

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 25 June 2019</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>End of 2018/19 corporate budget and performance report</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Cabinet member finance and corporate services</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To review performance for 2018/19 and the budget outturn for the year.

To provide assurance that progress is being made towards achievement of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) Performance and financial outturn for 2018/19, including debt write off, as set out in appendices A, B, D and F are reviewed and the cabinet identifies any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvement;**
- (b) the treasury management outturn report at appendix C be recommended to Council for approval; and**
- (c) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director People and Performance to produce and publish the final year end performance report**

## Alternative options

1. Cabinet may: choose to review financial and operational performance more or less frequently; or request alternative actions to address any identified areas of under-performance, including referral to the relevant scrutiny committee.

## Key considerations

### *Revenue outturn*

2. The 2018/19 revenue outturn is a £595k underspend as at the end of March 2019.
3. The table below sets out the directorate position at the end of March. Further service detail is available in appendix A.

### **Projected revenue outturn 2018/19 (as at the end of March)**

<b>Directorate net budget</b>	<b>Gross budget</b>	<b>Original Net budget</b>	<b>Movement in Net budget</b>	<b>Net budget</b>	<b>Full year outturn</b>	<b>Full year variance over / (under)spend</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Adults & Communities	87,266	51,929	(1,475)	50,454	50,234	(220)
Children & Families	168,778	23,402	1,217	24,619	26,106	1,487
Economy & Place	48,415	29,155	3,001	32,156	32,597	441
Corporate	15,413	14,139	656	14,795	14,795	0
<b>Directorate total</b>	<b>319,872</b>	<b>118,625</b>	<b>3,399</b>	<b>122,024</b>	<b>123,732</b>	<b>1,708</b>
Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves	63,786	25,499	(3,399)	22,100	19,797	(2,303)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>383,658</b>	<b>144,124</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>144,124</b>	<b>143,529</b>	<b>(595)</b>

4. The council has delivered a balanced outturn in previous financial years by delivering savings as central government funding has been reduced. The council continues to direct its resources to deliver the key services while reducing overall costs to demonstrate efficiency and ensure good use of scarce resources.
5. The outturn position for Adults and Communities is a net underspend of £220k. This is a decrease in the forecast since December of £220k, but is after a transfer to reserves due to the early delivery of savings within the directorate. These savings are to support some of the directorate budget pressures for 2019/20. The final position is a result of the allocation of the Winter Pressures funding as well as reduced overspends within the client

budgets during the latter part of this financial year; particularly supporting the increase in expenditure seen in both Respite and Short Stay. The client budget improvement is a result of the strengths based model (explained in more detail at paragraph 15) that includes; an improved information, advice and signposting offer, the new adult social care (ASC) pathways and associated targeted work programmes.

6. The outturn for Children and Families is an overspend of £1.487m due to the spend on looked after children's placements being higher than budgeted for at the start of the year. The number of children requiring the support of a residential placement (average cost c£200k per annum) had doubled from 9 to 18 by September 2018, with the budget set using figures at July 2017. The numbers are very small but are high cost individually. It is therefore difficult to predict the number and the trend information is not consistent. Different individual residential placements can be for a relatively short or long period, and contain a range of costs. The final number in residential care at the end of the financial year was 13. All other service budgets have delivered underspends to support the directorate budget. The predicted outturn has reduced by £536k since December. The positive movement resulted from a lower than forecast spend on the allocated amounts for short breaks for disabled children, reduced costs due to staffing vacancies in early years and a lower than anticipated net cost of inter-agency adoptions.
7. The outturn for Economy and Place is an overspend of £441k. This is an increase of £251k since December. SEN transport and home to school/college transport caused more pressure than forecast partly as an increase in the number of clients eligible for transport. The additional costs were partially offset by higher than forecast income generation in other areas of the directorate.

### ***Capital outturn***

8. The capital Budget underspent by £19.84m against the revised 2018/19 budget of £66.82m. This is due to the timing of delivery moving into future years. The underspend has not resulted in the loss of any capital funding and will be carried forward into 2019/20 except where the project has completed, if this is corporately funded borrowing it will increase funds available for future funding requests. There are three projects that have spent earlier than planned, so the carry forward will reduce 2019/20 budget, full details for each project can be seen in appendix B.

