Ross-Gloucester rail link. - To seek assurance that the policy supports the objectives of the Local Transport Plan 5. - To establish how the strategy supports potential coordination of bus and rail services.	- Rail strategy - Buses task and finish group report (any West Midlands rail strategy)	- John Hobbs Ffion Horton - David Land
Flooding spotlight review – terms of reference To agree the terms of reference for a proposed spotlight review to scrutinise flood risk management and flood emergency responses.	Spotlight review terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Prospective spotlight review

February/March 2027

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Flooding and flood risk management Terms of reference to be agreed.	Evidence to be agreed	- John Hobbs - Other TBC

Health Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Committee work programme

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 Person Update on work to deliver acute community mental health support in Herefordshire.	Evidence to be agreed	Gareth Morris, West Mercia Police Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health
Meeting the demand for adult social care task and finish group Agree interim report and recommendations	Final task and finish group report	Chair, task and finish group
Adult Social Care budget outturn Scrutinise financial outturn against budget savings plans	Quarterly budget outturn and performance monitoring	Hilary Hall, Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

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

Topic and Objectives	Evidence required	Attendees*
Shaping neighbourhood health - Analyse how the health partnership identifies health needs in communities. - Scrutinise provision of current and future neighbourhood health services.	2Neighbourhood health bid - Taurus Out of Hours GP service - Worcestershire Council papers	Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health

Topic and Objectives	• Evidence required	Attendees*
Adult Social Care budget outturn Scrutinise financial outturn against budget savings plans	Quarterly budget outturn and performance monitoring	Hilary Hall, Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Work programme Review work programme	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.

Scrutiny Management Board

Committee work programme

Committee Meeting

12 October 2026 **report deadline 02 October 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Temporary accommodation - Provide assurance that the council understands and is actively managing the growing demand and financial pressures associated with temporary accommodation, - Examine whether temporary accommodation services are meeting the needs of homeless households - Assess the effectiveness of prevention and support activity. - Identify the wider causes of homelessness and prolonged stays in temporary accommodation, including housing supply, demand trends and policy influences.	- Demand trends, causes of homelessness, turnover and household profiles. - Temporary accommodation costs, funding sources, capital investment and future financial pressures. - Resident experiences, prevention outcomes, housing supply constraints and options for reducing demand and length of stay.	Head of Supported Housing
Inequalities task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Commercialisation task and finish group final report Agree final report	Final report	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Annual review of effectiveness Agree final report	Scrutiny annual review	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Hoople spotlight review terms of reference Agree terms of reference	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Work programme Review work programme	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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
Hoople spotlight review report Agree findings and recommendations of the Hoople spotlight review.	Terms of reference	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
The voluntary and community sector (to be confirmed)		
Work programme Review work programme.	Draft work programme	Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Committee Meeting

January 2027 (date TBC) **report deadline TBC January 2026** pre meeting lines of enquiry planning TBC January 2026

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
Budget 2027/2028 To understand the executive's proposed revenue and capital budgets and its medium-term financial strategy.	2027/2028 revenue budget report 2027/2028 capital budget report 2027-28-2030/31 medium-term financial strategy report	Cabinet members Directors

Topic and objective	Evidence required	Attendees
To make recommendations for the executive to consider before proposing the budget to Council.	Supplementary information as requested by the committee.	

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	Culture and 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 4 September 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)

Hereford Bypass Phase One – Assessment Report Bypass update and next actions	Cabinet 24 September 2026	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Scott Tompkins, Delivery Director - Infrastructure scott.tompkins@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open Urgent
Herefordshire's 2026-27 Section 75 agreement To approve Herefordshire's section 75 agreement for 2026-27 with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) for up to five years in relation to the Better Care Fund.	Cabinet 24 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Nicola Williams, Service Manager D2A and BCF nicola.williams6@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383879	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open

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
Q1 2026/27 Budget Report To report the forecast position for 2026/27 at Quarter 1 (June 2026), including explanation and analysis of the drivers for the material budget variances, and to outline current and planned recovery activity to reduce the forecast overspend. To provide assurance that progress has been made towards delivery of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.	Cabinet 24 September 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	Non Key Open
Q1 Performance Report To review performance for Quarter 1 (Q1) 2026/27 and to report the performance position across the council for this period.	Cabinet 24 September 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Jessica Karia-Fitzgerald, Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence j.karia-fitzgerald@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260976	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	Non Key Open

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
Risk Management Update Q1 2026/27 To provide an update on the status of corporate risks at the end of Quarter 1 2026/27 (June 2026) and provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively across the council.	Cabinet 24 September 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	Non Key Open
Early Help Task and Finish Group - final report To provide Cabinet with the final report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Early Help task and group, looking at the provision of early help in Herefordshire.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Danial Webb, Statutory Scrutiny Officer Danial.Webb@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260659	Children and Young People	26 August 2026	Non Key Open

