

Title of report: Q4 Performance Report

Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 25 June 2026
Cabinet member:	Councillor Stoddart, 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 4 (Q4) 2025/26 and to report the performance position across all Directorates for this period.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) review performance for Q4 2025/26; and
- b) agree any outstanding key milestones from Delivery Plan 2025/26 (see Appendix A) are carried forward to the Delivery Plan 2026/27

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. Increased frequency is not recommended as progress is unlikely to be substantial on a monthly basis; and less frequency poses risk in underperformance going undetected for a significant period of time.

Key considerations

1. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2024-2028 and the associated annual Delivery Plan for the 2025/26 financial year. It provides a summary of the activities undertaken to deliver the key priorities and goals in Q4 and highlights the key performance indicators (KPIs). Appendix A provides the full breakdown of the Q4 updates on the Delivery Plan milestones. 184 out of 255 milestones (72.16%) were delivered under the Delivery Plan for 2025/26 by the end of the financial year. 11 milestones were discontinued and 60 milestones will be carried forward to the Delivery Plan 2026/27.
2. Beyond the Delivery Plan, the council has achieved many successes in Q4 of 2025/26, some of these successes are listed in the table below.

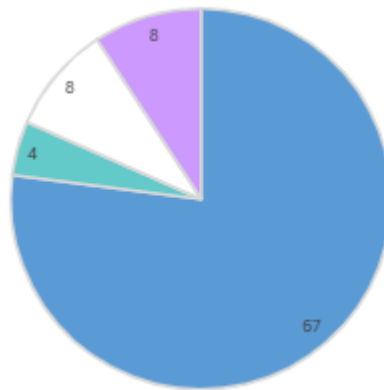
The council has continued to deliver on its Capital Investment Programme. The following table presents some of the highlights for Quarter 4.

Project	Investment	Where are we...
Hereford Transport Hub	£11.6m, of which £6.3m is Levelling-Up grant funding and £1.0m is Active Travel Measures	Construction approximately 56% completed with access road works and canopy cladding ongoing, raise gardens have been formed and the concrete base to cycle shelter cast. Delay to programme of 8 weeks due to the discovery of unchartered services.
Holme Lacy Road Active Travel Improvements (Levelling Up Fund)	£7.9m grant funding	Construction is approximately 24% completed. There is a delay to programme associated with various minor issues, this is being actively managed and mitigated to reduce impact.
Phosphate Mitigation/ Integrated Wetlands	£4.8m grant funding	Tarrington integrated wetland construction is completed and working. Ongoing discussions with Dwyer Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and Environmental Agency (EA) regarding environmental permits. Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) discussions also ongoing re future projects.
Peterchurch Primary School – New School Building	£10.9m	Construction works are progressing well with completion of the new school programmed for October 2026 with the demolition of the existing school building and external works due for completion in early 2027.
Aylestone School Expansion	£13.6m DFE grant	Planning permission approved. Contract is yet to be concluded and therefore a start date is anticipated for August 2026.
Hampton Dene Primary School – Extension to LRC	£2.6m DFE grant	Construction works are progressing to programme with completion of the new extension due for July 2026.
Schools Capital Maintenance Programme	£3.2m DFE Grant/	Tenders for works to be undertaken during summer holiday period 2026 issued as programmed.

	Borrowing/capital receipts reserve	
Estates Capital Programmes Improvements	£2.5m in 2025-26	5 projects completed during the reporting period with a further 7 schemes out to tender for works to commence in summer 2026.
Brookfield School, Hereford – Extensions and Internal Alterations	£5.8m DFE Grant Funding/capital receipts reserve	New two-classroom teaching block in occupation and refurbishment works to the existing secondary school building completed in January 2026. New sports hall due for completion in May 2026.