### ***Treasury management***

9. The net treasury budget outturn was a surplus (underspend) of £1.9m, this is detailed in Appendix C. The main reason being the lower minimum revenue provision cost of £1.1m. Minimum revenue provision is the cost set aside to finance capital expenditure financed by prudential borrowing. Due to capital spend in prior years being lower than forecast this resulted in a minimum revenue provision underspend. In addition, there was a delayed need to borrow due to capital receipt cash funds; this reduced the forecast annual interest cost payable. At the same time, the forecast interest earned was higher reflecting the increase in the bank base rate in the year. Herefordshire Council has adopted the recommendations made in CIPFA's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice*, which was revised in 2017. One of the clauses (identified in Section 5 of the code) is that Full Council will receive reports on treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year; a mid-year review; and an annual report after its close.

## **Corporate performance**

10. Council approved the corporate plan 2016/17-2019/20 in February 2016, framed around the key priorities to:
  - enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives;
  - keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life;
  - support the growth of our economy; and
  - secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
11. In January 2018 Council approved the 2018/19 budget and the supporting delivery plan was agreed by cabinet in April 2018.
12. Progress towards implementing the delivery plan is measured through a number of agreed performance measures. These have been selected because they demonstrate progress towards achievement of the council's priorities and also provide an overview of the council's performance from a resident's perspective. The databooks, which are available on the council's website, contain the latest performance outturns available. Where monitoring information is only available annually, these measures will be reported at the point it becomes available.
13. Appendix F provides an overview of performance for 2018/19. The proportion of performance measures showing improved performance or remaining the same compared to the same period last year is 62% (52% at end of December); there are 38% of performance measures that are currently performing worse than the same period last year (48% at end of December).
14. A summary of performance and the challenges faced in the achievement of each of the council's corporate plan priorities is included in paragraphs 15-71.

## **Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives**

### *Staying well at home*

15. During 2018/19, the offer from adult social care has been strengthened throughout the whole of the "citizen's journey". For example, people contacting the department for the first time are involved in a strengths based conversation that identifies quickly what they require and how the council might assist. A high proportion of contacts will receive high quality information, advice and signposting that connects them to community opportunities that can meet their needs. A smaller proportion of contacts will go on to receive a full Adult Social Care assessment that takes into account the person's strengths and assets. This results in an enhanced offer for the person that also ensures the best use of council resources. These developments have helped to hold back demographic pressures of an aging population and actually led to an overall 3% reduction in the total numbers of social care customers since 2014. The front door to social care has been strengthened, as has the assessment process for social care teams. Both these areas are now working on a strengths based approach; focussing on what individuals can do, rather than what they can't. In addition, the creation of a community broker team, that identify alternatives to formal care within the community, has received national recognition.
16. Activity on the Wellbeing, Information and Signposting Herefordshire (WISH) website has increased by 19% during the year. This has been supported by increased numbers of services registered on the WISH site and improvement in the way that information is made available to citizens. The WISH website provides online support for wellbeing, prevention and early help by:

- Providing access to up to date information;
- signposting to relevant advice and support;
- providing access to a directory of services; and
- connecting people to their communities.

#### *Targeted support*

17. During the last quarter, Herefordshire Council's HomeFirst service had its first Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. The service has been rated "good" in all areas with an overall CQC rating of "good". This is positive news in respect of a service which is key to supporting clients to regain their independence. The service offers support in people's own homes and support discharge home for people following an admission to hospital.
18. During the year, there has been a reduction in the output of overall reviews completed by operational social work teams, meaning that the proportion of annual reviews undertaken has dropped to 61%. This is a result of a range of factors requiring operational services to prioritise the assessments and reviews undertaken; these included staffing pressures due to sickness and recruitment difficulties, additional pressures on supporting the increased demand from the urgent care system (hospital discharge and admission prevention and in particular demand from the hospital). These pressures have partly been alleviated by successful recruitment to operational posts and expanded delivery of the council's HomeFirst reablement and support service.

