

Community Wellbeing Directorate

2026/27 Budget Position Statement

Key pressures, challenges and savings proposals for 2026/27

Community Wellbeing Directorate

Key Revenue Budget Pressures

- Increasing complexity of need and intensity of care support for adult social care provision
- Demographic changes with the county's ageing population living longer in ill health
- Increasing demand for temporary accommodation
- Impact of high hospital occupancy rates
- Increases in the number of individuals unable to fund their own care linked to inflation and rises in the cost of living
- Market conditions including care provider fee uplifts and care worker's pay

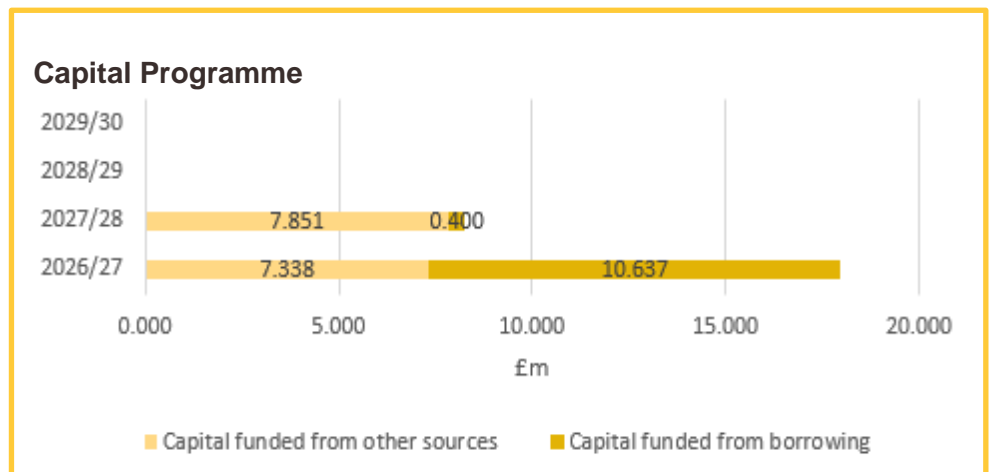
Key Savings Proposals

- Control of costs to secure reductions across care contracts
- Increasing income, ensuring fair and timely charges and contributions for services
- Managing demand through increased community engagement and review of care packages
- Delivering efficiencies through increased use of technology and reshaping of services

Key Capital Projects

- Hereford Museum & Art Gallery
- Hereford Library & Learning Centre
- Strategic Housing Acquisition Fund
- Disabled Facilities Grant

Revenue Budget	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Opening budget	90,366			
Pressures:				
Demographic growth	8,242			
Inflation	447			
Other pressures	(2,013)			
Savings				
Cost control	(4,100)			
Increasing income	(1,620)			
Managing demand	(455)			
Delivering efficiencies	(1,200)			
Closing budget	89,667			



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Strategic Priorities

The council's priority is to protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people and to enable residents to live healthy lives within supportive communities. The Community Wellbeing directorate aims to support individuals to live as independently and healthily as possible through investment in prevention, early intervention and the use of technology and to encourage communities to help each other through a network of community hubs.

The directorate mission is to enable diverse, inclusive, vibrant, connected communities where people feel safe, keep well and look out for each other.

Key Services

- Social care provision and support services for:
 - Older people
 - Adults with learning disabilities
 - Adults with physical disabilities
 - Adults living with mental health illnesses
 - Family carers
- Working with the Voluntary & Community sector to support residents and communities across the county.
- Safeguarding services for vulnerable adults.
- Working with NHS partners to deliver integrated services.
- Housing provision including homelessness outreach
- Talk Community operations including library services, museums, archives and information.
- Advice and guidance for the residents of Herefordshire through the Talk Community Directory.

Key Challenges and Risks to Service Delivery

- Demography: Herefordshire has a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and over, at 27% compared with 19% across England and Wales, and 57% aged 16 to 64, compared with 63% nationally.
- The ageing population leads to increased demand for complex and high-acuity care and support services.
- Providing the right care, to the right people, at the right time and in the right place, is a key challenge. Our transport connectivity issues also have a disproportionate impact on an ageing population living in the rural areas who find it difficult to access services.
- Health inequalities are evident across the county with improvements needed in areas such as dental health, mental wellbeing, diet and inactivity.
- Increasing costs for care contracts, additionality of costs to deliver services to a sparsely populated, rural population result in financial pressures to the Community Wellbeing budget.
- Increased demand for temporary accommodation. A shortage of affordable homes in Herefordshire and increasing demand for temporary accommodation means the council is reliant upon costly bed & breakfast/hotel accommodation to supplement existing supply.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Revenue Budget by Service
Appendix B: Revenue Budget Movements
Appendix C: 2026/27 Savings Proposals
Appendix D: Capital Projects

