

Leader's report to Council

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 8 October 2021

Report by: Leader of the Council

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide an update on the work of the Cabinet since the previous meeting of the Council and an annual report on the priorities of the Cabinet and progress made in meeting those priorities. A brief summary of decisions taken by the executive is provided at appendix A and all decision reports and notices are available on the [council's website](#).

The report provides a summary of progress made against the areas of focus identified in the County Plan. More detail about the council's performance and how that is reported is available on the performance management page of the council's website

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. I am pleased to provide to Council my Annual Leader's report. This report principally covers the key decisions taken since my last report to Council for the meeting on 5

March to the date of this report (Thursday 30 September). All decisions taken since July 2020 (the annual reporting period) are also included and have been set out in line with the reporting in to council timeframes in Appendix A.

3. Within the report I have set out the priorities of the cabinet and progress made in meeting the ambitions and objective that are set out in the council's County and Delivery plans.

Children's Services – improvement journey

4. During this reporting period the highly critical court judgement involving a child in the care of the Council (the YY case) was handed down by His Hon Justice Keehan. This Judgement was not the first in which His Hon Justice Keehan had raised concerns regarding Herefordshire Children's Services. I know we have all shared huge concern and upset about the impact that this council's failings have had on the families involved with these cases.
5. As difficult as it was to read the High Court Judgement, the recent Ofsted inspection, and to hear directly from staff and local residents, we accept the recent findings and are committed to improve the quality of service that our children, young people and their families should expect and deserve.
6. Our top priority as a Council must be to protect and improve the lives of our most vulnerable children and young people, and knowing that we have let them down weighs heavily on us. We must do better.
7. Council and the Cabinet members have fully accepted accountability for His Hon Justice Keehan's findings and have committed to delivering sustained improvement of children's services. In May 2021, the council received a non-statutory improvement notice and we have developed an Improvement Plan to set out the practical steps we are taking.
8. Since the judgement there have been changes in the senior leadership team at Herefordshire Council. As you will be aware, Catherine Knowles was appointed as Interim Director of Children and Families but has recently resigned from her position. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Cath for all her hard work over the last 6 months in Herefordshire and I wish her well for the future.
9. I am pleased to report that Darryl Freeman, recruited by us as Children's Improvement Director, has agreed to take over the role as statutory Director of Children's Services with immediate effect. Darryl will work alongside Paul Walker as Chief Executive and the lead member for Children and Families (Cllr Diana Toynbee). Recruitment for a permanent director is currently under way.
10. This is a challenging period of change for our Children and Families colleagues and there are further challenges ahead to enable us to develop and deliver improvements needed across the services.
11. A Department of Education (DfE) approved independent improvement advisor (Ms. Gladys Rhodes White) has been appointed to support the improvement journey and is the Chair of the newly established Improvement Board. Herefordshire Council has also sought external advice and support through the DfE, Ofsted and the Local Government Association (LGA) and has recently been successful in obtaining grant funding from the DfE (£215k) to provide additional expertise and capacity to support practice improvement. We are working with the LGA and Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to strengthen the scrutiny training offer we provide to members and officers.

12. We are keen to make progress, and also understand that, on this journey to 'getting to good', all changes made must be measurable and sustainable. This is essential for rebuilding trust, and ensuring that we provide compassionate and effective children's services that last into the future.
13. Following this improvement journey will be the collective priority for everyone with a responsibility for supporting children and families - elected members, council employees across every service, and the partners who work with children every day.
14. A central underpinning to this plan is our commitment to make 'working together' a reality not just an aspiration. This means placing the voice of the child at the heart of everything we do, better engagement with parents to ensure that we get the right support available at the right time, and evolving our children's services to deliver good outcomes.
15. We must not forget the very difficult job that social care staff carry out. They are dedicated and conscientious. We will ensure that they receive the support and development they need to do their jobs with confidence, empathy and professionalism.