#### *Care provision*

19. There has been substantial work to support Herefordshire's local social care market, both the care homes and care at home (domiciliary) providers. This includes a fee uplift for care at home providers of approximately 7% for urban packages and 20% for rural packages. This has been negotiated with consideration to the increase to the National Living Wage and to recognise the unique challenges of delivering care and support within a rural and sparsely populated county. In terms of the sector more widely, Herefordshire's Care Hero campaign has raised the profile of the sector and importantly provided a space for providers to advertise their job vacancies for free, thereby reducing the overall costs associated with recruitment.
20. There have been improving trends within our ability to respond to cases in hospital awaiting a discharge. Delayed Transfers of Care numbers, or DTOC, show a reduction in the numbers of days delayed in each month for the last 6 months. Despite the improvements, this remains a challenge for the whole health and social care system. To support the ongoing improvement, the Local Government Association were invited to undertake a peer review of our discharge processes to reflect on our system wide strengths and areas for development; this report is due to be published shortly.
21. In response to challenges within the urgent care system, including hospital discharge, a joint health and social care discharge lead has been appointed. Along with adult social care urgent care leads, this post will develop the operational integrated discharge team with the aim of further improving the co-ordination of discharges and support a more timely discharge from hospital. To further support improved hospital discharge, two "Trusted Assessors" have been appointed, to lead assessments for people requiring residential or nursing care as part of their ongoing support after leaving hospital. This will also support the care home market and reduce the time and resource to complete assessments within hospital.

## **Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life**

### *Improving children's health and wellbeing*

22. Tooth decay is predominantly preventable and is often linked to high levels of consumption of sugar-containing food and drink, which also contribute to obesity. During the last quarter, an oral health needs assessment has been initiated, public health nursing staff (0-5s) have distributed tooth brushing packs at the 1 year health check, with dental health follow-up at the 2 year review. Further work is underway to address this with a larger sample survey of 5-year-old children undertaken in the last quarter, with analysis to be undertaken by Public Health England. The results of this will be available later in the year.

### *Helping all children and young people succeed*

23. A significant improvement in educational outcomes has taken place in Herefordshire over the past 5 years. Data on 2018 published results for primary and secondary schools in Herefordshire validated in the autumn term indicate that the county is performing in either the top or second quartile of all local authorities in the vast majority of performance indicators. Validated data has been received this quarter relating to the performance of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) indicate that pupils receiving additional support are performing comparatively well. Pupils with education, health and care plans are an area of focus because over time this group has achieved less well than national comparison.
24. Overall school budgets remain tight as increases in revenue have not kept pace with rising costs. During the last quarter, Schools Forum recommended a schools budget (£100.2 million in total) which was then approved by cabinet as part of the budget setting for 2019/20. The county benefitted from an additional £200k funding made available from the national growth fund; this will be split equally between schools and the high needs block. As a result, in Herefordshire all primary and secondary schools will receive their full funding according to the national funding formula plus an extra £15 per pupil.
25. Nationally, there has been a great deal of publicity around pressures in the high needs block. A significant 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. In the autumn term, the Secretary of State, confirmed extra high needs funding that for Herefordshire amounts to £375k both this and next financial year. As a consequence, pressures in the high needs block have been alleviated in the short term. Although the high needs block in Herefordshire is currently not in deficit, schools forum has elected to keep this position under review on an annual basis.
26. The review of special educational needs provision across the county is a key priority in Herefordshire's strategy for Education, Development and Skills and work continues. Herefordshire Council is committed to supporting schools to develop inclusive practice that will enable more pupils to remain in mainstream schooling. National trends and developments have seen the numbers of children who are permanently excluded from school rise, although in Herefordshire this is still below the national average. Herefordshire Council commenced, in collaboration with schools, a review of the county's pupil referral unit and how it operates and this is reaching its conclusion. The funding model was approved in the last quarter. This development complements current capital projects with schools and academies that aim to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs; these include the 16-19 free school build at Barrs Court Special School and increasing provision at The Brookfield School for students with social, emotional and mental health needs. An independent consultant has facilitated discussion

with the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Head teachers and draft proposals are in place for implementation from Autumn 2019.

