

Chief Executive's Announcements – 15 February 2019

- Planning is well underway for local government elections on 3 May, including updated website with links and nomination packs and currently arranging briefing sessions with parish clerks, prospective candidates and agents. Many thanks to those members who participated in the videos on the website to outline the role of being a councillor.
- Our community brokers are shortlisted for the LCG finals in London with the results to be announced in March.
- The HR team and the 16+ team jointly hosted a 'takeover the council' challenge day for care leavers, on 13 February, in the Shire Hall. Around 25 care leavers spent the day as the management team of a fictional council encountering many of the tasks that real corporate teams deal with. They also 're-designed the city centre'. It was a great opportunity for aspiring managers to get a taste of playing a leadership role in a Council.
- Following the autumn budget announcements, an additional £5.1m investment from the Department for Transport is enabling the council, in partnership with Balfour Beatty Living Places, to improve the condition of B, C and U class roads with works now scheduled and taking place countywide.
- The Herefordshire Wye and Lugg Natural Flood Management (NFM) project is underway and is one of 26 Catchment scale projects funded by DEFRA that aims to reduce flood risk to local communities, as well as improving water quality and enhancing biodiversity, using NFM processes. There are seven areas being targeted across the county and community events are being held so that residents and landowners can find out about the project, as well as how they can get involved.
- We are currently consulting on the Hereford Transport Package walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements. These together with a Hereford bypass aim to transform the way we move around the city. There will be the opportunity to provide comments and feedback during this six-week consultation running from 29 January to 11 March.
- We are seeking views on the strategic approach and detailed policies and proposals for minerals and waste management in the county during our six-week consultation on the draft minerals and waste local plan running from 21 January to 4 March.
- We are currently consulting until 15 February on a revised Local Development Order for certain types of development for Hereford Enterprise Zone. This demonstrates the council's ongoing commitment to bringing forward new and high quality jobs in the county.
- On 13 December, Cabinet approved the creation of a Joint Venture company between the council and the University of Wolverhampton to deliver and operate the Centre for Cyber Security at the Enterprise Zone.
- We continue to work with NMiTE to support them in accessing Government funding and enabling them to bring forward the development of the new university.
- The renovation of the former school site in Blackfriars Street, Hereford will provide teaching and administration space. Proposals for student accommodation are also being progressed working with the Hereford College of Arts and the NMiTE team.
- Preparations for the first phase of the Ross-on-Wye Business Park development are now being finalised, which will be the first major development to be progressed with Engie through our Development Regeneration Partnership agreement.
- Our Solid Roots project is now starting to take off. It aims to make a difference for young children and has been developed with early years settings and schools. There are three strands focusing on parenting, speech and language and improving attainment and we are now offering three free online courses for all parents, parents-to-be, and carers in Herefordshire.

- Ofsted carried out a focused visit reviewing our "front door" including our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub during the week of the 21 January. Thank you to staff who took part and worked on the preparation too. We have had some verbal feedback and will receive a letter (no judgements or grades are given in a focused visit) setting out Ofsted's reflections and points for us to consider further. This will be available from the 14 February.
- The 2018 results for primary and secondary schools confirm that the county is performing in either the top or second quartile of all local authorities in the vast majority of performance indicators, building on the strong track record of improvement over the past four years. Areas now being targeted by local authority officers are improving outcomes in the Attainment 8 measure at the end of Year 11; ensuring more primary pupils achieve the higher standard (greater depth) in Key Stages 1 and 2; securing higher attainment for disadvantaged groups, particularly pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Nationally, there has been much publicity around pressures in the high needs block as a number of local authorities are currently in deficit and have been required to top-slice funding from the schools block. This is not the case in Herefordshire through strong financial management in partnership with Herefordshire Schools Forum. It is an area of pressure and we continue to work with schools and settings to review the position, lobby national government and constantly consider how we can best meet the needs of children and young people within the national funding formula.
- Testimony from a young person in our care being presented to Gloucester University students.