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
Travel Plan Strategy The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for an updated Travel Plan process for Herefordshire. The updated approach sets out a clearer, more consistent and outcome-focused process for the development, implementation and monitoring of travel plans across new developments, existing organisations and key trip-generating sites.	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Ffion Horton, Transport Planning Services Manager ffion.horton@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Update on the Phase 2 Phosphate Mitigation Schemes To provide Cabinet with an update regarding the Phosphate Mitigation Wetland schemes	Cabinet 22 October 2026	Cabinet member culture and Environment Gemma Dando, Chief Operating Officer, Richard Vaughan, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager gemma.dando@herefordshire.gov.uk, Richard.Vaughan@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260192	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	Non Key Open

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
Q2 2026/27 Budget Report To report the forecast position for 2026/27 at Quarter 2 (September 2026), including explanation and analysis of the drivers for the material budget variances, and to outline current and planned recovery activity to reduce the forecast overspend. To provide assurance that progress has been made towards delivery of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	Non Key Open
Risk Management Update Q2 2026/27 To provide an update on the status of corporate risks at the end of Quarter 2 2026/27 (September 2026) and provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively across the council.	Cabinet 26 November 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151), Rachael Sanders, Director of Finance stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk, Rachael.sanders@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095, Tel: 01432 383775	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	Non Key Open

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
Recommissioning of Drugs & Alcohol Recovery Services To obtain approval to recommission drug and alcohol recovery services in Herefordshire for an initial five-year period (2028–2033), with the option to extend the contract by a further two years. (2033–2035).	Cabinet 17 December 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Natalie Johnson-Stanley, Public Health Lead - Substance Misuse / Tobacco Natalie.Johnson-Stanley@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383230	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Cabinet Member Decisions (Key and Non Key decisions)					
Portfolio: adults, health and wellbeing					
Procurement of Sensory Impairment Service The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the procurement of a Sensory Impairment Service and authority to award and enter into a contract with the successful provider. The procurement will ensure continuity of specialist support for people with sensory impairments and support the Council in meeting its statutory duties.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 9 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing John Burgess, Senior Commissioning Officer John.Burgess3@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open

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
Renewal of Access Group contract for Mosaic, Synergy and associated systems To seek approval to enter into a new contractual arrangement with The Access Group for the continued provision of Mosaic, Synergy, Core+ and associated systems, including transition to Access' cloud-hosted (SaaS) service, following expiry of the current contract's available extensions in September 2026.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 25 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Hilary Hall, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing Hilary.Hall@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Herefordshire Care Home Partnerships Framework To approve the procurement of a new multi provider partnership framework for the provision of care home placements and related services. The Council is looking to formalise partnership arrangements for a minimum of 500-550 placements across all providers. Estimated value of up to £320m across the framework term (maximum of 8 years).	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Before 28 September 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Ros Murphy, Commissioning Manager, Community Wellbeing ros.murphy@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open

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
To re-commission the home care framework in Herefordshire To approve the re-commissioning of the council's home care framework, called Services In Your Home (SIYH), in Herefordshire. The new SIYH framework needs to be operational by 1 May 2027.	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 21 October 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing Sharon Amery, Senior Commissioning Officer sharon.amery2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383734	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy The purpose of the report is to approve the 2026-2036 Herefordshire Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing 30 November 2026	Cabinet member adults, health and wellbeing David Collyer, Acting Consultant in Public Health: General Practitioner david.collyer2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Community Wellbeing	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: children and young people					

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
Recommissioning of Family Help Service This report seeks approval to recommission the Family Help Service through an open procurement process. The existing contract is due to end on 31 March 2027 and a recommissioned service is required to support the council's Family Help offer, deliver early intervention and prevention services, and improve outcomes for children, young people and families	Cabinet member children and young people 28 September 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Sandra Griffiths, Commissioning officer sgriffiths3@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383141	Children and Young People	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Schools Budget 2026/27 The cabinet member to approve the schools budget for 2026/27	Cabinet member children and young people 30 September 2026	Cabinet member children and young people Samantha Gregory, Democratic Services Officer, Jen Preece, Democratic Services Officer samantha.gregory@herefordshire.gov.uk, jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	NEW ITEM	KEY Open

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
Schools, Central School Services and Early Years Budget 2027/28 To approve School Forum's recommended budget proposals for school budgets, central school services and early years within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2027/28.	Cabinet member children and young people 27 January 2027	Cabinet member children and young people Stacey Carter, Head of Strategic Finance (Deputy S151) stacey.carter@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383095	Corporate Support Centre	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: community services and assets					
South Bank Close and Ivy Close Lease Arrangements To approve Midland Hearts request to rescind their lease of South Bank Close and Ivy Close. To approve the procurement of a new lease holder for these properties.	Cabinet member community services and assets Before 30 September 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Hannah McSherry, Housing Strategy Officer Hannah.McSherry2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383061	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open

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
Establish a new Alternative Provision Centre capital spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to establish a new Alternative Provision Centre	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Relocation of Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units Capital Spend To approve the spend of the capital allocation to relocate Herefordshire Pupil Referral Units onto a single site.	Cabinet member community services and assets 14 October 2026	Cabinet member community services and assets Quentin Mee, Head of Educational Development Quentin.Mee@herefordshire.gov.uk	Children and Young People	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: economy and growth					

