

Recommendations following Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) – updated February 2019

	Recommendation	Initial response (following CPC February 2018)	Updated February 2019
1	<p>Articulate a longer term vision for Herefordshire including the development of a compelling narrative with your strategic partners under the banner of One Herefordshire. This will help clarify your ambition and establish your ‘USP’</p>	<p>The longer term vision for the county: <i>“People, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and well-being for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire”</i>, was originally developed with stakeholders through the sustainable community strategy process in 2010.</p> <p>Although there has not been a substantial re-testing of this overarching vision, supporting plans such as the <a href="#">Health and Wellbeing Strategy</a> and <a href="#">Economic Vision</a> have been developed with stakeholders and provide further depth to the vision specifically in relation to wellbeing and economic prosperity.</p> <p>The council’s corporate plan is scheduled for review in 2019/20 and the vision will be tested more widely at that stage. Consideration will be given to including a representative residents’ survey to test alignment between residents’ priorities and those of the council.</p> <p>There is more to be done in clearly articulating how the council and partners’ activities contribute to achieving the vision and communicating the distinctiveness of Herefordshire plans. There is also more to be done in ensuring a whole council understands the ambitions for the county and how they can contribute to achieving those ambitions. This will be progressed</p>	<p>The refresh of the Herefordshire economic vision and masterplan is scheduled to begin in June 2019. This refresh will take a strategic approach to the interdependencies between the economy and communities and create tactical plans that both provide the required economic growth and tackle some of the social challenges with our communities.</p> <p>Recognising the links between economy and community, the council is developing an approach to work with ward members, parish councils and community leaders to create and drive plans for economic development and building community assets within their local areas. The first of these sessions will be held in Leominster following the May elections.</p> <p>The council’s corporate plan is scheduled for review in 2019/20 and the vision will be tested more widely at that stage</p>

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		<p>through the existing strategic and business planning processes to ensure that members, employees, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute and challenge as appropriate. In addition a communications and engagement plan is being developed to ensure that agreed messages are clearly and consistently articulated.</p>	
2	<p>Ensure consistent delivery and follow through to turn the positive rhetoric into reality – including relationships with communities and engagement with strategic partners</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there were examples of strong place-based working using a systems approach.</p> <p>However there is more to be done to embed these approaches throughout the organisation. Through our management development programme planned for implementation in the autumn we need to promote the culture and support development of managers’ skills to ensure consistent and effective partnership working, system leadership, and community engagement.</p> <p>We have introduced a corporate project management system for capital project management. We will maintain focus on delivery against agreed outcomes and objectives through the corporate performance reporting processes.</p> <p>The scrutiny committees will have the opportunity to review and challenge savings plans relevant to their areas as part of the budget setting process and may review</p>	<p><b>Relationships with Parish Councils</b>  As part of the developing the relationships with Parish Councils, two parish council summits have been held (October 2018 and January 2019). The summits have been aimed at changing the conversation and understanding the local issues to enable greater collaboration in tackling some of the social challenges within the county.</p> <p>These workshops have been very engaging, productive and have provided valuable insight into themes such as social isolation and loneliness, mental wellbeing and fuel poverty. They have also highlighted the different approaches, solutions and enabled the shared learning to see how the council could support parish councils to continue this work and to do more where possible. These summits are planned to continue on a regular basis with the next scheduled for June 2019.</p> <p><b>Creating capacity</b>  One of the new key functions of the corporate centre is to create and provide the capacity to</p>