Performance: People

Q4 RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones



Milestones Colour Key: Blue: Completed; White: Carried forward 26/27; Purple: Parked as waiting on other interdependent activity - Carried forward 26/27 Teal: Milestone has been discontinued

Children and Young People

3. Best Start in Life. Alignment has strengthened between developmental checks undertaken at ages 2 – 2½, 3 – 4, and at the end of Reception, embedding a consistent approach within the revised *Best Start in Life Plan 2025–2028*.

This alignment is enabling a more coherent understanding of each child’s development across the early years, ensuring that information is shared effectively between professionals and that emerging needs are identified at the earliest opportunity.

As a result, children will be better supported to achieve a Good Level of Development, with earlier intervention where needed, stronger partnership working across education, health and early years services, and improved long-term outcomes in learning, wellbeing and school readiness.

4. Foster Care: The foster care Recruitment campaign has been reinvigorated with successful outcomes at the end of the year where 69.3% of our children are in a foster care placement above Eng Ave of 67%. At year end we see 37 new fostering households approved compared to 22 at year end last year.

Community Wellbeing

- 5. The Domestic Abuse Delivery Plan is subject to robust and ongoing governance, with formal quarterly review by the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. By making the plan accessible via a shared platform, partners can actively monitor progress and contribute updates throughout the year, enabling a more agile and coordinated approach to delivery.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Operational Group has taken a thematic approach to delivery, focusing each quarter on a priority area. This approach has enabled partners to deepen understanding and drive targeted improvements. In Quarter 4, the focus on improving understanding of domestic abuse and support services has strengthened awareness among professionals and communities, helping to improve identification of need and access to appropriate support. Collectively, these arrangements are enabling a more joined-up, informed and effective system response to domestic abuse across the county.

- 6. The annual report for carers of all ages has been developed in partnership with the Herefordshire Carers Partnership Board, ensuring that the lived experiences of carers directly inform local priorities and service development. This collaborative approach has strengthened engagement with carers and improved understanding of their needs across the system.

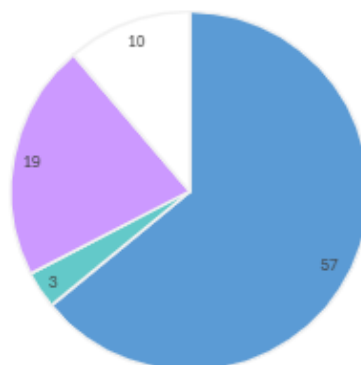
The report provides a clear evidence base to inform decision-making and drive improvements in support for carers. Its consideration by the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (now scheduled for April 2026) will further ensure accountability and oversight, helping to shape future services and improve outcomes for carers and their families.

- 7. Through the Community Spaces Capital Grant Scheme, funding has been awarded to 12 projects to enhance community hubs and infrastructure across Herefordshire. This investment is already supporting the development of more accessible, welcoming and sustainable community spaces.

Ongoing monitoring and active engagement with funded organisations have ensured that projects are progressing as planned and delivering early benefits. Initial outcomes demonstrate improved access to community facilities, increased opportunities for social connection, and enhanced inclusion for residents who may otherwise be isolated. Over time, this programme will contribute to stronger, more resilient communities and improved health and wellbeing across the county.

Performance: Place

Q4 RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones



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8. Investment has continued to strengthen community infrastructure and environmental restoration through a series of targeted programmes and partnership activity.
9. This year, grants for the Lengthsman, Public Rights of Way, and Drainage schemes have been successfully delivered, providing vital funding to parish councils. These schemes enable local communities to take a proactive role in maintaining highways, improving accessibility, and managing drainage. As a result, local routes have been better maintained, reducing risks associated with flooding and deterioration, while improving connectivity and safety for residents and visitors. Empowering parishes in this way has also supported quicker, more responsive maintenance and strengthened local stewardship of community assets.
10. In parallel, significant progress has been made in river restoration and catchment-wide collaboration. A well-attended Wye Catchment Partnership (WCP) meeting in February brought together over 50 stakeholders, strengthening cross-border collaboration and shared commitment to improving the River Wye's ecological health. This has been complemented by the launch of a new webinar series, improving access to knowledge, engagement, and best practice across the partnership.