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
Merton Meadow Flood Alleviation Scheme Approval for additional expenditure due to the impact of unprecedented levels of rainfall and flooding on the site during January to March 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth 15 September 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Roger Allonby, Service Director Economy and Growth, Stephen Holland, Interim Head of Housing Development Roger.Allonby@herefordshire.gov.uk, stephen.holland@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260330,	Economy and Environment	NEW ITEM	Non Key Open

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
Connect to Work Programme To approve the procurement of the Connect to Work Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Programme in Herefordshire using the Open Procedure in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The programme is fully funded through a grant provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To approve the award of a contract to the bidder achieving the highest overall score against the published evaluation criteria for a period of up to three years and six months, commencing in October 2026, with a total contract value of up to £1.22 million. To delegate operational responsibility for the delivery of the Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire to the Service Directors for Economy and Growth and Education, Skills and Learning, acting in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth.	Cabinet member economy and growth 30 September 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open

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
Skills Bootcamps Herefordshire 2027/2028 Financial Year To approve the submission of a delivery plan to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Skills Bootcamps funding of £1.5 million for the 2027/28 financial year. To agree that Herefordshire Council will act as the accountable body for the management, administration and commissioning of the funding, once approved by DWP, including any subsequent Skills Bootcamps allocations awarded to the council. To delegate to the Service Director for Economy and Growth and Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, all operational decisions necessary to implement and deliver the programme, including the appointment of training provider(s) and the management of associated funding and contractual arrangements.	Cabinet member economy and growth 30 September 2026	Cabinet member economy and growth Alexia Heath, Post 16 Senior Advisor aheath1@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432383416	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: environment					
Portfolio: finance and corporate services					

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
Public Notices To approve a contract via a direct award process for the placing of public notices in newspapers circulating within Herefordshire.	Cabinet member finance and corporate services 25 September 2026	Cabinet member finance and corporate services Ed Bradford, Major Contracts Programme Director Edward.Bradford@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 260786	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open
Portfolio: local engagement and community resilience					
Portfolio: roads and regulatory services					
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy To seek approval from the Cabinet Member (Roads and Regulatory Services) for the proposed revision of the Policy and Strategy for the delivery of Highway Infrastructure Asset Management. These documents establish the framework for the principles which are applied to the maintenance of our highway network.	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services 30 October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Mark Lewis, Group Manager – Highway Asset Management mark.lewis2@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	NEW ITEM	KEY Open

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
Procurement of Parking and Virtual Permitting Software To approve the procurement of Parking Enforcement and Virtual Permitting Software contract for a maximum of 5 years with an estimated value in excess of £500k .	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services October 2026	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services Michael Barnes, Parking Services Manager michael.barnes@herefordshire.gov.uk	Economy and Environment	NEW ITEM	KEY Open
Portfolio: transport and infrastructure					
Passenger Transport Open Framework To seek approval for the establishment and implementation of a new Open Framework for Passenger Transport Services. The framework will provide a compliant, flexible and efficient procurement route for the commissioning of passenger transport services, including home-to-school transport, SEN transport and public transport.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure 24 September 2026	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure David Land, Head of Transport and Access Services, Sarah Morris, Programme Coordinator david.land@herefordshire.gov.uk, Sarah.Morris2@herefordshire.gov.uk Tel: 01432 383484, Tel: 01432 383698	Economy and Environment	26 August 2026	KEY Open



Appendix 3 Recommendations made by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, January 2025– March 2026

Monday 20 January 2025					
River Lugg Water Quality					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Engage directly with Natural England and the Environment Agency to achieve the lifting of the housing development moratorium as soon as possible.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Partially agreed. The Council will take advice from its legal team in regard to any identified risk in respect of removing the Nutrient Neutrality requirement within the Lugg catchment. If positively advised by Legal the Council will seek a view from Natural England.
2	Ask for early consultation with Herefordshire Council and the Nutrient Management Board on the specific Diffuse Water Pollution Plan, for the Lugg and its tributaries, the Arrow and the Frome.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Agreed. This is already underway. The Council has a meeting diarised with the Environment Agency the author of the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan, to be attended by Welsh government and Defra to request the DWPP is shared with consultants responsible for drafting the catchment wide Nutrient Management Plan.
3	Engage with Government to ensure adequate funding for the actions in the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Partially agreed. It is outside of the scope of the work of the Council to secure funding for the delivery of the actions included within the DWPP as this lies with the Environment Agency and Defra, however the Council can advocate via the Nutrient Management Board, Phosphate Commission and Wye Catchment Partnership to ensure funding is in place for the implementation of the plan
4	Arrange another Rivers Conference focusing on the Lugg, Arrow and Frome.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Agreed. The Council will host a third annual rivers conference in Autumn 2025, the focus of which is to be confirmed, but will encompass high levels of phosphate within the Arrow, Lugg and Frome.
5	Prioritise processing of strategic planning applications to progress private mitigation and to reiterate the request to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to participate	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Partially agreed. Currently the allocations policy for credits is in date order, this decision was taken by Cabinet in May 2022 https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=8816