Progress reporting against the County and Corporate Delivery Plans

16. A summary of the most significant decisions the executive have taken since my last report in March 2021 (**17 a To 17u**) below. I also include a list of all key decisions taken by cabinet and cabinet members in Appendix A.
17. I would like to highlight the following.
 - a. **Covid.** The Cabinet continues to receive weekly verbal and written reports on the response to the Covid epidemic. Since the last Council meeting we have also seen an easing of the lockdown measures and the successful roll out of the vaccination programme in Herefordshire. Numbers of infections per 100,000 have risen significantly in the last month or so but so far have not resulted in pressure on the NHS nor a rise in deaths similar to past peaks of infection, For the first time infection rates has exceeded the average for the country.
 - b. **Covid Recovery Plan.** In June cabinet approved a £6.144m [Covid Recovery Plan](#). This paves the way for a wide range of activity to support the economy and the wellbeing of local people as we look to build back a greener, fairer society for all. The plan incentivises local residents to get back out socialising, spending time with friends and family, getting active and supporting local businesses. There is support for businesses to start up and grow, and to help and advice for those that are seeking new jobs or to re-train. I am also delighted that the plan will help continue the excellent business led visitor economy marketing and PR campaign after LEP funding ended in July.
 - c. **Core Strategy/Local Plan update.** Work is continuing to revise and extend the Council's Core Strategy through a local plan update. This will extend policies out to 2041. Current work is focussing on developing the plan's vision and objectives to ensure that the County Plan ambitions are embedded within the new development plan. At the same time a set of options for the spatial strategy are being developed in order to form the basis of an extensive consultation process anticipated to take place early in 2022. Various evidence base studies

are also being prepared to provide background information for the preparation of the plan's policies. The aim is to develop a draft plan in 2022 for publication early in 2023 followed by submission to the secretary of state for examination in public, with adoption anticipated in 2024. During the autumn members will have an early opportunity to view and discuss the emerging work on the options for the spatial strategy.

- d. **Waste Strategy.** The council's new waste strategy was approved at Cabinet on 29 July. The strategy contains ambitious targets for us to achieve over the next 14 years. It sets out an action plan which sets short, medium and long term priorities for the council and will need a strategic director to deliver this. At its heart the strategy seeks to put waste prevention as a top priority. This is followed by reuse, recycling, recovery (producing energy from waste) and finally disposal. And linked to this, Herefordshire has recently been invited to work with the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment 'Incpen' (together with Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, Somerset and Staffordshire waste authorities to develop a new national industry wide charter to promote public confidence in recycling. Our participation is already giving advanced access to the latest opinion research on recycling.

- e. **Stronger Towns Fund.** Progress has been made on the bid that was made to central government. This is another example of the Council working closely with business, the community and community and voluntary sector. I am pleased to report that some projects are planned to involve the use of Maylord Orchard, an option that would have been much more difficult to realise had the Council not owned this property outright.

In June the government committed £22.4m towards the implementation of the Hereford [Town Investment Plan](#) (TIP), which is fantastic news for the city and wider county. The development of the TIP has been a truly collaborative approach, with partners from across the public, private and community sectors coming together through the Stronger Towns Fund Board to identify a clear long term vision. Communities from across the city put forward ideas for project that were shortlisted for inclusion in the plan.

The funding from government includes support for three council led projects, the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery to create a new world class attraction and cultural hub, the redevelopment of Maylord Orchard including a new Learning Resource Centre helping to regenerate and re-purpose the heart of the city centre, and a project to improve the greening of the city, improve active travel measures and visitor information points. As required by government, we are now developing detailed full business cases for each of these projects by June 2022.

- f. **Local schools showing continuing progress.** Herefordshire moved up to 7th place in England for Key Stage 2 performance. 98.6% of our pupils in primary schools rated Good or Outstanding following recent Ofsted inspections. While this is, of course, very welcome news for our local pupils and schools, it also sends out a great message that Herefordshire is not just a great county to visit, but a great place to live and work.

