

Parish Summit

Agenda

- 16.30 – 18.30 Arrivals, Marketplace & Refreshments
- 18.30 Welcome from Cllr Lester, Leader of the Council
- 18.35 Parish Charter update from Simon Hairsnape, Chairman of the Charter Reference Group. Questions to follow
- 18.50 Budget and Fairer Funding Review from Cllr Stoddart. Questions to follow
- 19.15 Devolution update from Paul Walker. Questions to follow
- 19.30 Parish Grants update from Cllr Hurcomb. Questions to follow
- 19.55 Neighbourhood Development Plan update from Siobhan Riddle. Questions to follow
- 20.20 Closing Remarks from Cllr Lester





**Welcome
Cllr Jonathan Lester
Leader of the Council**

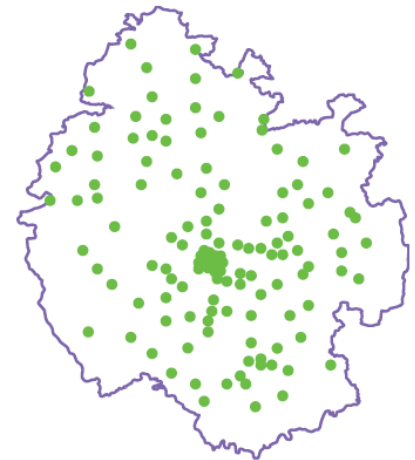




Parish Charter Update

Simon Hairsnape

Chairman of the Charter Reference Group

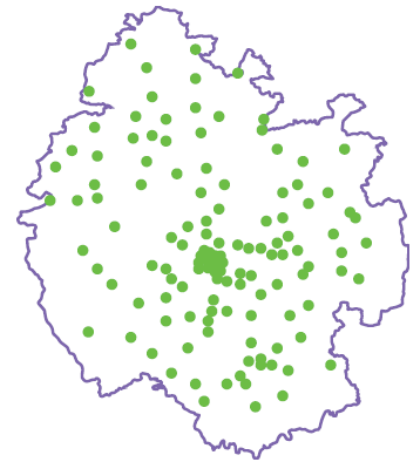




Budget and Fair Funding Review Update

Cllr Peter Stoddart

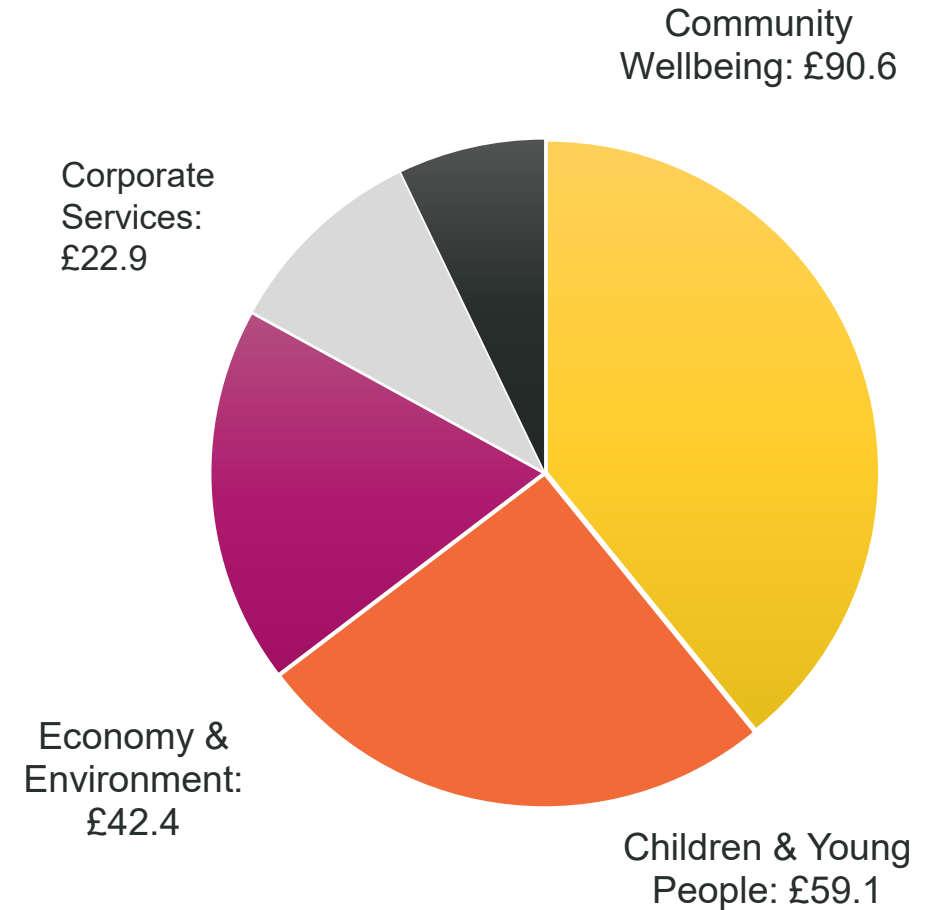
Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services



