

We are working towards setting the 20/21 budget and a four year medium term financial strategy (MTFS) which sets out in broad details the ambitions of the council and how the budget is proposed to be realigned to deliver this ambition. In parallel to the budget process, work continues to develop the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 which describes the strategic priorities, direction of travel and high level plans for the next four years.

Our proposed priorities are:

- Build communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together
- Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources
- Protect our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live

The Parish Summit on 20<sup>th</sup> September launched the consultation with around ninety attendees. A series of events has been held throughout the county, including targeted focus groups and an online survey. These findings will now feed into the Budget Consultation. This engagement has allowed us to talk to over a thousand people- including hard to reach communities and younger people. Feedback will inform the draft budget and corporate plan that will be proposed to full council in February 2020.

At the cabinet meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October the Cabinet agreed to establish a new earmarked reserve of **£150,000** to investigate different models of delivering **council housing** and a new earmarked reserve of **£550,000** to enhance **edge of care services** for young people. This is an indication of two of the priorities of the new administration.

Council officials and BBLP have worked hard to minimise the impact of severe weather on people and properties.

The Cabinet meeting on 27 November is being held in the library in Leominster - the idea being to take council business to different parts of the county making it accessible to the wider community.

Cllr Gemma Davies (commissioning, procurement and assets) is exploring how public procurement contracts can best support local businesses and communities. Cabinet members undertook a visit to Preston City Council in July to understand how they have introduced new ways of working. This included a review into their 300 largest public service contracts and sought out barriers to smaller businesses winning contracts. This approach has delivered around 23% of savings for the city council. As an example, their £2m school meals contracts was broken down into multiple smaller contracts of a size manageable to both large and smaller local businesses, which led to more local food being used in school meals and supported the wider local supply chain.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Services have experienced significant budget reductions in recent years, without any significant closures or reductions in service and with the support of communities. Cllr Davies is focussed on reviewing the current allocated budgets and exploring the levels of investment required to protect what we have while providing a more sustainable future for these important services. She will be learning how other councils manage museum services to ensure we choose what is right for Herefordshire. Cllr Davies will also explore what investment is possible to protect our valued library services across the county, and also what can be achieved through additional funding, including capital investment in buildings and facilities, across Museums, Library and Archive services.

Cllr Felicity Norman (children and families) reports that the increase in spend on Looked After Children (LAC) is being reviewed and has highlighted a need to spend on spend on edge of care service, and increasing the capacity of social work teams and quality assurance.

Cllr Trish Marsh (Environment, economy and skills) reports that a number of exciting new developments are underway which will support the economic growth of the county. The Cyber Quarter - Midlands Centre for Cyber Security is a £9m joint venture between the council and the University of Wolverhampton. Located on Skylon Park (Hereford's Enterprise Zone) construction is underway and due to be completed in summer 2020 along with the £7m redevelopment of a World War One Shell Store on the Enterprise Zone which will establish the first business incubation space available in the county. Construction has also commenced on the 178 bedroom first purpose-built student accommodation in Hereford on Station Approach, due to be completed in September 2020, supporting the development of higher education in Herefordshire.

Fastershire as a Herefordshire Council programme has been named **Best Public Sector Impact project** that demonstrates an exemplary approach to supporting the deployment of new digital infrastructure. The Independent Networks Co-operative Association (INCA) has recognised the project's approach in breaking down barriers to make progress in the deployment of broadband, using innovative ways of creating a step change in digital connectivity in a very rural areas. Fastershire has increased broadband coverage in Herefordshire by 87% since 2012 and is set to increase to 97% with the current contracts delivered by Gigaclear, Airband and Openreach. The remaining premises will be some of the most difficult to reach and often isolated, so the council are looking a introducing a grant scheme as a way of getting broadband to those remaining areas.