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		<p>delivery performance of particular projects or plans as appropriate.</p> <p>A member development policy and programme is being developed; as part of that programme we will provide elected members with development opportunities to further build their skills in understanding and interrogating data, and in effective questioning and challenge.</p>	<p>deliver change. A project management team has been established to support the organisation to drive the delivery of key capital projects and service improvement in operational areas such as children’s safeguarding and adult social care. The additional capacity to support business managers to drive improvements have shown strong indicators of success, examples being the recent Ofsted recognition of rapid improvement (February 2019) and the continuing success of the adult social care transformation programme to manage demand on formal care services.</p> <p>The expanding capital project team will be project managing many of the new development projects over the coming years. Additional capacity and leadership for the economic team has also been created through the appointment of a new Head of Economic Development.</p> <p>The corporate project management system continues to embed and a comprehensive training programme for project leads and project sponsors has been rolled out.</p> <p>A session has been held for members on how to understand and interrogate data. The feedback from this session will be used to inform the new members training and development programme.</p>
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<p>3</p>	<p>Undertake a strategic review of your finances so that the potential to resource your ambition and priorities over the medium term is maximized</p>	<p>The peer challenge team highlighted the council's successful delivery of financial savings in recent years, which, together with an increase in general and earmarked reserves has placed the council in a relatively secure financial position over the medium term and provides a platform to realise the county's ambitions.</p> <p>A review of general and earmarked reserves has been undertaken as part of the process for preparing the end of year accounts and a report proposing use of some of those reserves in order to deliver priority outcomes appears elsewhere on Cabinet's agenda today.</p> <p>The annual budget setting cycle will provide a further opportunity to review alignment of resources to strategic priorities and a more fundamental review of the council's medium term financial strategy is planned for 2019/20 alongside the planned review of the corporate plan.</p>	<p>A base budget review has been undertaken and reported to full council in February 2019. Included within the budget is a financial resilience/invest to save fund to support the development of new projects or innovations that create new solutions to resolve current or future challenges.</p> <p>The capital programme reporting continues to improve with the appointment of a capital finance lead and project managers. The capital strategy was formally adopted by council in February 2019 and will be key to the delivery of the council's ambitions over the coming years. The strong financial position of the council has provided a stimulus for good progress on strategic plans and development projects including support for higher education in the county through student accommodation, meeting the needs of people with dementia (Hillside), new employment opportunities and housing.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Consider expanding your presence, profile and influence on the regional stage (and beyond) using your narrative and USP</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised that the council is a well-respected player at the sub-regional level with a track record of success.</p> <p>It has been disappointing to note that consideration of Herefordshire Council's application to become a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority will not be progressed in the short term. However, both individually and as a</p>	<p>The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) are in the process of reviewing and redrafting their Strategic Economic Plan. The Strategic Economic Plan is used by the LEP to set its strategic direction and priorities, further it has a role in communicating with government and partners, in particular in setting priorities for the accessing of government funding and support. There have also been new national requirements to change the legal structure of</p>

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		<p>key partner in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the council continues to actively engage in relevant regional bodies including the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connects and West Midlands Rail to secure investment and other benefits for the county and region.</p>	<p>all local enterprise partnerships and the Marches LEP is currently considering how to implement these requirements locally.</p> <p>Good progress has been made on supporting the development of the narrative for Herefordshire. There is a new Herefordshire Investment Partnership (HIP) to support and collaborate with the council to attract inward investment and shape potential development projects. This approach has already seen interest from national players in the investment market.</p>
5	<p>Develop a more strategic, collaborative and corporate approach to building more resilient communities</p>	<p>The peer challenge team recognised there was evidence of effective work at a local level but there is more to be done to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to engagement and locality working.</p> <p>We are developing a communications and engagement plan which will ensure a consistent approach to engagement.</p> <p>There are a number of community or locality based initiatives already in operation across the council, but these have largely been service led – for example developing a community commissioning model for public realm service delivery; the establishment of a health and wellbeing network; the provision of Wellbeing Information and Signposting in Herefordshire (WISH); children’s wellbeing local area co-ordinators, adults’ wellbeing community brokers. However the benefits of</p>	<p><b>Community engagement</b></p> <p>Community engagement offered by the council has been considered by a cross directorate working group which has pulled together the work and outlining the type of work and more specifically, the activity. The summary is that the council has a wide range of community engagement methods and techniques with a high level of engagement around specific project or as part of day to day work however there is opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach to ensure maximising the use of resources. This initial mapping work will feed directly into to the Talk Community programme and wider engagement with residents such as ensuing a collaborative approach when adverse weather effects the county.</p> <p><b>Community health and social care partnerships</b></p>