*Keeping children and young people safe, in supportive family environments*

27. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was replaced by Early Help Assessment (EHA) in January 2018, resulting in increased assessments from 500 at that time to 1,090 at the end of March 2019. In encouraging partner agencies to carry out early help assessments, training has been delivered to over 500 professionals to date. This combined with early help presence in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has resulted in an increase in the number of early help assessments being undertaken. This means that more families with unmet needs are being identified earlier; these are assessed and support is provided in a more coordinated way to achieve sustainable changes within the family. This may avoid the requirement for an intervention from statutory services. Approximately 800 of these cases have a key worker from a partner agency such as a school, or from a service such as a health visitor.
28. The number of families who have achieved sustainable changes under the national Troubled Families programme, Payment By Result (PBR) by the end of March 2019 were 429; this has brought a further £50,400 into the council making the total £343,200 at the end of the last quarter. On average the amount of PBR claimed has now risen to 23 per month which is an improving picture.
29. The number of children subject to child protection (CP) plans has reduced in Q4 to 111 as at 31st March 2019, compared to the latter part of 2017/18, which ended at 201. This has been achieved through providing additional capacity to review current cases and officers found that some cases no longer needed support and oversight through a child protection plan. The council's number is now below the statistical neighbours' average based on most recent data; more specifically the national Children in Need (CIN) census data at the end of December 2018 shows that the rate per 10,000 children was 34, the national average being 45 and the West Midlands average is 50.
30. The service has reviewed the application of thresholds and service support to ensure that children and young people are being effectively supported at the right level of need. A number of cases that have stepped down from CP plans have been audited and the findings have been taken to the Safeguarding and Family Support management meeting and there will be a further review in June 2019 to ensure that there is continued oversight of this practice within this area.
31. A specific work programme was established to address our weaknesses regarding our approach to CIN. A dedicated senior manager led the work for a three-month period and has produced a clear CIN policy and procedure, which has recently been implemented. During this process and the establishment of CIN panels, we reviewed 181 CIN cases. We are monitoring child in need visits as part of our weekly performance management approach, which has shown some improvement but still needs to get much better. Strategy meeting guidance has also been reviewed and implemented. S47 guidance is in the process of being produced to improve the practice in this area.
32. There is a continued challenge in respect of the number of referrals that are being made into the MASH. This area of work is being considered with our partner agencies, in particular the police, to ensure that the referrals that are made into the social care system meet the appropriate thresholds and partners are clear on their own responsibilities. The looked after children numbers have increased overall during this financial year from 314 to 334 as at the end of March 2019; despite the overall number remaining the same as the previous quarter there were 3 children who ceased to be looked after in March 2019. The

increase has been due to the impact of long-term neglect and some large sibling groups being taken into care over recent months. Ofsted identified that there had been some delay in progressing neglect cases over a number of years in Herefordshire. Cabinet has approved a revised approach to special guardianship orders (SGO) including providing financial support. This should support more children being appropriately cared for with a SGO.

33. As a result of our improved approach to performance, children are receiving more timely visits. CP visits are at 95% in time in March 2019 compared to 85% in December 2018; LAC visits are 84% compared to 74% (in December); CIN visits are recorded as 79% compared to 63% (in December). Our timeliness of visits is still not as good as it should be, however, it is showing an improvement.
34. The recording continues to improve for both cases and social worker supervision; in September 43% of case supervisions were being completed, this has risen to 68% as at the end of March 2019. There has also been an increase in the percentage of social worker supervision that are being completed, which was 80% as at the end of March compared to 73% in August; the percentage of social worker supervision being completed was not calculated prior to August 2018.
35. In the year to date 65% of assessments have been completed within timescale; this is a significant area of concern and work is underway to ensure that the number of cases that require assessment are undertaken in a robust and efficient manner. The target that has been set is for 80% of assessments to be completed within the 45 day timescale. In March 2019, 92.4% of assessments were completed within the month and therefore met the target timescale, which is a significant improvement. Of the assessments completed in March 2019, 80% of cases are reported as seeing the child within 10 days. To continue this improvement we are making changes within the Mosaic system to set a 3-day limit.
36. The council, as is the case nationally, is struggling to recruit social workers for some key areas of service – this has an impact on quality of service including completing high quality assessments to timescales. The council is continuing to recruit for both agency and permanent social workers and also looking to recruit more family support workers to work with families therefore requiring less involvement of social workers. If we have continued reliance on agency social workers this may impact on the budget for 2019/20.

