



Title of report: Q1 Performance Report

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 25 September 2025

Cabinet member: Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Report by: Director of Finance

Report author: Head of Corporate Performance and Intelligence

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To review performance for Quarter 1 (Q1) 2025/26 and to report the performance position across all Directorates for this period.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) review performance for Q1 2025/26

Alternative options

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

Key considerations

1. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the associated annual Delivery Plan for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. It provides a summary of the activities undertaken to deliver the key priorities and goals in Quarter 1 and highlights progress in delivery of the key performance indicators (KPIs). Appendix A provides the full breakdown of the Q1 updates on the Delivery Plan milestones. 199 out of 226 milestones (88%) profiled to be 'in progress' by the end of Quarter 1 in 2025/26 have been delivered or are on track to be delivered by the end of the financial year.
3. Minor amendments to the Delivery Plan, approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 March 2025, have been under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive to ensure that key deliverables and milestones, against which performance will be monitored throughout 2025/26, reflect planned activity to achieve the priorities of the Council Plan.
4. Beyond the Delivery Plan, the council has achieved the following successes in Q1 of 2025/26.

Quarter 1 highlights

5. The council has continued to deliver on its Capital Investment Programme. The following table presents some of the highlights for Quarter 1.

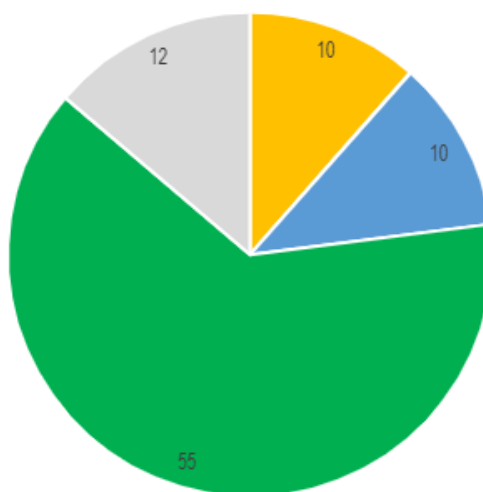
Project	Investment	Where are we...
Hereford Transport Hub	£11.57 million, of which £6.3 million is Levelling-Up grant funding and £1.0m is Active Travel Measures grant funding	Following a procurement process during Q4, the contract with the main contractor was finalised in Q1. The contractor is currently working through the contractor-design elements of their appointment and developing information necessary to discharge planning conditions. The initial phase of construction work is due to commence during Q2.
Holme Lacy Road Active Travel Improvements (Levelling Up Fund)	£7.914 million grant funding	Procurement concluded during Q1. The appointed contractor is mobilising for commencement on site during Q2. Tender returns were more favourable than pre-construction estimates, allowing the extent of associated 'Quiet Routes' south of the river to be expanded.
Western By-Pass Phase 1	£40.3 million	Following appointment of the design consultancy in Q4 (2024/25), the design work has been proceeding at pace through Q1 with a view to commencing a contractor procurement process in Q2.
Phosphate Mitigation/ Integrated Wetlands	£4.76 million grant funding	Construction of the second integrated wetland at Tarrington got underway in Q1 and is progressing well. Agreement subject to contract was also reached during Q1 with the school which will be the subject of the pilot private sewage treatment works replacement scheme. This will now proceed to formal contract in Q1, in tandem with procurement for a design and build provider and subsequent planning consent.