	in the pilot scheme for the development of the nature restoration fund.				A policy change would require further consideration with an accompanying rationale. Confirmation would be required from planning and legal that this could be delivered via the planning mechanism and a decision taken by Cabinet. A request has been made to MHCLG to participate in the pilot scheme for the development of the Nature Restoration Fund and can be reiterated at the next Nutrient Management Board meeting where the Deputy Director is due to attend.
6	Invest, with partners, in a specific innovation process to consider approaches that have been successful in different locations or sectors and identify new approaches worth testing in the nutrient management context.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Agreed. Already underway the Council holds a funding pot for river restoration which can be allocated to schemes that demonstrate innovative technology in removing legacy Phosphorous from soils.
7	With partners, identify key outcomes that will indicate the success of actions to move towards river restoration and agree how these will be collected and reported.	Tue 28-Jan-25	Thu 27-Mar-25	Fri 4-Jul-25	Agreed. Already underway through the development of the Nutrient Management Plan which sets out actions and outcome-based reporting to record measurable reductions in phosphate levels.

Monday 24 March 2025

Energy Efficiency and Retrofitting

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Develops a plan to deliver progress on energy efficiency and retrofitting across Herefordshire, including targets, in line with their ambitions on net zero, to include the co-benefits that flow from this, including public health, wellbeing, and the cost of living	Mon 24-Mar-25	Sat 24-May-25	Wed 28-May-25	Accept The Sustainability and Climate Change Team will draft a retrofit strategy for Herefordshire outlining how the council will directly and indirectly support, facilitate and encourage retrofit in the county. The ESSC will be consulted on a draft of the document once produced.
2	Appoints a skills champion on the cabinet to drive forward upskilling across key business sectors, including energy efficiency and retrofitting, to support their growth ambitions for Herefordshire	Mon 24-Mar-25	Sat 24-May-25	Wed 28-May-25	Developing skills across the county is a key priority for the council. Part of Councillor Graham Biggs role as Cabinet Member Economy and Growth is acting as the councils skills champion. There is a skills board in place chaired by David Williams principal of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College. Councillor Biggs sits on this board alongside council

					officers. All of the main colleges and training providers in the county are also members of this board. There is a collective effort between the skills board and business board to host an event bringing a number of Herefordshire businesses together to discuss and make provision for workforce planning, skills gaps and future skills needs. In addition £400,000 of UKSPF funding has been allocated to support employment and skills. Retrofit is a key part of the above as a key sector in the environmental economy.
3	Promotes the Publicly Available Specification 2035 (PAS 2035) standard for council-funded retrofit delivery and investigates equivalent standards for private schemes to consider	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept The next retrofit programme the council is gearing up to deliver is called Warm Homes: Local Grant which incorporates the use of PAS2035. This gives homeowners confidence the work is delivered to nationally recognised specifications and standards to ensure a high quality of work on their home. Through the creation of the Herefordshire Retrofit Strategy we will investigate what equivalent and alternative standards private homeowners could utilise instead of PAS 2035 and present the benefits and/or disbenefits of these alternative options.
4	Arranges a summit of interest groups of landlords and tenants, To explore how to implement the Renters Right (Reform) Bill, when in force, with a focus on energy efficiency and retrofitting and a goal of improving living conditions for renters	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept The Housing Team are considering the implications for housing services. The changes should give renters properties that meet standards giving better quality of housing, security and better rights. For Landlords it will highlight obligations they need to sustain in a longer tenancy agreement. However, it may decrease the number of properties that are available to rent due to the more onerous obligations and thus financial burden placed on landlords to meet standards. Landlords also may decide to sell to their properties due to this factor – which could reduce the supply of private rental stock, making it more difficult to secure a rental. The Housing Team will create a webpage with information for landlords and tenants – this can be a repository of information

					for both stakeholders. The Housing Team in conjunction with Environmental Health will look to hold a landlord forum with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) to facilitate landlord training and accreditation. The Forum will take place once the Bill has been enacted.
5	Develops an able-to-pay market strategy which will: - identify the key barriers to able-to-pay investment - work with partners to overcome these barriers and - use the evidence of the growing market to encourage supplier investment in the retrofit market	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept We are currently exploring options available to the public to access private finance in support of domestic energy retrofit. Through the development of a retrofit strategy for the county we will explore the key barriers to 'able-to-pay' investment. Through the delivery of the strategy we will work with partners to overcome barriers that have been identified and look to stimulate private investment in the retrofit market as appropriate.
6	Investigates models of partnership with funders to offer private low interest finance to support the able to pay sector to retrofit within an able-to-pay strategy	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept Research has identified that a significant barrier to increasing finance for retrofit is the difficulty for lenders to prove that implemented measures will result in better energy efficiency. Currently there are a number of finance mechanisms and low cost loans but negative perceptions of borrowing, complex applications and uncertainty over eligibility are all hampering take-up. We will carry out further research into finance models that are available to residents to enable domestic retrofit.
7	Looks at ways to encourage small improvements and easy wins that would bring a disproportionate improvement to a property's energy efficiency.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept We will explore this idea through our partner Keep Herefordshire Warm as well as via the Greener Footprints initiative in a similar way to the promotion of domestic energy retrofit last year Make your home more energy efficient - Herefordshire Zero Carbon and Nature Rich
8	Ensures that council funding towards intervention on retrofit skills continues to be used for projects that are appropriate for and reaching all retrofit-related companies in Herefordshire and focusing on existing people working in the industry as well as current students.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept For any future council funded projects that support retrofit skills we will ensure that the projects are appropriate for and targeted at all retrofit-related companies in Herefordshire where possible within the terms and conditions of the funding source.