Ongoing governance and coordination have been maintained through regular WCP steering group meetings and dedicated Task and Finish Group sessions. These forums have enabled partners to align priorities, track progress, and accelerate the development of the Wye Catchment Management Plan 2026 (WyeCMP26).

A key outcome of this work is the commissioning of a comprehensive evidence review. This will provide a robust and shared evidence base to inform future decision-making, ensuring that interventions are targeted, effective, and grounded in scientific understanding.

Together, these actions have strengthened partnership working, improved local environmental management, and laid the foundations for long-term, sustainable improvements to the River Wye and its catchment.

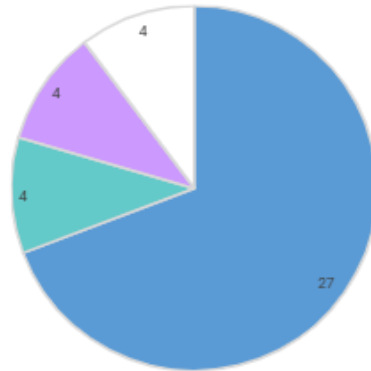
11. Strong progress has also been made in advancing the county's Nature Recovery Strategy, ensuring that it is shaped by robust evidence and meaningful community engagement.

Natural England has approved the public consultation for the draft strategy, which is being undertaken during the final quarter of the year. This marks an important milestone, confirming that the strategy meets the required standards and is ready for wider public and stakeholder input. Encouragingly, the consultation has already attracted a strong level of responses, reflecting high levels of local interest and engagement in nature recovery across Herefordshire.

The feedback received will play a vital role in strengthening the final strategy. By carefully reviewing responses, the council will be able to refine priorities, incorporate local knowledge, and ensure that the actions proposed are both effective and supported by communities and partners. This collaborative approach will help to deliver a strategy that is practical, inclusive, and focused on delivering real environmental improvements.

Due to external factors outside of the council's control, publication of the final strategy is now scheduled for Quarter 1 of 2026/27. This revised timeline will ensure there is sufficient opportunity to fully consider consultation feedback and produce a high-quality, evidence-based document.

Overall, these actions will enable the council to deliver a more robust and locally informed Nature Recovery Strategy, providing a clear and credible framework for restoring habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting long-term environmental resilience across the county.

Performance: Growth**Q4 RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones**

Milestones Colour Key: Blue: Completed; White: Carried forward 26/27; Purple: Parked as waiting on other interdependent activity - Carried forward 26/27 Teal: Milestone has been discontinued

12. Plans to deliver high-quality, affordable housing have progressed through the development of the Merton Meadow and Essex Arms sites in Hereford. A strategic plan for both locations has now been finalised, subject to a future outline planning application.

This represents a significant step forward in bringing forward well-designed housing that meets a range of local needs. The strategic plan establishes a clear vision for how these sites can be developed to provide a mix of homes, including affordable housing, helping to address demand and improve access to suitable accommodation for residents.

By setting out a coordinated and considered approach to development, the plan will enable the delivery of sustainable communities, ensuring that new housing is supported by appropriate infrastructure, good design, and integration with the surrounding area. It also provides greater certainty for future planning decisions, helping to streamline the next stages of the development process.

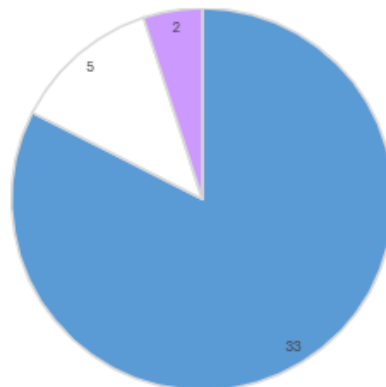
Once progressed through the planning system, these developments will contribute to increasing housing supply in Hereford, supporting economic growth, and enabling more residents to live in safe, high-quality homes that meet their needs.