Employment Land in Herefordshire	£12 million (£8m Ross & £4m other market towns)	<p>Detailed design and other key pre-construction activity for phase 1 of Ross Enterprise Park completed in Q1, and this will form the basis for a contractor procurement exercise in Q2.</p> <p>Significant progress has also been made developing opportunities in other market towns, specifically at this stage the Bromyard Old Depot Site and the Buttercross building in Leominster. A key decision is imminent in Q2 recommending budget approval for £3.7m to progress these, with the balance allocated for options development in other market towns.</p>
Hereford Museum & Art Gallery	£20.529 million (of which £12.129m is grant funding)	<p>Pre-Construction Services (PCSA) period commenced in Q1 and the full design team working to develop the remaining detailed technical RIBA4 design. One of the contractors is engaging with the market for subcontractors to deliver the construction and to ensure the cost plan produced at the end of RIBA4 is an accurate market-tested assessment for the project.</p> <p>Temporary works design completed in Q1 and RIBA4 design for the gallery fit-out continues with co-production and access panels stakeholder engagement providing support. Café designers have been appointed and have provided their initial concept ideas.</p>
Warm Homes Grant	£2.485 million grant funding	The new Warm Homes home retrofit scheme for 2025/26 got underway in Q1, with a positive start benefitting from mobilisation work and homeowner expressions of interest undertaken in readiness during Q4.
Peterchurch Primary School – New school Building	£10.853m	<p>Planning permission for new school building granted.</p> <p>Final contractor cost submission is due in July 2025 with the construction contract to be entered into and a proposed start on site for August 2025.</p>
Aylestone School Expansion	£13.1m DFE Grant Funding	The planning application is now to be determined at the October planning committee. Should approval be received, it is anticipated that works on site will commence in January 2026.
Hampton Dene Primary School – Extension to LRC	£2.6m DFE Grant Funding	<p>Procurement for construction contractor completed.</p> <p>Planning approval granted subject to Secretary of State approval (due 24th July</p>

		2025) with a proposed start on site in September 2025.
Schools Capital Maintenance Programme	£3.2m DFE Grant/Borrowing	Two projects completed in Q1 (Peterchurch Primary School drainage & Michaelchurch Primary heating) – value of £150,000 with a further 12 schemes tendered for implementation during the school summer holiday period of 2025.
Estates Capital Programme Improvements	£2.5m in 25/26	5 projects completed in Q1 with total projects value of £307k with further projects in procurement stage for delivery during the financial. Procurement complete on 2 further projects with start dates to be confirmed.

Performance: People

RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones at end of Q1



Milestones Colour Key: Green: On Track; Amber: At risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Blue: Completed; Red: Significant risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Grey: Not due to start yet

Children and Young People

- Family Group Conferencing is now available for all families, including those whose needs are met by Early Help, enabling earlier, family-led decision-making that empowers families to take ownership of their challenges and solutions. By involving extended family and support networks, FGC promotes more sustainable outcomes, reduces reliance on statutory services, and helps children remain safely within their family environment. This inclusive approach supports early intervention, strengthens resilience, and ensures that families receive the right support at the right time, ultimately improving outcomes and reducing long-term demand on social care.
- Increasing capacity through the mobilisation of a new Residential Children Home has been successfully opened and was registered with Ofsted in June 2025 despite the recruitment challenges. The second home is on track to open in September 2025. This expansion strengthens local placement sufficiency, reducing reliance on out-of-area or high-cost independent placements. It supports better outcomes for children by enabling them to remain

closer to their communities, schools, and support networks, while also improving oversight, continuity of care, and long-term cost-effectiveness for the council.

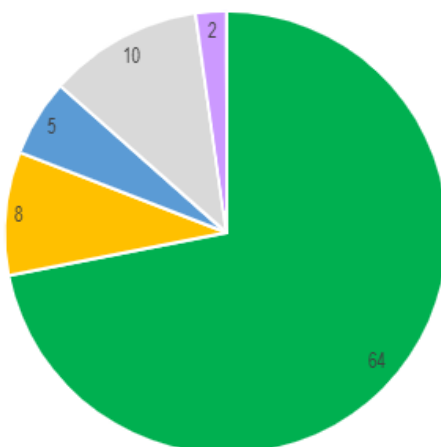
8. Progress continues on the development of a new build special free school as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) free school programme. While we await further detail from the DfE regarding the project timeline, the council remains committed and ready to move forward with the appointment of an academy trust as soon as confirmation is received. This project represents a key investment in local specialist education provision, and we look forward to working with partners to deliver this important new facility for children and families in our community.