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		<p>a strategic approach to the development of more resilient communities are recognised. This work has been started and we have established a CPIP group tasked with identifying opportunities for bringing this work together.</p>	<p>The council’s work in partnership with health leaders and operational teams to continue to improve the experience for patients and implementing the integration plan on a number of key transformational changes. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a health and social care integrated discharge function to improve the transfer from hospital into the most appropriate place</li> <li>• Integrating the health and social care community services functions of Homefirst and Hospital@Home to reduce duplication and provide the most appropriate care and support for individuals.</li> <li>• Integrating and expanding the health and social care quality assurance teams to support the care homes in Herefordshire to improve the quality standards and up skilling the workforce through targeted education and training.</li> <li>• Alignment of the adult social care and health teams in the community around GP localities</li> </ul> <p><b>Community development</b></p> <p>Herefordshire is leading the way and recognised both locally (Herefordshire Times – Health and Social care awards 2018) and nationally (Local Government Awards 2019 – Community involvement category) for its innovative working to enable people to live well</p>
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			<p>within their communities with its community broker model and Talk Community initiative.</p> <p>The community broker service is the vital link between social care and community. They understand the needs of the person and seek creative solutions from the voluntary sector and communities to them to help people regain independence, connect with their community and achieve their desired outcomes.</p> <p>Talk Community is a drop-in event held monthly within communities (currently at seven locations throughout the county) to support people to identify and access events, activities and services within their area to prevent or delay the need for formal care.</p> <p>There are plans to further develop Talk Community by enabling more sessions to be held in additional locations. The ambition is for Talk Community sessions to be held at 50 locations within Herefordshire by the end of 2020 and for these sessions to be ran by the voluntary sector and parish councils.</p> <p>A package of support has been developed to support the rollout. This includes training, display materials, a digital device to access WISH and the internet and small amount of seeding funding for community projects. This initiative was considered at the Parish Council Summit in January 2019 and the budget required to support the community to deliver</p>
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			<p>was approved by full council as part of the budget setting for 2019/20 in February 2019.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Further cultivate ‘One Herefordshire’ by developing a ‘One Council’ approach, specifically:</p> <p>Create more space for the political and officer leadership to work together strategically Give your managers the space to think and do Build a ‘top table’ (Strategic Management Team)</p> <p>Continue to strengthen your governance.</p> <p>Shift the strategic and operational focus from Directorates to One Council</p>	<p>A One Council approach is being developed through a combination of structural and cultural change.</p> <p>The political leadership (Cabinet) and managerial leadership (Chief Executive’s Management Board) are reviewing their working arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to collectively develop strategic thinking.</p> <p>The employee personal performance development process has put the council’s values and expected behaviours as a key component of employee development and the central importance of values and behaviours will be included in the manager development programme to be implemented in the autumn, reinforcing the whole council approach.</p> <p>New terms of reference for Management Board have been agreed which make clear the strategic nature of the board and its role in ensuring the coordination of activities and resources to maintain a coherent council-wide approach to delivering the council’s priorities.</p> <p>The council’s plans to strengthen governance, specifically in relation to capital project implementation and monitoring, and more widely as identified in the annual governance statement are being progressed and overseen by the Audit and</p>	<p><b>Organisation Redesign</b> Following the peer challenge, an organisation redesign was undertaken to create a new Corporate Centre and redefine and refocus the directorates. The role of the Corporate Centre is to enable great cross organisational planning and delivery recognising that there was good work happening with the directorates but that this was not always tied together effectively to maximise resources. The work is being developed and overseen through a programme of strategy and planning sessions by management board which have started in 2019.</p> <p>As part of this redesign process, the Adults and Communities directorate was established, placing greater emphasis on the role of communities as part of wellbeing and prevention. Additional capacity and leadership for this area has also been created through a new Assistant Director position for Communities and Partnerships.</p> <p>The Children’s directorate has become Children and Families, recognising the importance and support for families in the role of child protection. The previously known Economy, Corporate and Communities directorate is now Economy and Place with the corporate element becoming the core of the new Corporate Centre.</p>