9	Considers promoting a summary of all the sources of advice, help, and finance more widely.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept The Herefordshire Council website acts as a single repository for all of the useful links residents need in respect of home energy. Home energy – Herefordshire Council This includes links to the Keep Herefordshire Warm advice service which acts as a one stop shop for residents who want to pick up the phone for advice or send an email asking for help. Keep Herefordshire Warm promotes its services via a marketing strategy that has resulted in all Herefordshire Households receiving a flyer in March 2025. Days such as Fuel Poverty Awareness day help to further promote the service.
10	Analyses what it would take to bring all private rented accommodation up to the EPC C standard and identify what the council would do to help as soon as the EPC C announcement is made.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Accept The private rented sector (PRS) accounts for 9,294 properties (approximately 11.1% of total). Currently 2,043 households have an EPC C or higher. The majority are in Band D (3,570) and Band E (2,192), Band F (711) and Band G (178). The government is reviewing the Private Rented Sector EPC band C by 2030. To bring these Herefordshire properties up to Band C the investment required is estimated at £367 million. This estimate has been calculated using the Parity Pathways tool.
11	Writes and further petitions the Government to demand that the EPC C standard is introduced for the private rented sector.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	Decline The government has recently consulted on the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) reform and the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The government is consulting on proposals to further raise the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard for rented buildings to an EPC band rating of 'C' by 2027 and to a Band rating of B by 2030.
Waste contract					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Commission a piece of work, exploring further options for improving current reuse and recycling rates across the county, in advance of any expansion of the waste collection streams to food and garden.	Mon 24- Mar- 25	Sat 24- May- 25	Wed 28- May- 25	On 1st May 2025, cabinet considered and approved the commencement of a new garden waste collection service and food waste (subject to new burdens funding) from 30 March 2026. The implementation of this work will require significant

					resources to ensure effective mobilisation, to achieve the minimum customer numbers on garden waste to meet full cost recovery and to gain the highest participation rate possible on the food collection service. Combined these two new services have been conservatively modelled to increase our recycling rate from 40% to 58% which would represent a 45% increase in our recycling performance. Whilst providing communications to residents for the introduction of the food waste service, the intention is to also provide information on the existing recycling service with the aim that this will divert some of the 7% of recycling items which our waste analysis shows are still going into the black bins, into the recycling bins. Subsequent to the scrutiny meeting we have introduced a small WEEE and battery collection service which has seen high levels of use from the start. This service will shortly be expanded to include the collection of vapes, we are just awaiting the fabrication of containers which will be attached to the collection vehicles. Whilst it is expected that this will make up a small percentage of waste diverted for recycling, they are very important material types due to the hazard they pose to cause fires if placed into bins for collection. Subsequent to the meeting, commercial recycling collections have been expanded. We are now providing 1100 litre bins for recycling instead of only 240 litre bins and we are providing a food waste collection service which received 150 requests for service within the first 4 weeks of the service launch.
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Monday 12 May 2025

Road Safety

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
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1	Herefordshire Council develops a road safety strategy that supports the priorities under People, Place and Growth in the Council Plan and complements the policy produced by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.	Tue 13- May- 25	Sun 13- Jul- 25	Mon 14- Jul- 25	The current road safety strategy contained within the existing Local Transport Plan (LTP) produced in 2018 is currently being rewritten in preparation for the new LTP expected in (20??). It is vitally important this strategy encompasses those elements that address a Highway Authorities statutory duty, under various existing highway legislation such as the The Highways Act 1980, and Road Traffic Act 1988 amongst others. At present all elements contained within the existing strategy encompass all actions an authority can reasonably be expected to take, with regard road traffic collision data management, investigation / casualty reduction engineering, delivery of road safety educational initiatives, speed management & general traffic management across the highway network. It is also important these strategies reflect the levels of service achievable within current resources allocated to this field in order to ensure a both realistic and sustainable approach for the future. At present there is a high level of collaboration between Herefordshire Council & West Mercia Police across the principle areas mentioned above, which will underpin the new strategy moving forward. This will be reviewed during the various draft stages prior to being formally adopted. The currently consulted on LTP has a requirement to support improved Road Safety with the following policy LTP Policy TN7: Road Safety To reduce the number of people being injured on our transport network we will: • Monitor collision data to identify priority locations for improving road safety. • Take targeted action to further reduce fatalities and
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					injuries on our network. • Support safer speeds to improve perceived and actual road safety. • Deliver education programmes and infrastructure to improve safety for vulnerable road users, Investment will be prioritised in those areas with the highest numbers of vulnerable road users and/or collision history. Once adopted officers will be required to work on imbedding the policy
2	The executive should seek opportunities to improve the road network environs in the five market towns to make them safer and to feel safer for all road users.	Tue 13- May- 25	Sun 13- Jul- 25	Mon 14- Jul- 25	The upcoming revision of the current LTP will also contain a section relating directly to the Market Towns. Previous assessments of all market towns undertaken by BBLP as part of the Levelling Up Fund already exist however current progress is unclear and will require a review against existing priorities following completion of the new LTP. The interpretation of feeling safe is subjective therefore it would be impossible to properly monitor and target this recommendation. It should also be a drive for the Council to ensure all roads are safe as this is a legal obligation for all roads. - rephrase – road safety important, feelings of safety delivered across a whole range i.e. maintenance, LTP policy, As per the response to Recommendation 1 the LTP has a road safety policy requirement
3	Herefordshire Council to work with West Mercia Police to unlock behavioural, perception of safety, and geographic data about near miss and dangerous driving reporting, to better inform decision-making about engineering, education and speed limit zone solutions.	Tue 13- May- 25	Sun 13- Jul- 25	Mon 14- Jul- 25	This is difficult to address as while we will investigate and where appropriate act on concerns raised, we have no formal way of collating reports that we receive and any response or action we take into a single source of information. Concerns and reports can come to us through a number of different channels such as phone calls to our Operational Call Centre, Operation Snap submissions, the contact us page on our website, Neighbourhood Matters, e-mails to our generic Road Safety Team inbox, direct contact with Safer Neighbourhood Teams and direct contact with Traffic Management Advisors. As there is no