## **Support the growth of our economy**

### *Improve the infrastructure*

37. The development of the preferred package for the South Wye Transport Package continued to progress. Work to develop the full business case continued in consultation with the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable completion of the full business case submission subject to consideration of the scheme by the new council administration. A Public Inquiry for the Southern Link Road Compulsory Purchase and Side Road orders took place in October/November 2018 and these orders were subsequently confirmed in March 2019.
38. The proposed Hereford Transport Hub adjacent to the railway station and Hereford city public realm design development has progressed and a programme of engagement with key stakeholders is currently programmed to commence in late summer 2019. Public consultation is scheduled for late autumn 2019. Commercial Street repaving works were completed at the end of March 2019.



39. Cabinet selected the red route as the preferred route for the Hereford bypass for development and consultation in July 2018; design of that route progressed following that decision. A six-week public consultation on the walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements that would also form the Hereford Transport Package with the bypass took place in February and March 2019; a public consultation report is currently being prepared. A number of funding applications have been developed to secure funding which would enable delivery of the scheme.
40. In 2013, 55% of the county's A roads were in good condition (Green) with 9% deemed in need of maintenance (Red). The percentage of A roads that are good has increased to 59% and just under 7% of this network is in need of maintenance. Our asset management strategy set out to 'grow the green' and is doing so. For the B roads in 2013 58% was Green, 8% Red and this has improved to 61% Green and just under 7% Red. For C roads in 2013 53% of the network was Green, 11% Red; this has also improved to 60% Green and 6% Red. In all more than 83 more miles of our A, B and C roads are in good condition now, when compared to 2013. This result is testament to the success, to date of our asset management strategy. Through the delivery of our asset management strategy we will reduce the cost of potholes to the council and the community by over £1.6bn; will reduce the whole life cost of maintenance by over £72m; and the strategy will prevent over 386,000 potholes over the 34 year lifecycle of our roads. These benefits will be realised in full if we sustain our investment in the maintenance of our highways.
41. Our roads are supported by our bridges and this year we completed the replacement of the Storesbrook Bridge that carries the B4214 over the River Leadon just north of Ledbury. This bridge had provided a vital crossing of the River Leadon between Ledbury and Bosbury for more than 100 years and had reached the end of its operational lifecycle; the new bridge has secured the link between communities for generations to come.
42. A feasibility study into the redevelopment of the Blackfriars street end of the Hereford football ground has been carried out. This will enable the administration to consider the potential to develop a student accommodation or other possible uses as well as developing a new stand.
43. A master planning review of the potential development of an urban village along station approach is planned. This will also consider the inter-related development of the nearby Country Bus Station and College Road Campus sites to the north of the city. Initial pre-feasibility design work has been undertaken on the Country Bus station site to consider possible uses. Discussions have also been undertaken with the NHS regarding a possible joint development, to enable regeneration of a key gateway site into the city.
44. Along with match funding from national government, the council decided to make the significant investment in superfast broadband (30Mbps or above) in areas where the commercial network suppliers saw no economic return on their own investment. To date 87% of the county have gained access to a superfast service, compared to only 0.6% in 2012, and under stage 3 and 4 of Fastershire rollout this figure is set to increase further over the next two years.
45. The Government recently announced its aspiration for a 'Full fibre Britain' and the deployment of fibre to the premise (FTTP) technology allowing access to ultrafast broadband by 2033. In line with the Government's aims, currently 14% of the Herefordshire can already access a full fibre connection, twice the national average.
46. 35 businesses in Herefordshire have been delivered or in the pipeline for a bespoke superfast broadband solution to meet their growth needs – funded as part EU delivery programme.