Appendix A: Revenue Budget by Service

Service Description	Net Budget 2025/26 £'000	Gross Budget 2026/27 £'000	Income £'000	Earmarked Reserves £'000	Net Budget 2026/27 £'000	Net Budget 2027/28 £'000	Net Budget 2028/29 £'000	Net Budget 2029/30 £'000
Director and Community Services	2,891	3,308	(521)	(3)	2,784			
Better Care Fund	(13,692)	-	(16,252)	-	(16,252)			
Adult Social Care and Housing	82,015	115,481	(29,834)	(322)	85,325			
All Ages Commissioning	18,220	18,326	(1,467)	-	16,859			
Public Health	932	11,828	(10,718)	(159)	951			
Total	90,366	148,943	(58,792)	(484)	89,667	-	-	-

Appendix B: Revenue Budget Movements

Title	Detail	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Physical Support clients	2025/26 growth	4,747			
Physical Support clients	2026/27 growth	1,016			
Learning Disabilities clients	2025/26 and 2026/27 growth	1,661			
Memory & Cognition clients	2025/26 and 2026/27 growth	620			
Transitions from Children and Young People	Growth in clients	337			
Mental Health clients	2025/26 and 2026/27 reduction	(139)			
Consolidated grants	RSG Settlement	544			
Improved Better Care Fund	Additional grant	(1,585)			
Better Care Fund	Additional grant	(996)			
Pay Inflation	Estimated pay award	447			
Miscellaneous	Various	24			
Total		6,676	-	-	-

Appendix C: 2026/27 Savings Proposals £7,375k

Ref	Description/Activity	2026/27 £'000
CONTROL COSTS £4,100k		
C1	Partnership working: increased and robust market engagement to secure cost savings, improved value for money and increased capacity	2,500
C2	Voluntary & Community Sector: development of micro-provider market and Voluntary & Community Sector commissioning framework	300
C3	Hoope Community Equipment: remodelling of community equipment contract for delivery of goods and services to achieve increased value for money in 2026/27	400
C4	Hoope Learning Disability Service: remodelling of learning disability service using CareCubed to determine and model appropriate fees	250
C5	Shaw Contract: reset of the current contract (contract end date of 2033) to secure services at no additional cost to offset spot purchases	250
C6	CareCubed: application of benchmarking tool to support improved negotiations with providers and agree a fair cost of care	400
INCREASE INCOME £1,620k		
I1	Review charging for self-funders: to establish and promote an enhanced offer for residents in line with neighbouring authorities	120
I2	Financial assessments: review to ensure all assessments are conducted efficiently and fairly, enabling contributions to the council to be identified and collected in a timely manner	1,000
I3	Fees and charges: review of fees and charges across the directorate	250
I4	Direct payment cap changes: to align with other rates	250
MANAGE DEMAND £455k		
D1	Front door: improvements to self-referral portal including online forms and improved technology enabled communities (TEC) offer	50
D2	Review of long-term cases: to ensure right size packages of care	405
DELIVER EFFICIENCIES £1,200k		
E1	Magic Notes: implementation of software to support social worker assessments	400
E2	Maximise existing Copilot functionality: to support non-social work staff, enabling improved contract management and administration	200
E3	Culture, Museum, Libraries reshape: to deliver service efficiencies	100
E4	Talk Community reshape: to deliver service efficiencies	250
E5	Vacancy management: deletion of vacant posts across Directorate	250
		7,375

Appendix D: Capital Projects 2026/27 to 2029/30

Project	2026/27		2027/28		2028/29		2029/30	
	Total £'000	Funded by borrowing £'000	Total £'000	Funded by borrowing £'000	Total £'000	Funded by borrowing £'000	Total £'000	Funded by borrowing £'000
Disabled Facilities Grant	2,200	-	2,200	-	-	-	-	-
Empty Property Investment & Development	286	286	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acquisition Fund for Housing Provision	2,300	2,300	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merton Meadow - Brownfield Land Release Fund*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swimming Pool Support Fund*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Libraries Improvement Fund*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hereford Museum & Art Gallery Redevelopment	10,525	8,051	5,581	400	-	-	-	-
Library & Learning Centre relocation to Shirehall	2,064	-	450	-	-	-	-	-
Community Capital Grants Scheme	600	-	20	-	-	-	-	-
Total	17,975	10,637	8,251	400	-	-	-	-

*Spend in prior years