					single point of contact it would be a significant undertaking to co-ordinate these and to report formally. Operation Snap is probably the easiest to quantify, but again, the resource needed to do this could have an impact on the overall number of submittals we then act on. The validity of using these reports as a basis for action could be questioned as they can sometimes give a disproportionate picture of what is happening on the network. We have had instances, particularly with Operation Snap, where a co-ordinated plan of action by an individual and/or a small number of residents in a particular area shows a high number of reported incidents and suggests a major problem with one type of incident at a particular location. While useful, reporting of this nature does not necessarily give an accurate reflection of concerns held by the wider public or the number of incidents happening across the network as it relies on people actually reporting them rather than “suffering in silence”. An individual’s perception of risk and danger differs from one person to another, so it does not give the degree of quantifiable, fact based evidence that injury RTC reports do. Information on collisions where there has been a personal injury is collected by the Police, passed to Herefordshire Council, and more detailed collision investigation done by the Accident Investigation & Safety Manager. Where appropriate any remedial works at collision cluster sites/routes is then channelled into the future maintenance programmes etc. Herefordshire Council, BBLP and West Mercia Police’s Traffic Management Advisor have a long standing, close working relationship on this and all highway matters.
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					Collision data is also assessed by the Police and targeted enforcement is conducted on areas where there is a particular issue such as “high harm” motorcycle routes. Link to LTP
4	For the council to undertake an evidence-based increase of the road safety education budget, or to transfer funding from schemes for children to older adults.	Tue 13- May- 25	Sun 13- Jul- 25	Mon 14- Jul- 25	It would not be appropriate to remove funding from children road safety education to that for older adults as these are vulnerable road users. The Council does offer older adult driver training and additional funding would allow for the scope of the offer to be increased. There would be scope to work with the emergency services to delivery joint educational training opportunities; for example, both West Mercia Police and Shropshire Council funded young adult road safety education videos one of which focuses on Herefordshire; this model shows how we can collaborative on initiatives. Retain work with children, we do offer older training, when budgets are set me will consider opportunities to increase funding to increase the offer.
5	West Mercia Police to consider the balance of factors that contribute to road danger when undertaking road safety enforcement.	Tue 13- May- 25	Sun 13- Jul- 25	Mon 14- Jul- 25	West Mercia Police are committed to enforcing all road traffic legislation, and while speed enforcement may appear to have the highest public profile, our the police Operational Policing Units undertake all forms of enforcement year round in conjunction with NPCC campaigns such as summer & Christmas drink/drug drive, tyre safe, mobile phone use and driving without seatbelts. In addition, our speed enforcement officers are now able to provide evidence of additional offences such as drivers using mobile phones, not wearing seat belts, driving whilst not in proper control etc so while speed enforcement is the priority for them the activity contributes to the wider enforcement picture. This recommendation cannot be accepted as Herefordshire Council do not have the ability to direct police resources.
6	The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) eligibility criteria should be made more transparent.	Tue 13-	Sun 13-	Mon 14-	There is currently no one specific eligibility criteria for the provision of Traffic Regulation Orders. These are assessed