Community Wellbeing

9. The Herefordshire Connect cross-sector referral platform is now ready to launch as a pilot with identified partner organisations supporting the Household Support Fund. Data sharing agreements are in place, and the platform has been successfully built and tested. This innovative tool will improve access to cost-of-living support by enabling direct referrals between organisations, reducing duplication, and ensuring residents receive timely and coordinated help tailored to their needs.
10. Work is progressing to improve the support people receive in the community after being discharged from hospital, including access to reablement services. A review process and supporting audit tools have now been developed in collaboration with health and care system partners. The audit, scheduled for Quarter 2, will involve key stakeholders and help identify opportunities to strengthen the discharge pathway. This work aims to ensure individuals receive the right care at the right time, reduce readmissions, and support people to regain independence more effectively.

Performance: Place

RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones at end of Q1



Milestones Colour Key: Green: On Track; Amber: At risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Blue: Completed; Red: Significant risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Purple: Parked as waiting on other interdependent activity; Grey: Not due to start yet

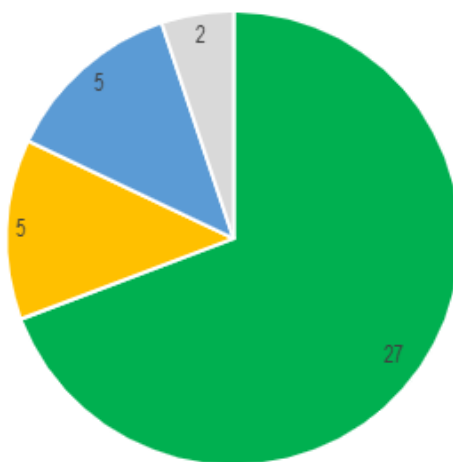
11. A countywide Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland strategy to value nature and uphold environmental standards has now been finalised following extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders. To support its successful countywide adoption, a launch and adoption event is being planned for September, aligning with Herefordshire Council's formal commitment as the initial signatory. This strategy sets out a shared vision for minimising

pollution, enhancing biodiversity, and protecting natural assets for future generations. By working collaboratively with partners, the strategy will help ensure a healthier environment, support climate resilience, and contribute to the long-term wellbeing of communities across Herefordshire.

12. The review of the Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2019–2029 is progressing well in partnership with the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership (HCP). Following a successful consultation with stakeholders and partners, a refreshed vision and set of priorities have been drafted. An update on progress was shared at the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in June 2025. The updated strategy will help shape a vibrant and inclusive cultural landscape across the county, supporting local creativity, boosting the economy, and enhancing wellbeing through greater access to arts, heritage, and cultural opportunities for all residents.
13. As part of our commitment to reducing waste, increasing reuse, and boosting recycling rates, plans to introduce a separate food and a garden waste collection service are progressing. The rollout of these services is dependent on confirmation of new burdens funding from central government, which is still awaited. While this may affect the original timescales, the council remains fully committed to delivering this important service. Once in place, separate food and garden waste collections will help reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, lower carbon emissions, and support a more sustainable future for Herefordshire.

Performance: Growth

RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones at end of Q1

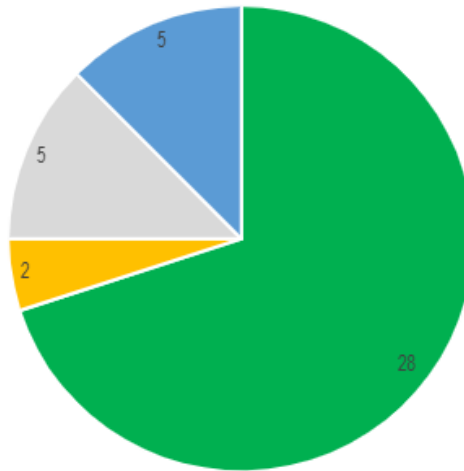


Milestones Colour Key: Green: On Track; Amber: At risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Blue: Completed; Red: Significant risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Grey: Not due to start yet