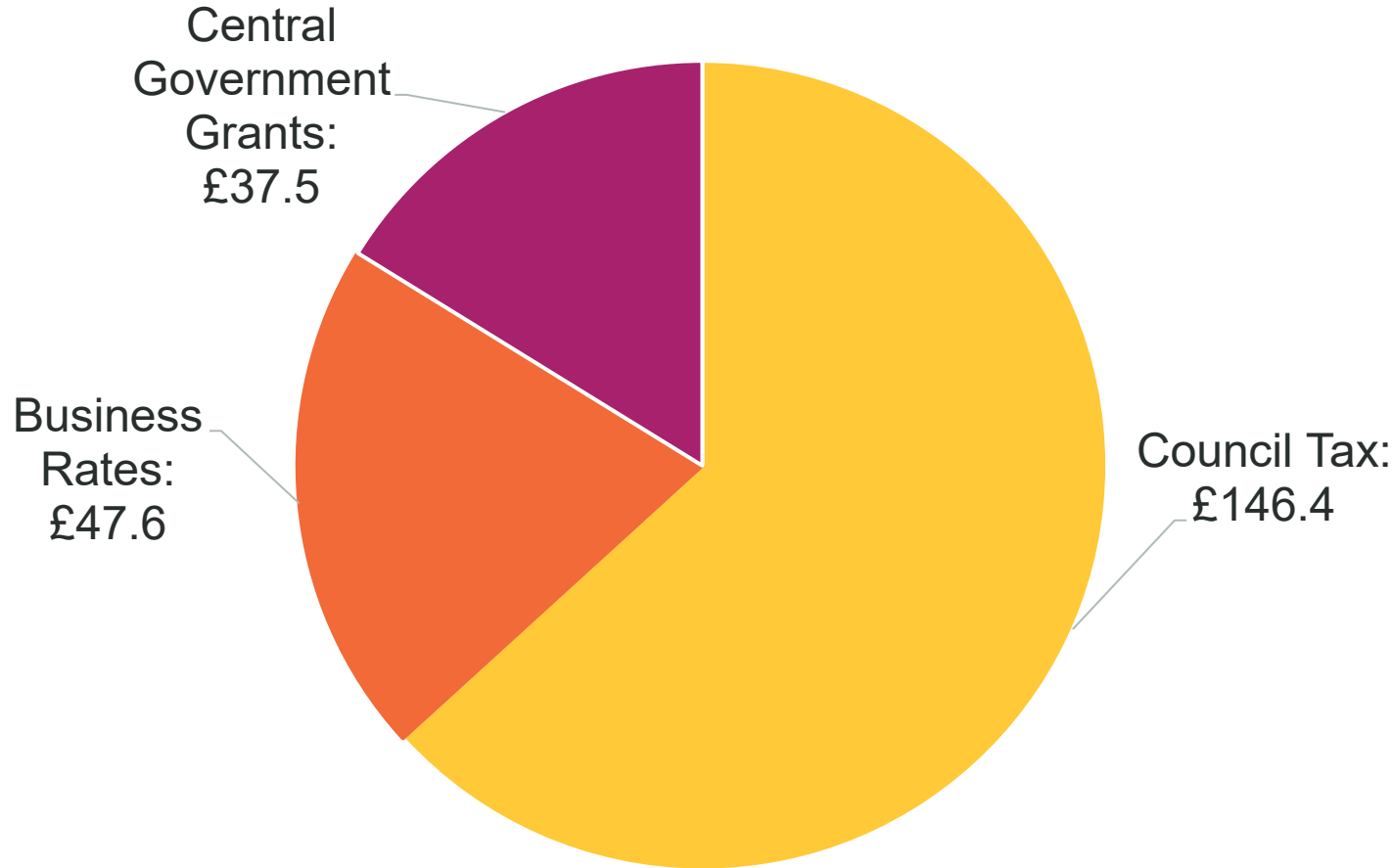
Performance against budget in 2025/26

- The council's revenue budget for 2025/26 is **£231.5m** across the Council's 4 Directorates and central budget areas
- At Quarter 1 (June 2025), there is a **forecast overspend of £4.3m** before management action for 2052/26
- Key costs pressures in year include **demand and cost increases in social care budgets, SEN and Home to School transport and temporary accommodation**
- Recovery action has been identified to **reduce the forecast overspend to £1.0m**

Total Budget £231.5m

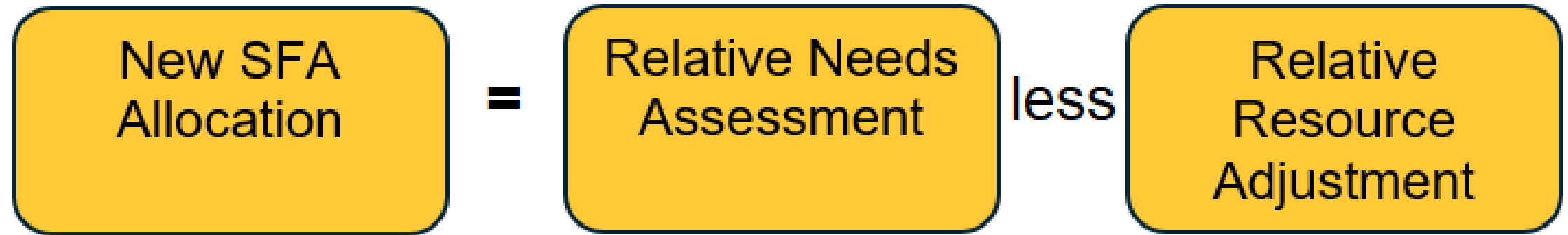


Council Funding 2025/26 £231.5m



- **84%** of council's funding in 2025/26 is derived from local raised taxes: Council Tax and Business Rates
- **16%** from central government grants