		May-25	Jul-25	Jul-25	on an individual case by case basis by trained Traffic Engineers, and depend upon a multitude of factors that are determined upon investigation. It is vitally important these are evidence based / data led and follow both national and local best practice guidance / regulations, in order to ensure consistency of application. The Traffic Management Team have reviewed TRO information which is available online and have found it to be no longer fit for purpose. What happens now? Some changes have already been made to provide more transparent information with some more slight amendments and updates to be progressed imminently. The Team are to also upload a copy of the prioritised waiting list so current applications can be seen online. The stages of the application process to also be amended to ensure clarity.
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Monday 16 December 2025**Carbon Neutral Housing**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	The Executive should commission a piece of work in collaboration with housebuilders (including housing associations) to quantify the impact of implementation of the Future Homes Standard on the achievability of the new housing target for the County of 27,260. This should include the future availability of new affordable and social housing.	Fri 19-Dec-25	Thur 19-Feb-26	Tue 17-Feb-26	Partly Accept A Local Plan viability study for Herefordshire is the most appropriate and robust mechanism for assessing the impact of the Future Homes Standard (FHS) because it will independently and transparently test the cumulative effect of mandatory national requirements alongside local planning policies over the full plan period to 2045, rather than treating the FHS in isolation.
2	The Executive should continue discussions with relevant industry partners to evaluate the skills required to deliver the Future Home Standard in the County and how this will feed into a joined-up approach by the Council including colleges, the youth employment hub and those involved in career advice.	Fri 19-Dec-25	Thur 19-Feb-25	Tue 17-Feb-26	Accept Building Regulations applicable to domestic properties are a Level 2 surveyor. All surveyors currently working for Herefordshire Council are capable of domestic projects with a floor level not exceeding 7.5m.

3	The Executive should implement a review of the Council's policy and operational readiness and preparedness of planning and building control to ensure they are fit for purpose for when the Future Homes Standard finally comes into force, including training requirements.	Fri 19- Dec- 25	Thur 19- Feb- 25	Tue 17- Feb- 26	Partly accept Building Control have restructured to meet the current demands, however, recruitment is troublesome at this time, partly due to Herefordshire's time-consuming procedures and partly market conditions. The FHS appears to be a change to the Building Regulations 2010 and not a structural change to the Building Act 1984. A change to the Building Regulations is much easier to accommodate and will inevitably be supported with LABC training. The new structure, once fulfilled should be in a position to accommodate the changes. Planning: FHS considerations to be incorporated into Local Plan preparation process.
4	The Executive undertake a review/audit of the government support being put in place to assist the market to deliver the quantum of carbon neutral homes.	Fri 19- Dec- 25	Thur 19- Feb- 25	Tue 17- Feb- 26	Agree The Warm Homes Plan was released in January 2026. This aims to triple the number of homes with solar power by up to 3 million homes, deliver 450,000 heat pump installations, upgrade 5 million homes in total and double the amount of heat demand met via heat networks by 2035.
5	In the development of the Local Plan 'building control standards' are reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the Future Homes Standard and provide viable and affordable compliance with the development of 'carbon neutral' homes.	Fri 19- Dec- 25	Thur 19- Feb- 25	Tue 17- Feb- 26	Reject The Herefordshire Local Plan will include specific policies addressing climate change and carbon neutrality, with all policies and proposals underpinned by a viability assessment to ensure deliverability. The Future Homes Standard, which will apply to all new homes once it comes into force, is expected to be implemented, following legislation anticipated in 2026, with full compliance subsequently required. Government is yet to produce a formal timetable for the FHS. National guidance is clear that local plans should not duplicate statutory requirements, including Building Regulations, or repeat matters already covered by national policy. This is a long-standing principle set out in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and the consultation draft version) and in national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This ensures that local plans are clear and that unnecessary duplication is avoided

6	The Local Plan – through building control policies ensures that every new home built is fitted with solar panelling and/or renewable heat sources to reduce the pressure on the national grid.	Fri 19- Dec- 25	Thur 19- Feb- 25	Tue 17- Feb- 26	Reject The Future Homes Standard, which will apply to all new homes once it comes into force, is expected to be implemented, following legislation anticipated in 2026, with full compliance subsequently required. Government is yet to produce a formal timetable for the FHS. The Herefordshire Local Plan will include specific policies addressing climate change and carbon neutrality, with all policies and proposals underpinned by a viability assessment to ensure deliverability. However, national guidance is clear that local plans should not duplicate statutory requirements, including Building Regulations, or repeat matters already covered by national policy. This is a long-standing principle set out in the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and the consultation draft version) and in national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This ensures that local plans are clear and that unnecessary duplication is avoided. Note: alongside the consultation draft NPPF, Government is also consulting on its draft Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance (ending on 10 March 2026). This includes a section on how the design of new buildings can maximise adaptation, mitigation and resilience to extreme weather and other effects of climate change.
7	The Executive encourages government and other stakeholders to investigate and consider options that allow a more balanced approach to the financial products available for home buyers to allow for downstream energy cost savings to provide a more attractive purchase options carbon neutral homes for those who have income but lower equity.	Fri 19- Dec- 25	Thur 19- Feb- 25	Tue 17- Feb- 26	Agree The Warm Homes Plan was released in January 2026. This aims to triple the number of homes with solar power by up to 3 million homes, deliver 450,000 heat pump installations, upgrade 5 million homes in total and double the amount of heat OFFICIAL demand met via heat networks by 2035. It states that innovative financial products will be made available via various schemes to help improve the housing stock that will include low and zero-interest loans for households irrespective of income. No further detail has been supplied.