14. A key step has been taken to support residents in accessing skills development, training, and employment opportunities. A Cabinet Member decision has now been made to enable delivery of the 2025/26 programme. This programme will help people across Herefordshire gain the skills and confidence they need to enter or progress in the workforce, supporting economic growth, reducing inequalities, and improving quality of life for individuals and communities.
15. As part of our commitment to supporting Hereford City and our market towns as vibrant, thriving hubs, we are continuing to explore opportunities to improve regional connectivity and economic growth. We are currently awaiting the outcome of modelling by Transport for Wales on a proposed fast rail service between Cardiff and Manchester, which will help assess the impact on local line capacity. In parallel, the outcome of proposed housing allocation sites for the Regulation 18 consultation will help inform the business case. These developments are key to shaping future infrastructure and investment decisions that will benefit residents, businesses, and communities across the county.

Performance: Transformation

RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones at end of Q1



Milestones Colour Key: Green: On Track; Amber: At risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Blue: Completed; Red: Significant risk of not being completed by the end of the financial year; Grey: Not due to start yet

16. As part of our commitment to attracting and retaining an excellent workforce, several improvements have been made to enhance the recruitment and onboarding experience. These include the introduction of revised candidate application forms to make the process more accessible and user-friendly, the implementation of a feedback process to gather insights from both candidates and hiring managers, and strengthened pre-employment checks to ensure safer and more efficient hiring. These changes support a more inclusive, transparent, and high-quality recruitment process; helping the council build a skilled and motivated workforce to deliver the best outcomes for residents.
17. The council continues to invest in its property assets to ensure they are well maintained and to reduce the long-term cost of reactive repairs. Good progress is being made in completing Estates and Schools capital programmes from previous years, and a number of new projects within the 2025/28 programme have now commenced and are on track to be delivered within the year. This ongoing investment helps ensure that council buildings remain safe, efficient, and fit for purpose; supporting the delivery of high-quality services to residents while reducing future maintenance costs.

Local Authority Data Explorer

18. The Office for Local Government (Oflog) has closed, and Local Authority Data Explorer has now been removed.
19. The MHCLG announced in July that they are launching a new Local Government Outcomes Framework. The outcomes align with the key national priorities, ranging from preventing homelessness and rough sleeping to community safety and satisfaction. The outcomes are underpinned by metrics to measure progress.
20. This approach is designed to support a move away from hundreds of ringfenced grants to instead focus on a small number of tangible improvements for people and communities.
21. Central government will still take a key interest in outcome delivery and intervene where necessary and MHCLG will work with other government departments to make sure that support and challenge in response to the Framework works.

22. Framework data will also feed into Government's assessment of whether the Best Value Duty is being met.

23. MHCLG have requested feedback on the draft framework and the metrics contained within. Herefordshire Council is currently working on a response and also considering the alignment of the Herefordshire Council's Delivery Plan outcomes metrics with the metrics proposed by MHCLG. When this work has been completed, the new Outcomes Framework will be shared with Cabinet.