### *Develop the economy*

47. The redevelopment of the Shell Store site on the Hereford Enterprise Zone commenced in April, and should be completed in spring 2020. The £7.5m redevelopment will establish a business incubator facility and a place for higher education students to engage with industry. The Shell Store will provide employment space for up to 25 dynamic and innovative businesses, driving economic growth through the generation of around 128 new jobs by 2023 – rising to more than 450 by 2031.
48. The construction of the £9m Midlands Centre for Cyber Security on the Hereford Enterprise Zone will commence in June 2019. The Joint Venture with the University of Wolverhampton will create a range of opportunities in the growing cyber security sector in Herefordshire, providing business accommodation alongside product testing, specialist research and educational facilities, benefitting the local economy through investment, job creation and skills development.
49. The planning application for student accommodation in Station Approach was approved in February by the Planning and Regulatory Committee. Comprising 178 bedrooms, the facility will provide high quality purpose-built student accommodation, helping attract young people to want to study in Herefordshire and supporting higher education providers. Final project approval is anticipated by June 2019.
50. Analysis of Site Options responses are continuing for the Hereford Area Plan (HAP). Draft design Supplementary Planning Document consultation is complete; development of key elements of evidence base work continues. Public consultation on the HAP draft plan/preferred options is expected after July 2019, with approval of pre-submission plan in winter 2019 and final submission and Examination In Public expected in the spring 2020.
51. Consultation on the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan is complete, and consideration of consultation responses and redraft of plan is underway.
52. Examination is ongoing for the Travellers sites Development Plan Document (DPD); further hearings were completed on 18 March. The main modifications are now being prepared for consultation; the mandatory 6 week consultation will mean adoption cannot be completed until full Council in the autumn.
53. Planning performance has continued to improve during 2018/19, enabling the council to deliver the corporative objectives and prevent it from becoming a 'Standards Authority'. With new staff recently appointed, there is a continued focus to improve service delivery and rise up the league tables through 2019/20. A planning consultant has also been appointed for a fixed term until all posts are in place and they can deliver.
54. Although pre-application responses continue to be a concern, the new staff recruited will also enable to focus on this area of work, therefore it is anticipated there will be a further improvement to response rates in 2019/20. To recognise this planned improvement, pre-application fees have been set to increase by 10% to offset the expenditure in these new staff.

### *Ensure access to housing*

55. The Bromyard former depot which secured planning approval for 45 dwellings, to be delivered by Keepmoat Homes, will comprise of 27 dwellings for sale on the open market and 18 affordable dwellings with associated open space, landscaping and means of vehicular and pedestrian access on land off Hereford Road (A465), Bromyard. Work is due to commence following securing vacant possession on paddock land.

56. As part of identifying new sites for housing development, early investigation of options for the Holme Lacy site (pre application) is underway to include retention of the former school building.
57. There were 203 affordable housing units delivered during 2018/19 which exceeded the planned target of 200. Delivery of affordable homes is expected to continue to rise year on year but significant growth required to meet local housing need now and in the future.

### **Secure better services, quality of life and value for money**

#### *Efficient use of resources*

58. Smallholdings disposal has been completed apart from a small number of minor plots of land. Capital receipt of over £46m has been realised, and overheads maintaining and managing the smallholdings portfolio have been reduced significantly.
59. The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) and Herefordshire Council have announced the sale of the College's Southern campus to the council, helping to secure the future of the RNC and support higher education in the county.
60. The campus in College Road, Hereford is the established home to a number of highly-regarded higher education courses and programmes. The purchase of the site by the council means the campus will continue to be used as a centre for excellence in higher education offering shared facilities for students from the RNC and those enrolled in other higher education courses in Hereford. The sale of its Southern campus is part of a three year plan to overcome external financial pressures and ensure a successful future for the College.
61. Recruitment to some key roles in the council remains challenging, particularly in social care, children's social work and professional roles supporting major procurement projects. The corporate centre continues to work to make the council an attractive employer and in June a new benefits portal will be launched to staff which will offer shopping discounts and promote wellbeing initiatives. This will be supported by the wellbeing strategy which has been incorporated into the workforce strategy and subject to approval will be launched during the coming year.
62. The overall trend in workforce costs continues upwards as a consequence of the additional £1.5m investment in children's workforce. The use of agency staff in all other areas of the council remains static or is reducing.
63. Car parking income achieved in 2018/19 was £4.138m (which was a £47k increase on the previous year). There was an increase in general use and length of stay in off-street car parks as a result of Station Approach (City Link Road) opening, on street pay and display and the introduction of pay by card at council machines. These three elements made car parks more accessible with payment terms easier and enables the council to generally manage parking according to demand.
64. The end of 2018 saw the launch of a large scale resident parking scheme across Hereford, and feedback has been positive from residents. It is expected that a number of vehicles that were historically using residential side streets will now use public car parks which will further assist with the management of this traffic and the associated demand for parking.