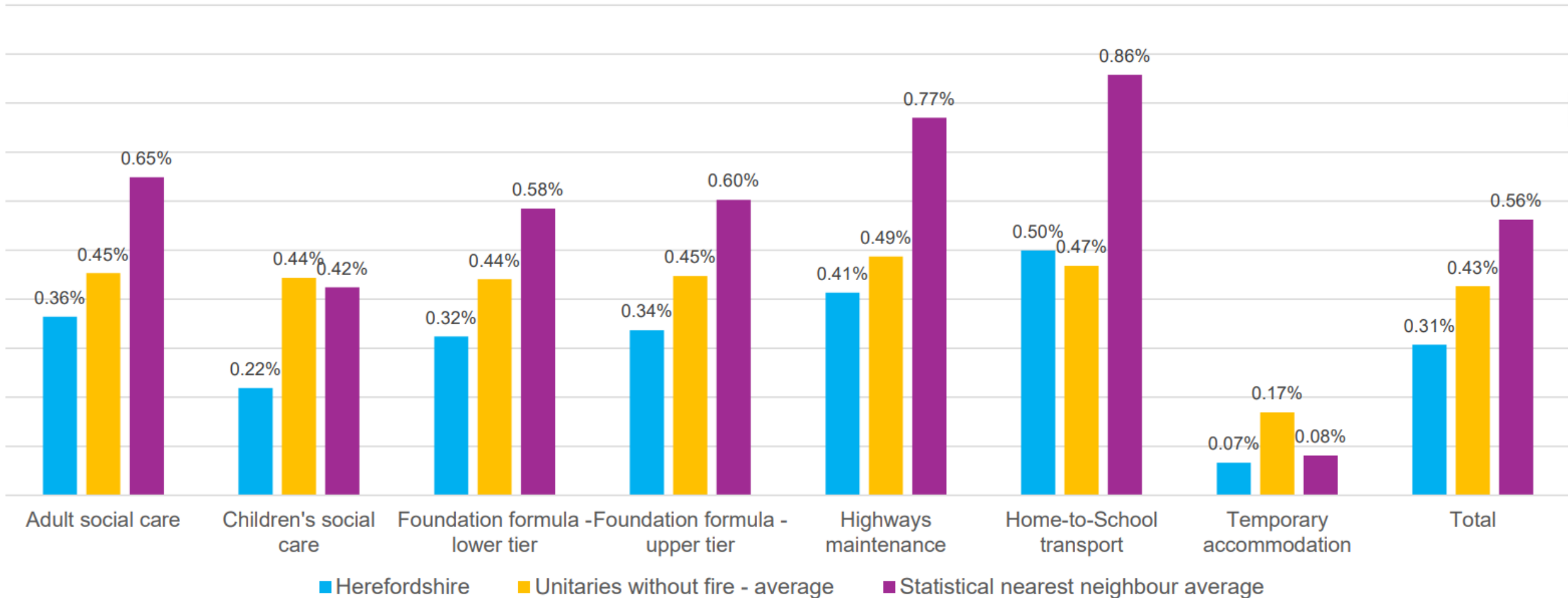
'Fair' (?) Funding Review: Updated Formula



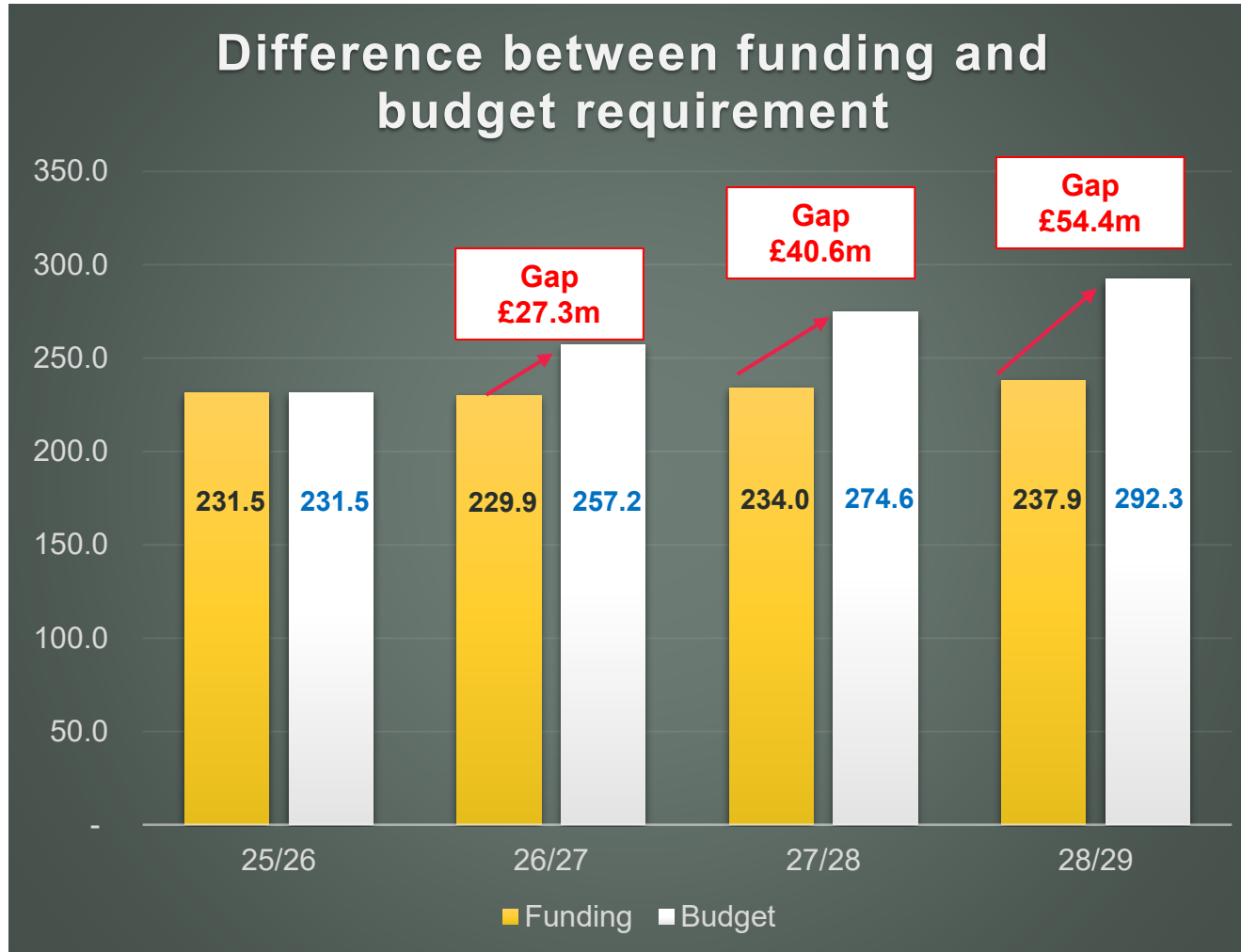
$$\text{Relative Needs Assessment} = \frac{\text{Herefordshire's share of need}}{\text{Total Local Authorities' needs}} \times \text{National Fixed Pot}$$

