

**Chief Executive's announcements
Full Council 28 January 2022**

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone who has helped with the Covid-booster vaccination effort over the Christmas period. I visited the Maylord Orchard vaccination site and it was great to see partners and volunteers working together to help protect our community. We continue to support residents and businesses throughout the Covid pandemic and our 'Play Your Part' campaign asks all residents to do their bit to help limit the spread of Covid-19.

A New Year brings a new start and as we continue on our path of improvement, there have been a number of changes to the senior management structure at Herefordshire Council. As part of the 'One Council' transformation programme we have appointed Darryl Freeman as Corporate Director for Children and Young People, Mark Purvis as Director of Transformation, David Ubaka as Delivery Director for Transport Strategy, Matthew Pearce as Director of Public Health, and Ross Cook as Corporate Director for Economy and Environment. The Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing is currently being re-advertised. These appointments complete the senior management restructure and will mean we can deliver further improvements across the organisation quickly and effectively.

We continue to improve our children's social care services as part of the Children's Improvement Plan and are pleased to receive a grant from government of around £1.7m to support our activity and help us to improve outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire. The Children's Services Improvement Board, which consists of representatives from a wide range of agencies who work with children and young people in Herefordshire, continues to oversee our improvement journey. The Board is chaired by DfE appointed Improvement Advisor, Gladys Rhodes White OBE.

Our commitment to address the climate and ecological emergency continues and we recognise the urgent need for action. We have formed the Climate and Nature Partnership Board to help the county reduce its carbon output to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Our new Herefordshire Citizens' Climate Assembly brings people together from across the county to help influence and shape how we address the climate and ecological challenges that we face. We have already undertaken many practical initiatives such as LED street lighting, solar panels on our buildings, Beryl Bikes and our very popular 'Bus It' campaign, with free bus travel on weekends to help get people out of cars and onto buses. There is much more planned. With practical changes such as changes to our bin collections to encourage more reuse and recycling, better walking and cycling options so you don't have to get into a car for your journey, alongside strategic approaches such as ensuring that all our policies reflect our commitment to preserve and protect our beautiful county for generations to come.

We are finding more collaborative ways of working with business, to forge new relationships and build on our strengths and opportunities. Following our in-person meetings with business leaders across the county, the first virtual summit took place in January. Our Business Summits have been well-attended, both online and offline and I look forward building relationships through our regular quarterly economic updates with the business community. There has been overwhelming support from the business sector

to establish the new shared 'place-based' vision for Herefordshire, and realise the truly great potential and ambition of our fantastic county. The Herefordshire Big Plan will set out our vision, and establish how, together with partners, we will get there. Our new university, with its first cohort, brings opportunity into the county as well bringing a new energy and vibrancy to Hereford. There is much for Herefordshire to look forward to!

Regeneration is part of our 'Big Plan' which brings businesses and partners together to create a lasting vision for Herefordshire. We have much history and heritage to be proud of in the county and we will work to maximise the impact and value of our resources- whether built or natural, owned or shared. A great example of regeneration is the Shell Store munitions factory on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate. This was an historic but dilapidated site and it has been given a new lease of life as a venue for business conferencing and business development.

It's important for me to continue to get to know Herefordshire better, so where Covid restrictions have allowed, I have continued my programme of meeting staff, Councillors, local businesses and community representatives alongside representatives from our community. I have spent time with the Covid Outbreak Management team, some of our care leavers, Herefordshire Football Association, the food share at Barons Cross estate, Talk Community hubs, Maylords vaccination site, and with Officers from the Garrison.

I have also put in place a programme of regular all-staff and leadership briefings. This is an important way to communicate with staff during our period of transformation across the organisation, share progress with new developments and programmes with presentations from colleagues and a chance to listen to the voices of staff across the council.