- g. **Visitor Economy Marketing Campaign.** In July, the £444K funding from the Marches LEP came to an end. I would like to thank all those involved in the successful delivery of the projects linked to this funding and especially those from the private sector who contributed significantly. This project exceeded all of the initial targets it was set. It generated over 1.3 million social media impressions, reaching 8.3m people, and gained significant and most welcome coverage in a wide range of national newspapers and magazines. As a great conclusion to the campaign, the first ever Herefordshire TV advert was launched. To capitalise on this positive momentum the council has included some further funding in the Covid Recovery Plan to ensure the continued delivery of the campaign through until the end of March 2022.
- h. **Support [Centre for Veterans](#) re-opened.** In April, this one stop shop for advice, guidance and signposting for serving personnel, veterans, their families and carers re-opened following further lifting of Covid 19 restrictions. This Centre, based at 19 West Street in Hereford, is facilitated by Herefordshire Council who, through grant funding, supported the set-up of the Centre and has successfully secured further funding to directly employ and manage the Veteran Support Centre Manager. The Centre is a legal charity in its own right and has an active Management Group made up of representatives from organisations who have an interest in the delivery of this work in Herefordshire.
- i. **Afghan Refugees.** The council has committed to welcoming refugees from Afghanistan under the Government's two schemes, the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) for Afghan Citizens generally and the Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme for those who were employed supporting UK forces. We have recently offered to accommodate and support 56 refugees, to arrive during November and December. These will be the first of at least 125 people to be resettled in Herefordshire by 2025.

A specialist support service is being commissioned and provision arranged in relation to schools, health services and learning English. The council is working closely with partners including the National Health Service, Police, voluntary and community organisations and the armed forces community.

- j. **Affordable housing delivery.** Through negotiation of affordable housing as part of the planning process and partnership working with Registered Providers and general providers Strategic Housing we successfully exceeded the affordable housing target set for 2020–21 delivering 229 dwellings.
- k. **Green Homes Grant.** Also in June, the council received the [Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery phase 2 \(GHG LAD 2\) funding](#) via the Midlands Energy Hub (MEH). The capital funding of up to £1,460,600 will support around 150 fuel poor households in the county with energy efficiency and renewable technology measures. The primary purpose of the LAD Phase 2 scheme is to raise the energy efficiency rating of low income and low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated homes (those with EPCs of D, E, F or G) in an effort to alleviate fuel poverty, contribute to tackling the climate and ecological emergency, improve local air quality and support the green economic recovery in response to Covid-19.

- l. **Environmental Building Design Standards.** The Cabinet has approved new standards to apply to council developments and council retrofit of housing schemes across the county. This will be followed by the development and consultation on new Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). These standards should raise expectations and inspire the council and others to provide the higher quality greener homes and help towards the achievement of zero carbon targets agreed by Council.

- m. **Council Housing Building Programme.** We continue to have this as a top priority. Various papers have been considered by Cabinet and cabinet members, and potential sites are being considered. We have a regular dialogue with Homes England with a view to unlocking more difficult sites.

- n. **Fastershire.** Since July, over half of the properties in the North Herefordshire parliamentary constituency can now access a Full Fibre Gigabit Capable connection. Excellent progress is being made in Ross on Wye by Full Fibre Ltd. 80% of the town, from August, is now able to order a full fibre connection. Nash & Knill and Castle Frome, Thornbury, Tretire & Three Ashes and Eywood were awarded a combined £330,000 to get Airband to bring Full Fibre to these remote communities through the Fastershire Community Grant. The final structure has been completed on Fastershire's contract with Openreach in Hereford.

ZZOOMM continues to also make good progress with their full fibre deployment for the entirety of Hereford City. All of these operators will be working intensively in Herefordshire during 2021 and 2022. This is excellent news for the county's digital connectivity bringing associated benefits to the Herefordshire economy, environment and society.