$$\text{Relative Resource Adjustment} = \frac{\text{Herefordshire's council tax base}}{\text{Total Local Authorities' tax bases}} \times \text{Notional council tax}$$

Relative Needs Assessment: Herefordshire



Impact of Funding Review for Herefordshire:



An estimated gap of £27.3m in 2026/27 – BUT WHY?

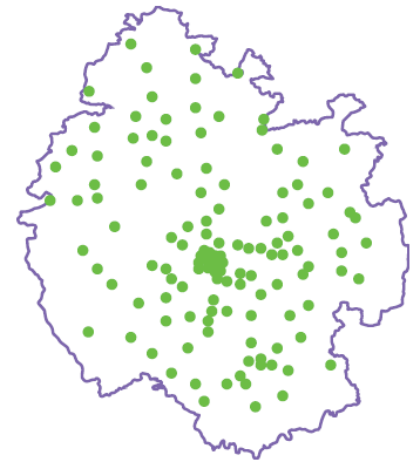
- Demand and costs are increasing at a faster pace than increases in funding
- Data which informs funding formula shows **Herefordshire has less need** relative to other local authority areas
- Our **Council Tax is below** the amount Government have assumed we collect (Herefordshire: £1,969 vs average: £2,200)
- Government have assumed councils will raise council tax by **max 4.99%**



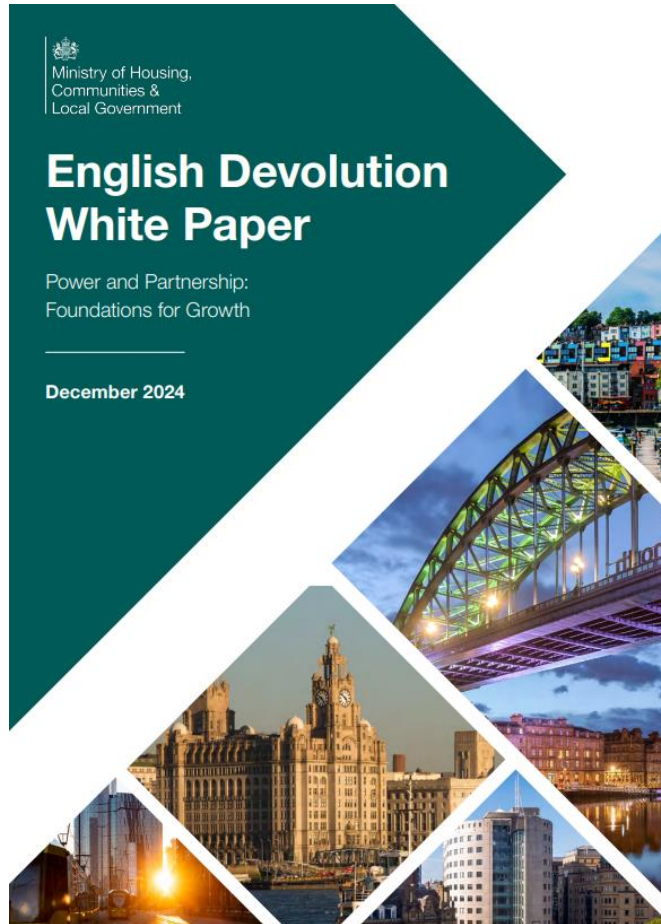
Devolution Update

Paul Walker

Chief Executive



English Devolution Update: 7th October 2025



What is the current position?
What is happening in neighbouring areas?
Herefordshire's next steps.



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What do we know?

The government is creating **Strategic Mayoral Authorities (SMA)** – these are numbers of contiguous councils working together covering areas people ‘recognise and work in’ and with a population of at least 1.5m.

Local Government Reform - Councils operating within two-tier systems and small (failing) unitary authorities will be required to form new unitary councils with a population of 500K.