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		<p>Governance Committee. The council's constitution has been reviewed, following consultation with all elected members and employees, and amendments agreed by Council in May to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>The development of a corporate services centre under the leadership of the chief executive is being progressed. The structure of the directorate performance challenge sessions is being reviewed to ensure that a whole council response to performance challenges can be developed and that opportunities to secure wider benefits from service planning or delivery can be identified and realised.</p> <p>The review of the corporate plan and medium term financial strategy planned for 2019/20 will provide an opportunity for further ensuring that a whole council strategic focus.</p>	
7	<p>Build on your success and have the confidence to work with your top team to drive and deliver your political priorities</p>	<p>The Cabinet's priorities have been clearly articulated in the corporate plan approved by Council and are reflected in the annual corporate delivery plan.</p> <p>The Cabinet team will continue to work with senior managers to drive and deliver these priorities and will ensure that our plans and the successes which we collectively achieve are effectively communicated.</p>	<p>The corporate delivery plan for 2019 has been revised to include key projects. This will be considered by Cabinet on 28 February 2019.</p>

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<p>8</p>	<p>Within the context of a corporate transformation programme, develop a more strategic approach to your workforce to ensure alignment with ambition and priorities</p>	<p>The peer challenge team found that employees they met appeared happy, engaged and passionate about working for the Council and were positive and committed to the organisation and Herefordshire as a place. As the team noted these elements provide a good platform for our improvement journey, and we can be proud of the many committed individuals who work with us to achieve our ambitions for the county.</p> <p>We have recognised the need for a more co-ordinated approach to developing and deploying our workforce and already increased organisational development capacity within the human resources team.</p> <p>A workforce strategy is being developed which will provide the framework within which we will ensure that our employees have the right skills, and that capacity is in the right place within the organisation to support delivery. This will include building in flexibility and development of generic skills as well as identifying and resourcing specific skills requirements, all set within the context of the council's values and behaviours.</p> <p>In addition an Equality in Employment action plan is being developed to help ensure that our workforce is representative of the community it serves and that our employment practices help us to meet our public sector equality duties.</p>	<p><b>Leadership Group</b>  A leadership forum for senior managers (around 50 people) within the council has been refreshed to improve cross-organisational working, management development and strategic planning including a more coordinated approach to working with communities and strategic partners.</p> <p>During 2018-19 the organisation has developed and delivered a programme of development for managers in a range of core skills areas including partnership working. In addition, it has launched a leadership programme being rolled out to 120 managers over the next 12 months. Issues related to recruitment and retention have been addressed through the development of a new approach to recognising hard to recruit and retain roles.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place on how to improve performance development planning and changes have now been implemented. The workforce strategy has been drafted and will be signed off by 31 March 2019. A complementary employee wellbeing strategy is also in development.</p>
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<p>9</p>	<p>Use your communications more proactively to build support and understanding of your vision, ambition and direction of travel</p>	<p>The council has agreed a communications strategy and protocols and reviewed the structure of the corporate communications team to ensure resources are aligned to the strategic priorities.</p> <p>A communications and engagement plan is being developed to guide how the strategy is implemented.</p> <p>Effective communication of the council’s key messages is something that all elected members, employees and contractors can contribute to and we need to ensure they are supported in doing so, making the essential links between the vision, the outcomes, and the activity.</p>	<p><b>External communications</b></p> <p>Herefordshire Now, a print and digital publication of Herefordshire Council activity including update on key programmes and areas of public interest is now in circulation. A quarterly print run of 3000; along with associated council tax publication is sent to each household with an average of 1,060 visits to each issue of the digital copy.</p> <p>There have been ongoing improvements to the council’s website and the WISH (Wellbeing Information and Signposting in Herefordshire) sites with October and November seeing the highest activity averaging around 2,400 a month.</p> <p>There has also been an introduction of “report it app” for greater resident engagement as “eyes and ears” in the county to report faults and problems.</p> <p>Social media activity continues to grow with 7k Facebook and 11k Twitter followers of Herefordshire Council.</p> <p>The intranet has been revised to provide improved navigation and up to date content, with revised news core and new digital screens are currently being piloted in Plough Lane to highlight key activity, performance and case studies.</p>
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