Monday 2 March 2026					
Local Cycling, Walking, and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Define “wheeling” clearly and ensure compliance with the definition (incl.Equality Act considerations) in all projects in the plan.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Agreed LCWWIP draft will be updated to include the Wheels for Wellbeing’s definition of ‘Wheeling’, which has greater alignment with the Equality Act 2010
2	Ensure the Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives are at the front of the LCWWIP.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Agreed LCWWIP will be updated to move LTP objectives to beginning of document
3	Work with Active Travel England to use the DfT audit/prioritisation methodology to give more weighting to safety and perceived safety when selecting routes and projects outside Hereford city.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Agreed Herefordshire Council is working to apply DfT audit and prioritisation methodologies
4	Reintroduce a dedicated capital programme line for crossings, dropped kerbs, and other safety/cohesion measures, rather than relying solely on ATE or Section 106 funding.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	To be considered as part of 2027/28 budget setting process
5	Integrate and make best use of the extensive public rights of way network in upgrades and route choices, including first/last mile links to public transport.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Partly agree Transport Planning and Rights of Way Officers will work collaboratively to ensure that opportunities may be presented to encourage greater connectivity.
6	Ensure alignment across the suite of transport strategies (LCWWIP,LTP, bus strategies, etc.) and with active travel projects already in delivery; cross check against market town movement studies.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Disagree LCWWIP already has a section showing alignment with council and national policies and plans
7	Balance the plan content and investment between walking, wheeling, and cycling, avoiding an emphasis on cycling infrastructure alone.	03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Fri 01-May-26	Partly Agree LCWWIP will be updated to include references and alignment to the Hierarchy of Road Users
Waste Recovery Contracting					
Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	Consider in good time the risks emerging from legislative and industry regulatory changes to the	Tues 03-	Sun 03-	Wed 13-	Accepted 1. Commission a report on the viability of the EfW facility

	viability of the energy from waste facility in Worcestershire.	Mar-26	May-26	May-26	beyond the current life of the waste disposal contract. 2. Include viability report outcome within the options appraisal for procurement of new waste disposal arrangements.
2	Publish a clear timetable for introducing a separate food waste collection service, including funding approach and dependencies.	Tues 03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Wed 13-May-26	Accepted Completed briefing paper with timeline was taken to Cabinet Members for discussion 19 March 2026
3	Consider ways Herefordshire Council could minimise waste produced in Herefordshire.	Tues 03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Wed 13-May-26	Accepted Officers will research further ideas for waste minimisation options to include in updated Waste Management Strategy, to be published January 2027.
4	Work with Talk Community to look at the possibility of community larders or fridges in rural locations.	Tues 03-Mar-26	Sun 03-May-26	Wed 13-May-26	Rejected

Wednesday 28 June 2026**Land Use Management**

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Date Sent	Due Date	Recd Date	Response
1	That Herefordshire Council should consider ways to better signpost landowners to schemes to support engagement and education with regard to their land management responsibilities	Wed 18-Jun-26	Tue 18-Aug-26	Mon 17-Aug-26	Partially Accepted The council already provides a range of guidance and information to support landowners through relevant service areas on its website. However, it is recognised that information relating to land management responsibilities is spread across multiple subject areas and may be difficult to locate. The council will review whether improvements to website signposting are required, including the potential for a dedicated landowner webpage that brings together key guidance, responsibilities and links to relevant support schemes. In the meantime, officers will continue to signpost landowners to relevant information and support through existing channels.
2	With interested partners, the executive should develop a plan for facilitating and enhancing its current work,	Wed 18-	Tue 18-	Mon 17-	Accepted The executive will deliver this recommendation through continued engagement with county- and catchment-wide

	including the promotion of innovative methods, preventative practice, and carbon mitigation in land use management, to reduce the risk to the public realm.	Jun-26	Aug-26	Aug-26	partnerships including Farm Herefordshire and the Wye Catchment Partnership, for which it is secretariat. Actions in this area are already underway in the form of ongoing partnership working, projects that are determining the efficacy of innovations, and planning for events that will disseminate information and facilitate knowledge sharing. A communications plan has been drafted and will be enhanced in collaboration with Comms Officers to effectively communicate the work Herefordshire Council is carrying out in this area. [Note: Please explain whether the recommendation is agreed, partly agreed or not agreed to and what actions will be taken, or what actions are already in place].
3	That the public rights of way team review and amend their reporting framework so that it better reflects the process that they follow	Wed 18-Jun-26	Tue 18-Aug-26	Mon 17-Aug-26	Accepted Under the new Public Realm, the system which is used to manage the network has been developed to improve reporting and feedback to customers. The PROW Team are working with the managers of the system to wherever possible enhance and improve the detail and searchability for reporting actions and works undertaken to manage the network. It should be noted that this is an ongoing task, and some amendments would require significant changes to the system which will take time.
4	That the executive review current enforcement practices with all relevant partners and agree a co-ordinated and consistent approach to enforcement, to strengthen action against those with land use management responsibilities who do not comply.	Wed 18-Jun-26	Tue 18-Aug-26	Mon 17-Aug-26	Partially Accepted Herefordshire Council has an overarching Enforcement & Prosecution Policy, supported by specific policies where required, including a separate Enforcement Policy for Public Rights of Way enforcement. The council will continue to work with relevant partners to review current enforcement practices and identify opportunities to improve coordination and consistency where appropriate. However, enforcement powers and responsibilities are held by a range of

					independent organisations, and the council cannot direct their actions or require a single enforcement approach across all partners.
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