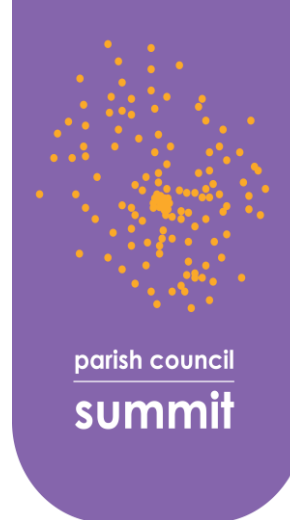
National Update October 2025

English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill has passed through the house of commons, and is now due to progress to the house of lords (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/4002>)

Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) – Cumbria, Cheshire and Warrington, Greater Essex, Hampshire and Solent, Norfolk and Suffolk, and Sussex and Brighton have been selected for fast tracked to establish devolution deals.

Local Government Reform (LGR) – Government wrote to 17 two tier authority areas (including Worcestershire and Gloucestershire), and 2 unitary councils asking that they pursue Local Government Reform (seeking to create unitary authorities of 500K population or more).

Herefordshire has NOT been asked to pursue Local Government Reform



What happening around us?

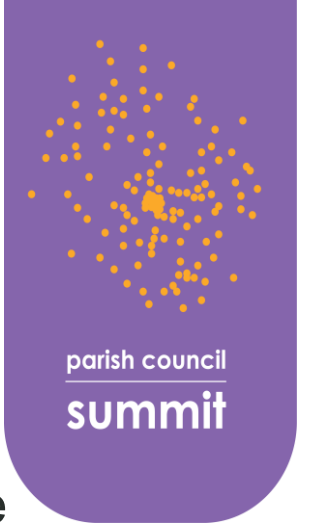
Local Government Reform (LGR) – Worcestershire and Gloucestershire are working through Local Government Reform, in assessing options to create unitary authorities. Shropshire is a unitary authority already and do **not** need to undertake LGR.

Local Elections – Following the local elections in May 2025, Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire have had a change in administration.

Integrated Care Board (ICB) – the former Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB boundaries have changed significantly, to include Coventry and Warwickshire.

Marches Forward Partnership (MFP) – We continue to work proactively with Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Powys through the MFP, in taking forward shared priorities. A Partnership Board has recently been formed and MHCLG are establishing a cross govt officer working group to support MFP.

Strategic Mayoral Authority (SMA) – The Leader and CEO continue to meet counterparts in surrounding areas to explore opportunities.



Herefordshire's Next Steps^{OFFICIAL}

Herefordshire has **not** been asked to participate in Local Government Reform – we are a stable and successful unitary authority in our own right (formed on 1st April 1998), and we will continue to operate as such.

Should we find a way forward in forming a Strategic Mayoral Authority area with neighbouring authorities, Herefordshire will remain an independent council/ organisation.

Until our neighbours have had time to work through their changing circumstances (such as LGR) it is difficult to reach a clear way forward regarding a possible Strategic Mayoral Authority. We continue to regularly meet the Leaders and CEOs of the neighbouring counties in the interim.

We are refreshing our Economic Plan to help define our future ask of government, such as infrastructure investment to enable growth, transport improvements, and economic investment (through business rate retention) to address the current gap in productivity.

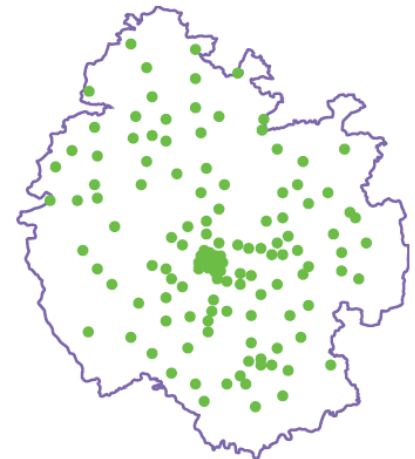




Parish Grants Update

Cllr Dan Hurcomb

Cabinet Member for Local Engagement and Community Resilience



Parish Grants

Summary of what we have delivered



- ✓ Last year we were able to award over £178,000 for the repair or replacement of 550 assets.
- ✓ So far, during this financial year, we have approved applications with a value of £141,000 to repair or replace 291 assets.
- ✓ £141,000 has been allocated in PROW Grants so far during 2025/26, all 38 applications have been approved.
- ✓ There is no set deadline for PROW Grant Applications, although works must be completed by the end of March 2026.