- o. **Public realm, annual plan 2021/22.** The [Public Realm Contract Annual Plan](#) for 2021/22 was published in April. Investment in the asset capital budget this year will increase spend on drainage, structures, footways and cycleways and will mean a reduction in resurfacing. This is deemed the optimum use of available funding against the risk profile of the network. Drainage is crucial to the integrity of our road surfaces and because of cuts to our public realm budgets over the last decade, drainage has suffered as scarce resources has been used more reactively on our roads. For the county's roads to be maintained to the proper standard our residents expect, what we need is additional guaranteed revenue and capital funding from central government.

- p. **Talk community hubs.** There are now 28 Talk Community Hubs. A recent addition is one in Ross-on-Wye Community Garden. It is one of our more unique hubs, because although it's located in the centre of Ross-on-Wye, it is within a community garden, which provides a safe and tranquil space for people to relax and take some time out from the busy hubbub of daily life. To keep up to date with Talk Community you can visit the dedicated web-site on the following link:

<https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/keeping-well-staying-healthy/keeping-yourself-well/talk-community-hubs/where-is-my-nearest-talk-community-hub/y>

- q. **National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better.** On 15 March, the government set out steps to encourage local transport authorities and bus operators to work more closely together to increase patronage, reliability and satisfaction of bus services. The strategy comes with the promise of up to £3bn for investment in public transport outside of London. Government is requiring local authorities to produce Bus Service Improvement Plans underpinned by statutory Enhanced Partnerships with local bus operators if they want to access this funding. Many of the aspirations of the strategy align closely with those identified in the Hereford Transport Strategy Review including increasing patronage, bus priority and getting more school children on buses.

The council has secured £100k Capacity Funding from the Department for Transport to fund this work over the coming year which will include preparation of a Bus Service Improvement Plan. [The council's plan](#) is expected to be launched in October this year, I look forward to reporting on progress in my next report. It is regrettable that the Council currently has limited control over bus companies, which makes achieving our goal of making bus travel a more common feature of our communities, including rural ones more challenging

- r. **People:** The Council is currently working with three interim Directors. I am very grateful for the efforts of those who have stepped into interim roles. There are also several departments in the Council which are recruiting additional staff. Inevitably this places pressure on the existing staff and I very much appreciate their efforts, and the patience of Councillors and members of the public as we seek to achieve a full complement of staff. Recruitment at all levels is taking place. As far as recruitment at Director level is concerned, this has started and the process as set out in the Constitution will be followed.

Recruitment of social workers is of particular concern with effort being concentrated in this area. Being able to recruit and retain great social workers is a key part our children's improvement plan.

Work is underway on all aspects of recruitment to ensure we put our best foot forward on the recruitment market. This work includes making sure we have a competitive salary and benefits package, good development and career progression opportunities, robust induction and a supportive working environment where good social work practice can thrive. We all know that Herefordshire is a great place to live, work and bring up children. We need to get that message out!

- s. **Project Management.** I am pleased to report the establishment of the Project Management Office which will help to deliver projects especially in the Economy and Place Directorate. This is very much a subject for management rather than any Cabinet decisions, so as cabinet members we must be careful not to cross a line. I believe we have a correct balance at the current time.
- t. **Hereford Enterprise Zone.** The development of Hereford Enterprise Zone continues to go from strength to strength. The council successfully implemented a £5.4m Marches Local Enterprise Partnership grant between October 2021 and March 2022, primarily focussed on bringing the northern magazine area back in to economic use. A number of major milestones have been achieved, in June Robert Jenrick opened the very impressive £7.4m Shell Store Business

Incubator building, the £9m Midlands Centre for Cyber Security construction has now been completed and is due to open in October, and NMITE's Centre for Timber Technology and Centre for Advanced Manufacturing is currently being constructed by Speller Metcalfe (local construction firm). Since 2011 the Enterprise Zone has delivered 22 hectares of land sold for development or developed out directly, 67,000 sq m of development built or committed to being built, with over 1,000 jobs associated with that development.