24. In the meantime, we will continue to report on our top ten indicators:

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Q4 Actual	Q1* Projection	Q1* Actual	Q1* RAG**
Percentage of service users aged 65+ discharged from hospital into Home First who are still at home 91 days after discharge	79.83%	80%	76%	Amber
Percentage of Children and Young People social work assessments completed within timescale (45 days)	67.7%	85%	74.43%	Red
Percentage of children in care who have an up-to-date review	98.25%	95%	99.7%	Green
Percentage of major planning applications dealt with within 13 weeks (or 16 weeks if subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment), or with an agreed extension of time <i>Provisional subject to DLUHC confirmation</i>	94.59%	70%	90.91%	Green
Percentage of non-major (minor and other) planning applications dealt with within 8 weeks, or with an agreed extension of time <i>Provisional subject to DLUHC confirmation</i>	77.71%	80%	79.84%	Amber
Number of kg of waste that is not sent to reuse, recycling or composting (per household) <i>Provisional subject to DEFRA confirmation</i>	366.40kg (YTD Dec 2024)	480kg (YTD Mar 2025)	494.51kg (YTD Mar 2025)	Amber
Number of affordable homes delivered	276	86	133	Green
Number of people rough sleeping	1	5	8	Red
Value of grants awarded to businesses to support viability and enable growth through UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	£2,937,548	£0	£0	Green
Average days sickness per FTE	8.02	9	8.37	Green

* year to date (April 2025 – June 2025) unless stated otherwise

** RAG (Red Amber Green) Key: Green (target met/ exceeded); Amber (within 10% threshold); Red (away from target by 10%+ in an adverse direction); Grey (not targeted/ monitoring only)

25. Q1 data on Social Worker Assessment within timescales at 74.3% reflects the three months between April and June where we can see a low start at 63% and much higher finish by June

at 84.8%. This range is reflective of staff management within the period where we have managed leavers and new starters and intermittent vacancies that increases workloads and effect delays on completion. In one instance, the departure of a team member in April required the reallocation of 25 cases. Due to the volume and timing, this temporarily impacted the ability to meet expected timescales. During the assessment period children are seen and parents and partners spoken to, with any immediate safety issues addressed as we work to complete the assessment. We have had a successful first Q1 on recruitment in this part of the service and we hope to be fully and permanently staffed by the end of September.

26. The number of people rough sleeping is fluctuating throughout the quarter. There were only 5 rough sleepers when the night shelter closed and we will continue to review the number of people rough sleeping. On street support is provided by the Outreach Team and where available accommodation is provided.
27. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund are key tools for supporting local business growth and resilience. While no grants were awarded in Quarter 1, this reflects the planned focus on setting up the schemes, developing guidance, and inviting applications. The first grants are expected to be awarded from Quarter 2 onwards, ensuring that funding is delivered effectively and reaches businesses that can make the most impact in supporting local economic development.

Community impact

28. In accordance with the accepted code of corporate governance, the 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.
29. Regularly reviewing performance with a view to identifying actions which will further drive improvement in outcomes or efficiencies helps ensure the council achieves its County Plan priorities.

Environmental Impact

30. This report details how progress is being made in achieving the Delivery Plan which details how the council is working to deliver the environmental ambitions set out in the County Plan. Individual projects and deliverables included within the Delivery Plan will all be subject to their own governance arrangements and assessment of environmental and ecological impact.

Equality duty

31. 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.

32. 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.
33. Each project within the Delivery Plan will assess its equality impact individually. Where a decision is likely to result in detrimental impact on any group with a protected characteristic it must be justified objectively. This means that attempts to mitigate the harm will be explored. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker will balance this detrimental impact against the strength of legitimate public need to pursue the service change.

Resource implications

34. These recommendations have no direct financial implications, however cabinet may wish to consider how money is utilised in order to meet the council's objectives.

Legal implications

35. This Council is a best value authority designated under the Local Government Act 1999. It is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way it exercises its functions. Measuring performance is a tool to evidence such improvement.

Risk management

36. The risks associated with the council's business are recorded on the relevant service risk register and escalated in accordance with the council's Performance Management Framework and Risk Management Plan. The highest risks, i.e. those scoring greater than 16 after controls, are escalated to the council's Corporate Risk Register.

Consultees

37. None in relation to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A Refreshed Delivery Plan 2025/26 with Q1 updates

Background papers

Council Plan 2024-28
Delivery Plan 2025-26