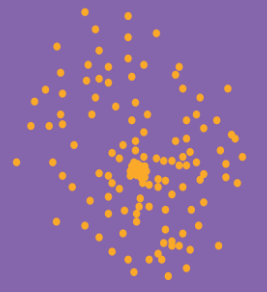
Public Grants continued



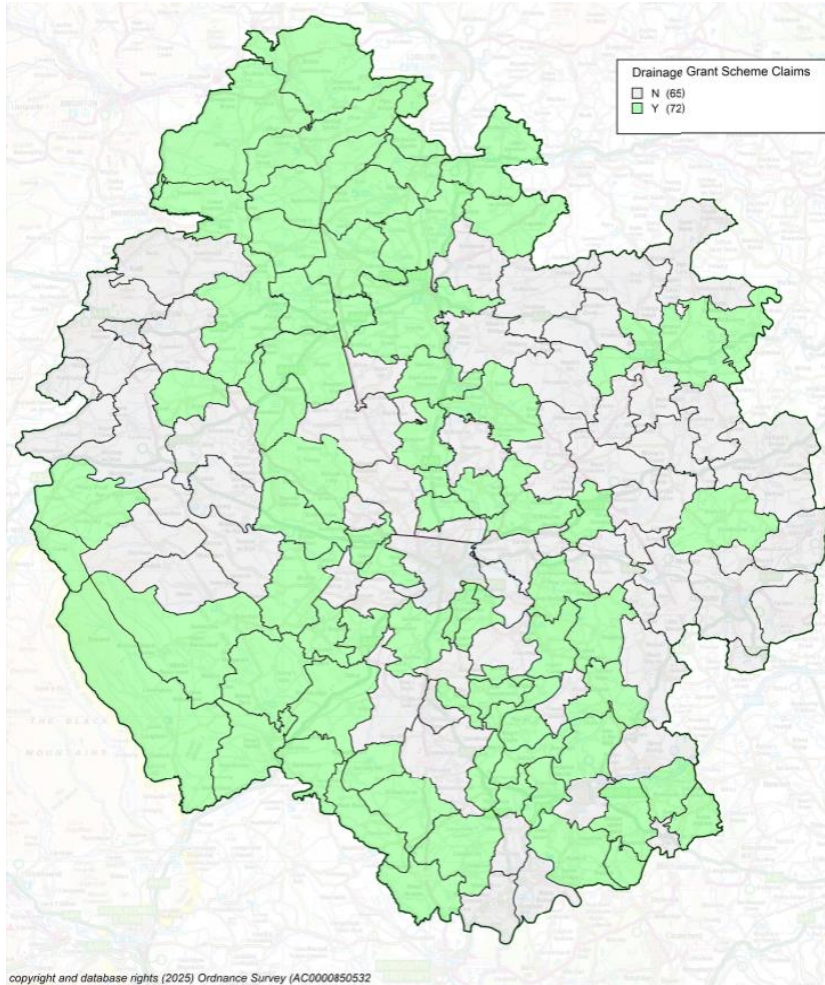
- ✓ Local Access Forum is about to welcome new members at our next meeting on 31st October.
- ✓ Parish Footpath Officers have been offered a wide range of training courses by the PROW team, and are about to announce a bespoke training programme delivered by RoSPA
- ✓ Many Parish Footpath Officers have now received kit bags, PPE, and ID cards.
- ✓ 12 bridges are in the process of being installed across the county over the coming weeks and months.
- ✓ A plan is being drawn up to fast track the required repairs and vegetation clearances throughout the network.



Drainage Town and Parish Grant Funding 2024/25



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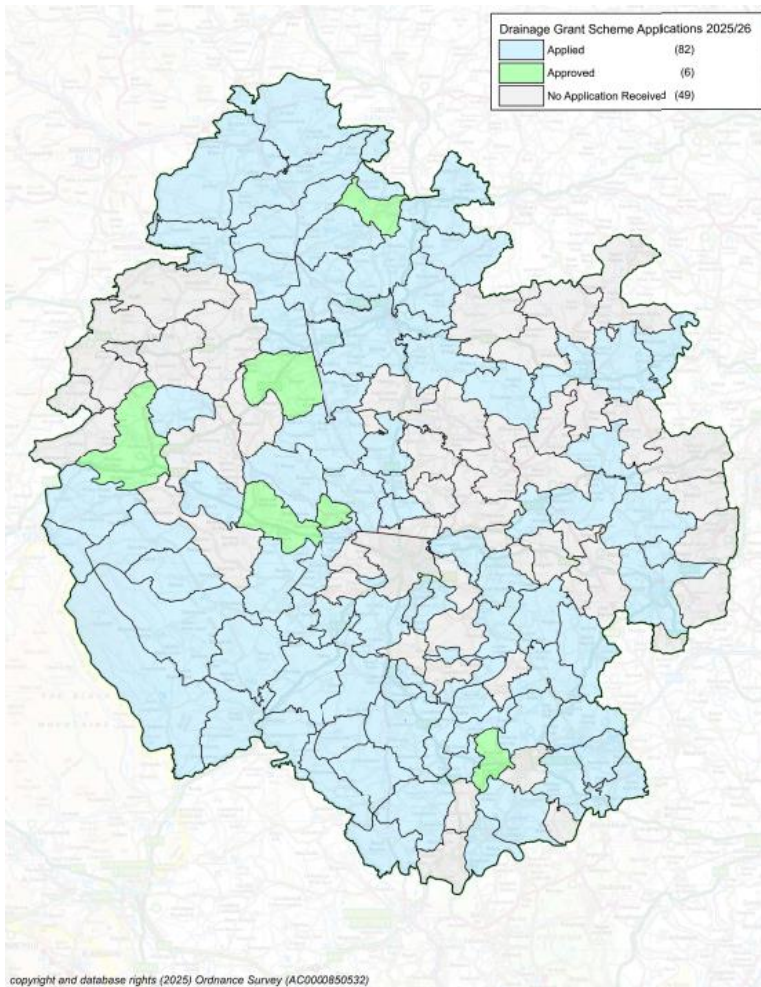


Last year, we awarded grants totaling over £341,561 to 72 Town and Parish Councils