#### *New governance*

65. Targets of 95% compliance were met for requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations to be responded to within the statutory deadline; compliance figures are now published on the council web site. Subject access requests increased since data protection legislation changed to make the requests free of charge and with a reduced deadline, however they have still been completed within target.
66. The Data Privacy Toolkit that is required to enable the council to access NHS data has been submitted and is being reviewed by NHS England.
67. Updating of the register from the Household Notification Letter was very successful; more than 2,000 households using either the online service, email or phone to update their details. Engagement officers visited over 1,000 residents and registered over 400. A further 300 new electors registered from other sources during this time, and 3,000 people re-registering because they have moved house within Herefordshire during the March/April period.

#### *Improved customer service*

68. In Customer Services, a service providing support for applicants of Universal Credit was launched in liaison with the Department of Work and Pensions. A large number of people (617) were given assistance, including refugee families settling in Herefordshire in the summer. During 2018/19, a new Blue Badge case management system was procured and successfully implemented, and applicants were encouraged to apply online with support if required.
69. Social media audience numbers and engagement levels have greatly increased during the past twelve months. More video content is being posted on Facebook and Twitter platforms, and we have been growing our following on Instagram and Linked-in with a view to reaching different audiences. Herefordshire Now was introduced in September 2018, providing information about council services for local residents. Produced to be mainly viewed on-line with around 3,000 paper copies distributed through public building outlets across the county, the on-line audience has steadily grown from 1,052 for issue 1 to 2,006 for issue 2. Issue 3, which was published at the end of February, included a four page pull-out on 'Your Council Tax explained', which was also delivered to every household in the county with the annual council tax bill.
70. The council's website continues to improve and provide additional functionality. In the past year a mobile app was developed which allows residents to report a pot hole in a quick, user-friendly way. The usage of the website has decreased slightly (3%) in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 and this is attributed to fewer weather events. Although the overall number of users has decreased, the number of returning users to the site was up by 1% (equivalent to around 8.5k people) which shows that people are encouraged to return to the site. An additional 1,026 people signed up to receive alerts from the website on topics such as news items, school and college term dates and market and fairs information.
71. 331 attendances at "internet for beginners" hosted at the libraries to help address digital inclusion for people who need to build skills and confidence in going on-line.

## **Community impact**

72. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, and

ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner.

73. Regularly reviewing performance with a view to identifying actions which will deliver further improvement in outcomes or efficiencies helps ensure the council achieves its corporate plan priorities.

## **Equality duty**

74. 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.
75. 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 part of the decision making processes, individual directorates and service areas assess the potential impact of any proposed project, leading to fairer, transparent and informed decisions being made..

## **Resource implications**

76. The overall trend in workforce costs continues upwards which is a consequence of the additional £1.5m investment in children's workforce. The data shows a reduction in the use of agency staff in all other areas of the council.

## **Legal implications**

77. None.

## **Risk management**

78. The risks associated with any delivery plan objectives and projects are entered onto the relevant service or directorate risk register and escalated as appropriate. The corporate risk register is available on the council's website and the significant risks are included within appendix F.

## **Consultees**

79. None in relation to this report. The development of the delivery plan was informed by the evidence base already gathered during the year and which includes user, resident and partner feedback where available.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A	Revenue forecast
Appendix B	Capital outturn
Appendix C	Treasury management forecast
Appendix D	Bad debt written off
Appendix E	Savings performance reports
Appendix F (i)	Organisation wide scorecard
Appendix F (ii)	Adults and communities scorecard
Appendix F (iii)	Children and families scorecard
Appendix F (iv)	Economy and place scorecard

## **Background papers**

Databooks ([link](#))

Corporate risk register ([link](#))