- u. **Phosphates in our Rivers.** There have been many meetings since the last Council meeting involving cabinet members and officers seeking solutions to this problem which is preventing new building in the north of the County, and damaging the health of our rivers. We are engaging with our MP's, the Environment Agency, Ministers, officers and Councillors of neighbouring local authorities, Welsh Water, the farming community and the food processing industry. All acknowledge the problem We are seeking solutions together but are in the hands principally of Central Government and, through them, an underfunded Environment Agency.

Plans are advanced for land to be purchased for the development of wetlands and we now have in place a dedicated resource to press on with this project at a quicker pace.

Reporting progress against stated commitments in the Delivery Plan

18. A list of the decisions taken by cabinet and cabinet members since the last report to Council (covering the period between 6 March 2021 to 30 September 2021) is provided at appendix A. 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.
19. Since my last report, two key decisions were taken under the general exception provisions (giving more than five but less than 28 days' notice). Four key decisions were taken under the urgency provisions (less than five days' notice) and no decisions were subject to call in. As identified in appendix A
20. The following table provides a brief summary of some of the cabinet's decisions and progress against the priorities we have set out to in our delivery plan (adopted 26 November 2020). Whilst there are a number of projects planned, the proposed top strategic priorities for delivery in the coming years remain:
 - I. Delivery of affordable homes built to strong environmental standards
 - II. Improving the digital connectivity of the county
 - III. Creating jobs and skills that enable our residents to earn higher wages
 - IV. Creating a modern and resilient transport network within the City and County

<i>Links to County and Delivery Plan ...</i>	<i>The steps and decisions we have taken in this reporting period</i>
County plan ambition is to: <i>Target of carbon neutrality by 2030</i>	A: Acceptance and implementation of Solar PV for schools project This decision gave approval for the Council to undertake an invest to save programme to install solar photovoltaic panels (PV) on maintained schools in Herefordshire.

<p>Corporate delivery plan priority:</p> <p><i>Increase the % of investment that contributes significantly to achieving climate and nature goals</i></p> <p>Decision maker:</p> <p><i>Cabinet member environment and economy</i></p>	<p>In taking this decision we wish to develop power purchase agreements (PPA) with schools so that there is no upfront cost for schools for the solar PV systems. Here schools would share the financial benefit through discounted costs for the renewable energy and the income from the sale of the energy would be used to repay the capital investment and further reduce the council's energy bill.</p> <p>This project will contribute towards the council's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030/31, will help to improve local energy security and will generate financial savings for both schools and the council</p>
<p>County Plan Ambition is to:</p> <p><i>Children and young people in this county to have a great start in life</i></p> <p>Corporate delivery plan priority:</p> <p><i>Reducing the number of school leavers who are not in education, training or employment (target to be set but with the caveat of potential impact of COVID-19 on opportunities).</i></p> <p>Decision maker: <i>Cabinet Member environment and economy</i></p>	<p>B: To accept and approve the gateway delivery of additional Kickstart scheme placements, providing work experience placements to 16 to 24 year olds.</p> <p>This decision sought approval to accept and deliver additional grant funding offered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The council has successfully applied to DWP to be a gateway organisation for the delivery of the Kickstart scheme across Herefordshire. As part of the Covid 19 recovery programme, the Kickstart scheme funds 6 monthly work experience placements for 16 to 24 year olds receiving universal credit.</p> <p>The council successfully applied to DWP to be a gateway organisation in October 2020, providing a route for both the council and local employers to participate in the scheme. A Cabinet Member decision was taken on 4 February 2021 to accept and deliver up to £986,124 of support through the scheme.</p>
<p>County plan ambition is to ensure: <i>Action to tackle the climate emergency.</i></p> <p>Corporate delivery priority is: <i>Create a new countywide climate & ecological emergency partnership, strategy and action plan to improve biodiversity and achieve countywide carbon neutrality by 2030</i></p> <p>Decision maker: <i>Cabinet</i></p>	<p>C: Allocating the use of the climate reserve</p> <p>This decision sets out the Council's ambitious plan to lead the local response to the Climate & Ecological Emergency including the development of a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and to allocate the use of the Council's dedicated climate reserve in order to accelerate the delivery of our net zero carbon and nature rich commitments.</p> <p>Since the publication of the Council's first Carbon Management Plan in 2011, Herefordshire Council has made excellent progress reducing emissions from the Council's operations and is currently delivering the third 5-year carbon management plan. This plan sets out the Council's route to zero carbon by 2030/31 and sets out an ambitious interim carbon reduction target of a 75% by 2025/26.</p>