Drainage Town and Parish Grant Funding 2025/26



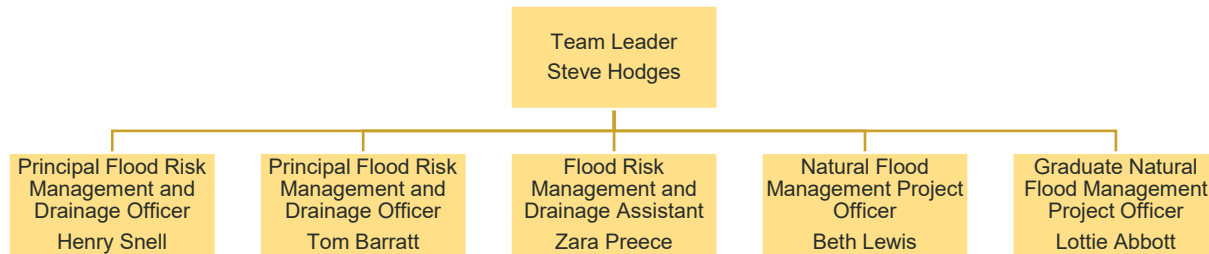
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- ✓ Town and Parish Councils were invited to submit funding applications on 5 June 2025
- ✓ A workshop was held at Plough Lane on 11 September, attended by approximately 30 participants.
- ✓ So far in 2025/26, £60,600 has been allocated across six approved applications
- ✓ We received 97 applications from a total of 88 Parish Councils

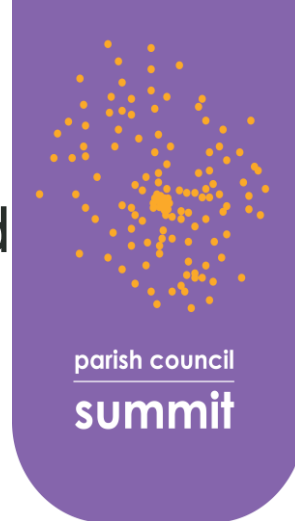
Flood Risk Management and Drainage Team

- For general enquiries, please contact the team via the shared inbox floodrisk@herefordshire.gov.uk
- To report flooding call 01432 261800 or visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reportaflood
- To access advice and guidance, visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/floods



Team updates

- ✓ 40 Flood Investigations required to identify causes, responsibilities, and recommend actions
- ✓ Flood response review – improving escalation processes within the council
- ✓ Lead Local Flood Authority duties – coordinating Risk Management Authorities and updating the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- ✓ Community support – overseeing Drainage Grant Scheme, working with 38 Town and Parish Councils on Community Flood Equipment and Flood Plans, and hosting workshops
- ✓ Community Flood Signage Scheme – approving road closure points and arranging training for those wishing to take part in the trial
- ✓ Flood Response Programme – strengthening flood resilience for homes, businesses, and infrastructure in the county's most flood-affected areas over the next two years

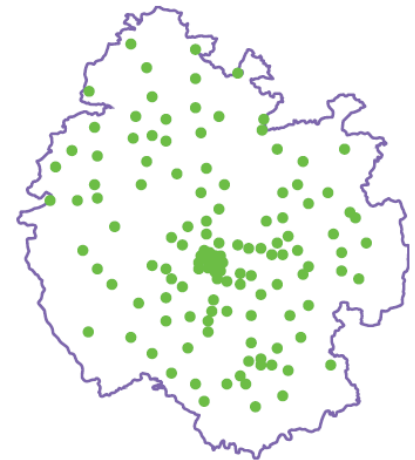




Neighbourhood Development Plan update

Siobhan Riddle

Strategic and Neighbourhood Planning Manager



Implications of Revised NPPF on Plan-making



REQUIRED TO
WRITE A NEW
LOCAL PLAN UNDER
LURA



NEED TO
ACCOMMODATE A
HIGH MANDATORY
HOUSING TARGET
FOR COUNTY



NEED TO EXPLORE
NEW SPATIAL
STRATEGY,
CONSIDERING HOW
REVISED GROWTH
FIGURES WILL BE
APPORTIONED
ACROSS COUNTY

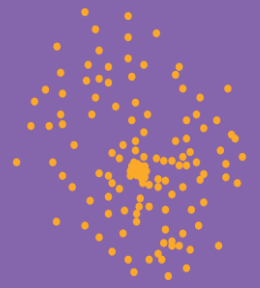


NEW STANDARD
METHOD FOR
CALCULATING
HOUSING AND
DIFFICULTY IN
PROVIDING THIS
FIGURE AT TOWN /
PARISH LEVEL
UNTIL THE NEW
LOCAL PLAN IS
SUFFICIENTLY
PROGRESSED



IMPLICATIONS TO
TIMELINES FOR
NDPS

NDPs under NPPF 2024

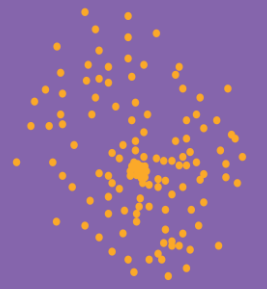


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- ☐ All plans seeking to review or make an NDP must be in line with NPPF.
- ☐ New housing requirements for the county must be factored into plans
- ☐ Any new housing requirements will be calculated using new standard method formula based on parish housing stock
- ☐ Difficulty in providing a Proportional Growth target due to increased mandatory housing target. Any figure provided could be subject to significant increase at this stage.



Advice moving forward...



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APPORTIONMENT
OF GROWTH
ACROSS COUNTY
FIRST NEED TO
SET OUT IN A NEW
LOCAL PLAN.
RECOMMEND TO
PAUSE ON
FORMAL STAGES
OF NDP MAKING.



