

Meeting:	Council
Meeting date:	Friday 12 October 2018
Title of report:	Leader's report to Council
Report by:	Leader of the Council

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To provide an update on the work of the Cabinet since the previous meeting of the Council.

A brief summary of decisions taken by the executive is provided at appendix 1 and all decision reports and notices are available on the council's [website](#).

The report also highlights to Council publication of the annual report of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the report be noted.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options; the constitution requires the Leader to provide Council with reports on the activities of the executive.

Key considerations

2. A list of the decisions taken by cabinet and cabinet members since the last report to Council (covering the period between 28 June and 21 September 2018) is provided at appendix 1. Details of all these decisions, and of those taken by officers under delegated authority, are published on the councillors and democracy pages of the council's website. No key decisions were taken under either the general exception provisions (giving more than five but less than 28 days' notice) or the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice); no decisions were subject to call in.
3. Members will note from the appendix that the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee approved the annual report of its activities in July. Members may also be interested to read the [annual report](#) of the activities and achievements of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership as a whole. The report demonstrates the effectiveness of working together and highlights the robustness of Herefordshire's proposals enabling our success in securing and drawing down external funding to support economic growth in the county.
4. During August the [care heroes](#) website was launched as part of a campaign to help adult social care providers to recruit more staff, and in particular the care workers so vital in ensuring that our most vulnerable residents get the care and support that they need. I would ask all members to promote the website in their communities.
5. I'd also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the council's community brokers team for their recent success at the Hereford Times Health and Social Care awards where the team took the care innovation prize for their work in connecting people to opportunities in the community that best meet their needs enabling them to live fulfilled and independent lives. A fantastic achievement for a team less than a year old, yet making a real difference to Herefordshire residents' quality of life. My congratulations also go to all the winners and nominees whose work is often not seen but is so vital.
6. The performance of pupils in Herefordshire's schools overall was positive this year, with some exceptionally strong performance in the primary phase. When compared with other councils, Herefordshire results are in the top 25% for several performance indicators and this year the most significant improvement was in outcomes achieved by pupils in Year 6 at the end of the primary phase. Outcomes for this cohort have been steadily improving over a number of years, but in 2018 67.6% of pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, well above the national figure of 64% and the 62% West Midlands average. This placed Herefordshire in the top 25% best performing councils for the first time and the highest performing council of our statistical neighbours. This is a fantastic achievement and testament to the tremendous hard work of pupils, teaching staff and school leaders.
7. I would like particularly to draw members' attention to the fact that our looked after children are doing better in early schooling with the numbers achieving the required standard – termed a 'good level of development' – well above national. Herefordshire's looked after children are doing less well in later schooling compared to their peers in Herefordshire. Of this cohort, 15% achieved a strong pass in English and maths. This percentage doubled for the number of children achieving either English or maths at grade 5. Whilst this performance is likely to compare favourably with the national results for looked after children, there is clearly more we need to do to improve educational outcomes for this group of pupils in Herefordshire. At the end of Key Stage 5, 75% of the looked after children cohort have a positive employment or education with training destination in September including three students who achieved the grades they need to go on to study at university. I am sure members will want to join me in wishing all our looked after students that left school in July every success in their chosen path.

8. In early September Herefordshire received an informal inspection and visit from the government's chief adviser on supporting care leavers, for whom this council has, since April of this year, accountabilities up to the age of 25. The chief adviser will advise the minister of his findings and will then send us his formal view which we will ensure is shared. It is good to note that the chief adviser's informal feedback made clear that he had found much that was positive and encouraging.
9. In September, Herefordshire hosted a visit from members of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy, arranged by Community First. The committee plans to make recommendations to government about measures which will help benefit the rural economy in England. Together with business representatives, I was able to share with select committee members some of the successes of the county and some of the challenges we face. I look forward with interest to the publication of select committee's report and recommendations.
10. In response to the motion passed by Council, on 23 July I wrote to the Secretary of State for Justice setting out the difficulties arising from the move of remand case hearings from Hereford to Kidderminster and requesting that the decision be re-considered and justice be returned to the county. The response received on 13 September advised that, whilst the position would be monitored to ensure that projected benefits of the move were maintained, there were no plans to reverse the decision. This is of course disappointing but, together with colleagues from Shropshire, we will continue to make the case for local justice.
11. I have reviewed the objectives set for the Chief Executive, taking into account the views expressed at the last meeting of Council in response to the Independent Person's suggestion put forward by Councillor Powers that a further objective be set to: "Champion high standards of conduct and a strong commitment to public service throughout the council". The objectives are established each year, following consultation with the political group leaders and in accordance with the framework for assessment of the chief executive approved by the Employment Panel. It is a requirement for all employees to uphold high standards of conduct and to give the highest possible standard of service to the public; it is also a general requirement of all managerial posts including that of the Chief Executive to champion those high standards and public service values throughout the organisation. In light of those existing requirements I have decided that a further objective for the current year re-stating those requirements is not required.
12. I hope that all members have read the report of the recent Ofsted inspection during which the council retained its 'requires improvement' judgement. We place the highest priority on keeping our children and young people safe and giving them the best start in life, and it was reassuring to note that the inspection team found no instances in the cases they reviewed where a child was at risk of harm, that they recognised the additional investment that had been made in the service, and that they found us to know ourselves well. This awareness is vital to ensuring we deliver the improvements needed to provide a service that is recognised as good. Our proposed plans in response to the findings of Ofsted have been tested and challenged by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee before being considered by Cabinet later this month – the support of all members for our continued improvement journey will be welcomed.
13. Building on the positive public response to the council tax brochure published in March 2018 a new quarterly publication 'Herefordshire Now' was launched last month. Herefordshire Now, available on the council's website and at key locations across the county, will provide residents and businesses with information about the work and achievements of the council, and aims to build a better understanding of our strategic direction, vision and ambition.

14. I will be hosting the first parish council summit on 17 October. The evening aims to improve the way we work with parish councils to share our collective knowledge and experience and identify practical ways to work together to address challenges and promote opportunities to provide the best for Herefordshire residents. A report on the outcomes of the summit will be provided to all members in due course.
15. The public consultation on the budget ended on 21 September and responses to that consultation will be analysed and considered as the proposals are reviewed and tested through the scrutiny committees before being considered by Cabinet and Council in the new year. The council has an established track record for achieving a balanced budget, whilst maintaining prudent reserves. We have, since 2010, delivered over £77m of the £96m savings required by 2021, and still have more to do to ensure we can meet the challenges of the future, but not let this divert us from delivering our corporate plan, or from recognising and celebrating our successes. Being able to talk to the Select Committee members about Herefordshire served to remind me how much we have to be proud of in Herefordshire.

Community impact

16. The community impact of any decisions of the executive have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken. Reporting to Council the activities of the executive demonstrates the council's commitment to the code of corporate governance principle of implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Equality duty

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

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

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
18. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report provides a summary of activity undertaken, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty. However these considerations are set out in each of the relevant reports informing the decisions listed at appendix 1, and will inform any future decision making.

Resource implications

19. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The financial implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set

out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken and will inform any future decision making.

Legal implications

20. The council and committee, and cabinet rules within the constitution require the Leader to provide a report to Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last meeting of Council. This report ensures these requirements are met.
21. There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The legal implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken.

Risk management

22. There are no risks arising from the recommendations of this report. The risks of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix 1 have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken and will inform future decision making.

Consultees

23. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of executive decisions taken.

Background papers

None identified.