Cllr Liz Harvey (finance and corporate services) reports that Herefordshire Council has signed up to the national digital declaration, aiming to affirm collective ambition between local public services and national government specifically to:

- design services that best meet the needs of citizens

- challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services we need
- protect citizens' privacy and security
- deliver better value for money.

These aims match Herefordshire Council's approach to increase the use of the on-line services and the declaration allows the council to access additional training and funding opportunities.

As part of the Modern Slavery Action 2015 local authorities are required to publish an annual statement on its activities to use its powers, influence and responsibilities to prevent and act against modern slavery. To endorse this statement the cabinet are making the commitments as outlined below:

**Proactive** – improve awareness, understanding and identification of modern slavery with council staff and members being proactive in reporting suspected incidents.

**Protect** – safeguard children and adults to not be at risk of modern slavery, and support victims with care and services.

**Partnership** – to work in partnership with other agencies, residents and businesses to address the causes and effects of modern slavery on people.

**Providers** – create effective systems and controls to safeguard against any form of modern slavery taking place through the contracts we hold.

**Prosecute** – to work with agencies to gather evidence to hold perpetrators to account.

**Policies** – to have in place the policies and practices that enable the reporting of modern slavery and reduces the exploitation of people in the first place.

In August, Cllr John Harrington (Infrastructure and transport) took a decision to pause and review the Hereford bypass and Southern Link Road schemes. This decision was called in by the General Scrutiny Committee in September, who recommended Cllr Harrington reconsider the decision in light of some specific recommendations. Giving due regard to the recommendations Cllr Harrington has now taken the further decision to include the continuation of some project development activity already scheduled for the Southern link road (subject to funding), and the completion of a number of assessments and reports already underway for the Hereford bypass. It also confirms a commitment to consult widely during the review.

Both the Hereford and South Wye Transport Packages include improvements to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure in the City, and work towards the implementation of these will continue subject to funding being available. The scope of the review is now being considered, and a further decision on this will be taken by Cllr Harrington toward the end of the year.

The new bike share scheme 'Beryl Bikes' (150 bikes located over 40 bays) launched in Hereford this summer and has been a tremendous success. Since the launch, Beryl cyclists have clocked up over 7,960 rides totalling over **20,400 km** of short trips in and around the city

The Hereford City Centre Transport Package (HCCTP) consists of the City link road (which opened in December 2017); a new transport hub at Hereford railway station and improvements to the public realm including improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure in Commercial Road, Blueschool Street and Newmarket Street. Following a period of design development, there will soon be a decision by Cllr Harrington to commence stakeholder engagement and public consultation about these proposals.

Work will shortly commence on the **review of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy**. The existing Core Strategy provides a commitment to begin a review in 2019 and national policy requires a five-yearly review (the existing Core Strategy was adopted in 2015). Over the next few months the Cabinet will be working with officers to consider the scope and extent of the review and the timescale for preparation of the Plan and identify where changes are needed.

Health and Adult Wellbeing Cabinet Member, Cllr Pauline Crockett, reports that the procurement of the community equipment service was launched in early October and has promoted the expected level of interest from the market. Cabinet will now be asked to approve the commissioning and the award of contract on 19 December.

Association of Directors Adults Social Services (ADASS) undertook a peer review in September on the Adults & Communities directorate ambitious plans to promote wellbeing, protect vulnerable people and manage future demand for formal adult care services through new community partnerships. The “**Talk Community**” programme is an all-encompassing approach to working with Herefordshire’s communities.

The Peer Review team were asked to consider how our current plans and partnerships can be strengthened to increase or accelerate the impact on population wellbeing, community resilience and managing the demand for formal care. A draft report is expected

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning both the NHS and local government which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible. The BCF plan for 2019/20 has been submitted and is currently being reviewed through the regional and national assurance process. The Health and Wellbeing Board has approved the joint plan between the local authority and the CCG which agrees the joint funding for a number of schemes, services and initiatives, national conditions and performance metrics. The plan provided an updated on delivery during this year and the local health and social care integration plans.