PARISHES STILL
WISHING TO
PROGRESS:



WILL NEED TO
REQUEST A NEW
HOUSING
REQUIREMENT
FIGURE FROM
COUNCIL BASED
ON NEW
STANDARD
METHOD
FORMULA.



THE COUNCIL CAN
NO LONGER
UNDERTAKE
HRA/SEAS. NDP
GROUPS WILL
NEED TO
COMMISSION
CONSULTANTS TO
DO SO.

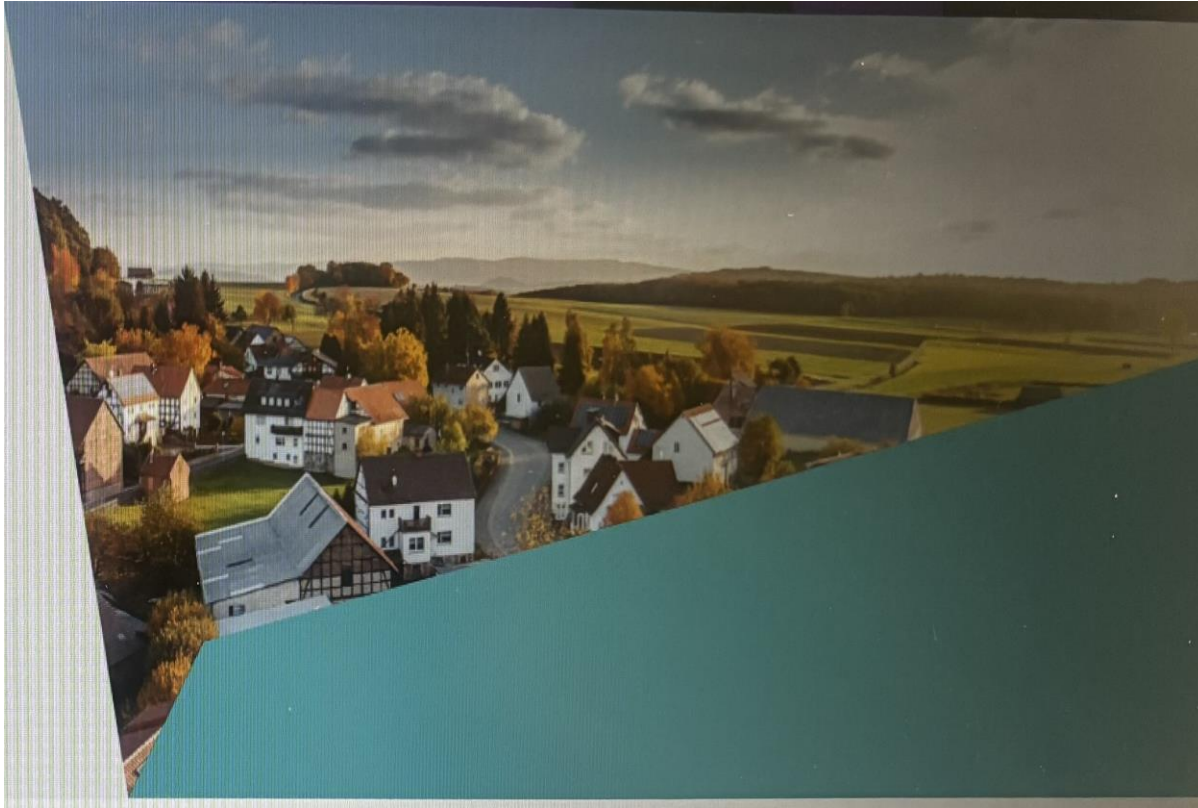


NATURAL
ENGLAND ADVICE
TO BE TAKEN INTO
ACCOUNT



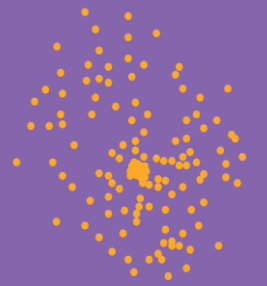
NDPS MOVING
FORWARD IN
ADVANCE OF A
NEW LOCAL PLAN
WILL EXPIRE IN
2031 AS CORE
STRATEGY
PROVIDES THE
POLICY CONTEXT.

Funding Restrictions



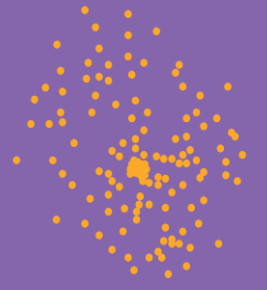
IMPORTANT NOTICE

MHCLG has informed us that, as a result of the spending review, they cannot proceed with commissioning new neighbourhood planning support services for 2025 onwards. Unfortunately, this means that we cannot open to applications for new grants or technical support. We are able to complete all technical support packages agreed by MHCLG by the end of March 2025 and we have until the end of March 2026 to do so depending on the timetable for each package.



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Assistance & Support to help you move forward...the next steps



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FAQ Support updates

High level support with the development of templates to assist with NDPs i.e. sites assessments

Neighbourhood Planning Pathfinder meeting in March 2026 (In person & virtual)

Followed by Parish Surgeries thereafter

Contact us:

neighbourhoodplanning@
herefordshire.gov.uk

**“If everyone is moving
forward together, then
success takes care of itself”**



Closing Remarks

Cllr Jonathan Lester

Leader of the Council





Thank you