13. The council is continuing to work in partnership to increase the availability of high-quality, affordable housing and prevent homelessness across the county.

Good progress has been made in bringing forward refurbishment projects that will create additional accommodation in central locations. The invitation to tender for refurbishment works on a key city centre building has been successfully completed and a contractor appointed. This is an important milestone, enabling works to proceed and bringing the project closer to delivering new affordable homes. Once complete, this development will provide safe, well-located accommodation, helping to reduce housing pressures and support individuals at risk of homelessness.

Performance: Transformation

Q4 RAG status of Delivery Plan Milestones



Milestones Colour Key: Blue: Completed; White: Carried forward 26/27; Purple: Parked as waiting on other interdependent activity - Carried forward 26/27 Teal: Milestone has been discontinued

- The council has continued to strengthen its strategic oversight and governance of Hoople Ltd, ensuring that the company remains aligned with the council's priorities and future operating model.

Through the council's Shareholder Committee, active oversight has been maintained during the year, with regular consideration of both service delivery and financial performance. This ongoing scrutiny has ensured that Hoople continues to provide value for money and supports the effective delivery of key services.

Looking ahead, the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the council and Hoople Ltd is scheduled for review in 2026/27. This review will provide an opportunity to ensure that the relationship remains fit for purpose, fully aligned with the council's strategic plan, and responsive to its evolving Target Operating Model and financial strategy.

These actions will enable the council to strengthen its partnership with Hoople, ensuring that services are delivered efficiently, sustainably, and in a way that best meets the needs of residents. In turn, this will support improved service outcomes, greater financial resilience, and a clearer alignment between the council's strategic ambitions and its delivery arrangements.

Local Government Outcomes Framework

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced in July 2025 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.
- 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.
- 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.

18. Framework data will also feed into Government's assessment of whether the Best Value Duty is being met.
19. A tailored Outcomes Framework has been developed and this will be used to monitor performance from Quarter 1 2026/27.
20. Performance against our top ten indicators is noted in the table below:

Key Performance Indicator	Q3 Actual - YTD	Q4* Projection - YTD	Q4* Actual - YTD	Q4* RAG**
Percentage of service users aged 65+ discharged from hospital into Home First who are still at home 91 days after discharge	72.84%	80%	72.26%	Yellow
Percentage of Children and Young People social work assessments completed within timescale (45 days)	84.24%	85%	85.32%	Green
Percentage of children in care who have an up-to-date review	100%	95%	100%	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>	88.89%	70%	84.09%	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>	83.31%	80%	84.26%	Green
Number of kg of waste that is not sent to reuse, recycling or composting (per household) <i>Provisional subject to DEFRA confirmation</i>	126.36kg (Q1)	200kg (Q2)	250.51kg (Q2)	Yellow
Number of affordable homes delivered	193	270	310	Green
Number of rough sleepers who have been offered and refused support	12	8	9	Yellow
Value of grants awarded to businesses to support viability and enable growth through UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	£1,135,184.50	£1,120m	£1,135,184.50	Green

Average days sickness per FTE	8.53	9	8.38	
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* year to date (April 2025 – March 2026) 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)

21. There continue to be a core number of EU nationals that are particularly hard to reach. To address this, we now hold weekly reviews of all known rough sleepers. This partnership-led approach ensures that our reporting reflects the reality on the ground as accurately as possible and that we continue to target our work and breakdown barriers to engagement. This is complex work that can take years to resolve.

Community impact

22. 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.

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

23. 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

24. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
25. 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

26. 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

27. 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

28. 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 the Risk Strategy.

Consultees

29. None in relation to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A Q4 Council Plan Delivery Plan Updates

Background papers

Council Plan 2024-2028

Delivery Plan 2025-2026