<p>A County Plan ambition is to: <i>Improve the mental wellbeing of Herefordshire residents</i></p> <p>Corporate delivery plan Objective <i>Improve the overall mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents of all ages</i></p> <p>Decision maker: Cabinet</p>	<p>D: Mental Health Aftercare Arrangements as required under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983</p> <p>This decision approved the joint policy and standard operating procedure (SOP) for section 117 aftercare, which is required under the Mental Health Act 1983. People who have been detained in hospital for treatment of their mental health needs may require care and support after they leave hospital. This aftercare will be arranged by the council or the NHS and provided in a variety of ways, depending on people’s needs.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group have a joint responsibility in law to make available appropriate aftercare services for people who have previously been detained in hospital for treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983. In practice, this responsibility applies only to aftercare for people who have been detained in hospital for more than 28 days.</p>
<p>A County Plan priority is to: <i>Improve energy efficiency of homes and build standards for new housing</i></p> <p>Corporate Delivery Plan Objective: <i>Introduce supplementary planning guidance on environmental building standards to ensure all new buildings are compatible with our climate and nature goals</i></p> <p>Decision maker: Cabinet</p>	<p>E: Environmental Building Design Standards</p> <p>This decision approved the output of the proposed environmental building design standards which will set the standard for future developments and retrofit of housing schemes across the county. At Cabinet on 26 November 2020 the decision was taken on how the council would progress the delivery of net carbon zero affordable housing across the county over the coming years. Cabinet also approved the appointment of an independent expert to advise on building housing to maximise the environmental benefits to meet the council’s climate emergency responsibilities.</p> <p>The council commissioned Zero Carbon House to create a proposal and advise on standards for building housing to maximise the environmental benefits to meet the council’s climate emergency responsibilities. Working alongside other council policies, such as the forthcoming Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), these standards should raise expectations and inspire the council and others to provide the higher quality greener homes needed.</p>
<p>A County Plan priority is to: <i>Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism</i></p> <p>Corporate Delivery Plan Objective: <i>Implement the Leominster Heritage Action Zone Project, to act as a</i></p>	<p>F: Leominster Heritage Action Zone.</p> <p>This decision approved expenditure to deliver activities as detailed in the Leominster Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan.</p> <p>There are currently more than 60 High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) schemes across England in the HAZ Programme. This is a £95m nationwide initiative designed to secure lasting improvements to historic high streets for communities who use them. The programme is funded with £40 million from the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport’s Heritage High Street Fund, £52 million from the</p>

<p><i>catalyst to the regeneration of the town and to attract new visitors</i></p> <p>Decision maker: Cabinet</p>	<p>Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Future High Streets Fund, and a further £3 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.</p> <p>The council is now putting in place the match funding, including funding for the public realm projects, and delegating operational decisions to the Director for Economy and Place. The match funding will allow the start of first stage of the public realm projects. This is the procurement of professional services support to carry out the consultation and design of the public realm schemes. This procurement will be carried out in consultation with the council's Commercial and Infrastructure teams and will follow the council's contracts procedures rules.</p>
<p>A County Plan priority is to:</p> <p><i>ensure that all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve; it will protect the lives of vulnerable people; and invest in education and skills.</i></p> <p>Decision maker: Cabinet</p>	<p>G: Herefordshire Capital Investment Strategy 2021-2030 For Specialist Settings Educating Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p> <p>This decision approved this strategy for Herefordshire Council to support implementation of capital improvements to specialist SEND education accommodation.</p> <p>Herefordshire council has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient high quality accommodation for pupils with an Education Health Care plan (EHCP) for their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In order to ensure that sufficient places are available in safe and suitable accommodation to cater for the full range of needs identified within EHCPs</p> <p>The strategy ensures that there is high quality sustainable specialist educational accommodation for children and young people (CYP) with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) for SEND in Herefordshire.</p>
<p>Corporate Delivery Plan Objective: <i>Hereford City Centre and our market towns being reimaged, refocused and transformed as the way in which we live</i></p> <p>Decision maker: Cabinet Member, Finance, Corporate services and Planning</p>	<p>H: Town Deal Heads of Terms</p> <p>In late 2019 Hereford was included, along with another 101 towns across England, within the government's Towns Fund programme. At the geographic heart of Herefordshire, Hereford is the sub-regional driver for over 192,000 people. With a unique heritage, and a striking rural identity, alongside a thriving artisan food and drink culture, Hereford is an attractive town both to visit and in which to live.</p> <p>This is an opportunity to come together to drive long-term economic and productivity growth in Hereford, particularly as we meet the challenges presented by Covid-19. The Hereford Towns Fund Board and the council submitted a Town Investment Plan at the end of January 2020 to government seeking £25million and on 8 June 2021 it was announced that the Hereford Towns Fund Programme had been allocated £22.4million.</p>

Outside Bodies – Annual Reporting

21. Since 2018, the council has commissioned short annual reports covering the work and activities from our recognised outside bodies. I am very grateful to the members and officers for their time in preparing these reports. Those that have been received at the time of publication are included in Appendix C.

Community impact

22. The County Plan shapes the future of Herefordshire and aims to encourage and strengthen our vibrant communities, create a thriving local economy and protect and enhance our environment to ensure Herefordshire remains a great place to live, visit, work, learn and do business. The plan guides the work of the council and our relationship with individuals, families, communities and partners through to 2024. The council's delivery plan outlines the detailed work that we have committed to delivering over the next eighteen months.
23. 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.

Environmental Impact

24. A central underpinning of Herefordshire Council's County Plan is healthy, connected and vibrant ecosystems strongly support the local economy, improve health and wellbeing and make the county an attractive place to live and to visit. It is a commitment of the plan to protect and enhance this environment while stewarding it for future generations.
25. The council's delivery plan is underpinned by the commitment of this executive to use our unique role as leaders of the places we represent to help people feel safe, supported and proud of our unique and beautiful environment and we shall tackle the climate challenge through new approaches to sustainability. In doing this we will base our work on the lessons we have learned, what our residents and businesses tell us and our understanding of what our county needs for a successful future.

Equality duty

26. 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.

27. 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. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
28. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.

Resource implications

29. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The financial implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix A 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

30. 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 and, at the first meeting to follow the annual meeting of Council (except in a year when there are ordinary elections), on the priorities of the cabinet and progress made in meeting those priorities. This report ensures these requirement are met
31. Appointment of cabinet members and allocation of portfolio responsibilities are responsibilities of the Leader of the Council, and the constitution requires that any changes are subsequently reported to Council. This report ensures these requirement are met.
32. There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The legal implications of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix A have been set out within the relevant decision report and taken into consideration at the time the decision was taken

Risk management

33. There are no risks arising from the recommendations of this report. The risks of any decisions of the executive listed at appendix A 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

34. None.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Executive decisions taken from 17 July 2020 to 30 September 2021.
- Appendix B – Cabinet Member Portfolios
- Appendix C – Annual reports, 2020/21 received from the council's recognised Outside Bodies

Background papers

None