

Getting Ahead: Herefordshire Council's Transformation Strategy 2025 – 2028



Getting Herefordshire Ahead:

Transformation Strategy

2025 - 2028

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Our Transformation Programme

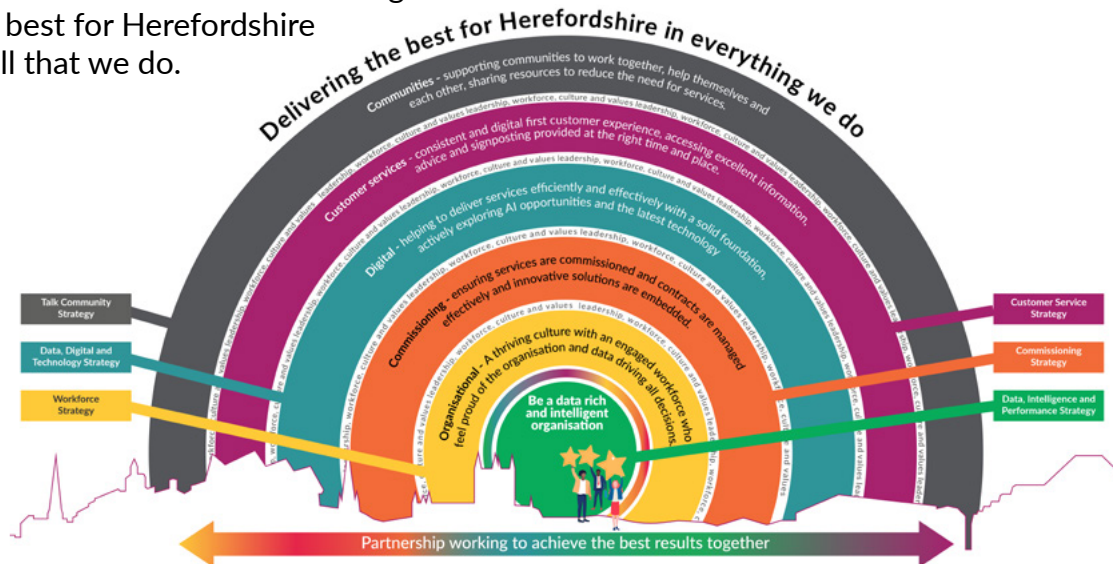
Vision and Ambition

Our Strategic Transformation Programme will improve all aspects of the way the council works and its delivery is fundamental to ensuring that we evolve into a council which is fit for the future.

This programme will enable our staff, our council and our residents to grow, develop, prosper, and flourish. Transformation is a core pillar of the Herefordshire Council Plan, and by delivering against this strategy, we can be certain that we will be delivering the best for Herefordshire in all that we do.

The Transformation Programme is structured around five key themes, with financial sustainability for the long-term and partnership working to deliver the best results together running as golden threads throughout.

The following diagram sets out our future Target Operating Model and demonstrates the interdependencies between each transformational theme. This diagram also highlights the key strategies that will act as transformational enablers.



Herefordshire Council

Design Principles

Our Transformation Strategy and Transformation Programme are founded upon a core set of design principles which guide our decision making and work planning.

These design principles will be applied to strategic and directorate level transformation decision making, ensuring our actions keep us aligned to our future vision.

Further underpinning this strategy are our THRIVE organisational values which act as our guiding principles, and the beliefs that shape our culture and behaviour.

Our values strive to promote a workforce confident and capable of delivering



change by fostering a culture of trust, teamwork and collaboration.

Our values provide a framework for us all to align our actions with the council's vision and priorities creating a positive and supportive work environment where individuals can thrive both personally and professionally.



Getting Ahead - our Transformation objectives

- Support a financially stable and sustainable council delivering high-quality, value-for-money services.
- Develop a more commercial approach to service delivery, increasing income generation opportunities.
- Deliver modern, flexible, and outcomes-focused services designed around residents' needs.
- Become more creative and innovative through technology.
- Work in partnership with communities to design and deliver services and support.
- Develop an agile, flexible, knowledgeable, and empowered workforce.
- Promote, share, and recognise good practice and transformational successes.

What will the future look like?



We will provide excellent information, advice and guidance out in communities through websites and hubs, supported by self-service and AI that enables residents and businesses to do what they need to do at the time that works for them.



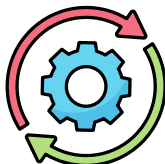
Interacting with us will be easy and enriching. We will establish one front door that deals with all enquiries, and this will be supported by more specialist triage and assessment when required. These teams and access points will work seamlessly together.



The council's corporate core will become the hub for strategic planning, commissioning, listening and learning.



Data and intelligence (contract information, community intelligence and performance data) will have a clear route to flow back from frontline services, the front door and support services.



This information will drive our improvement activity that flows back out into front line and support services. We will promote a test and learn environment within the organisation, empowering our teams to make change and seek feedback.

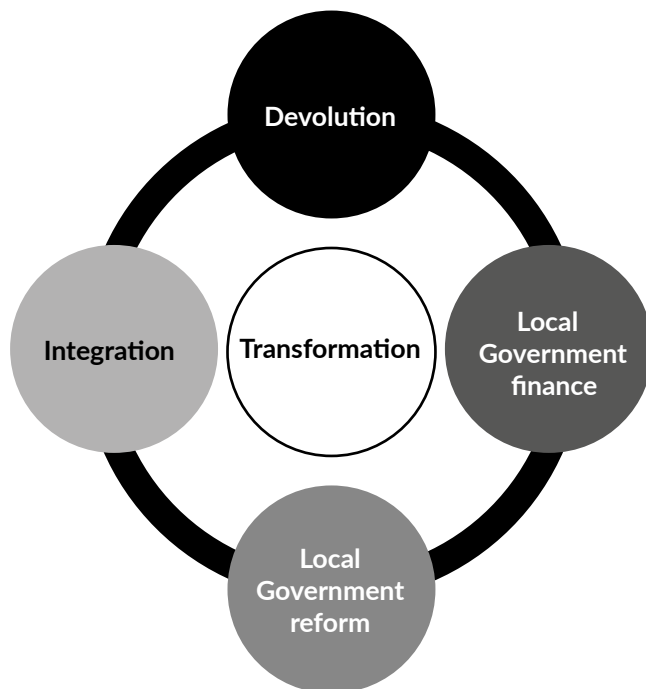
Our strategies to support our new ways of working will be ambitious and inter-linked with our transformational objectives and organisational values at their core.

Current context and external influencers

This strategy sets out the focus of our Transformation Programme including the financial improvements that will be achieved because of our work.

We are, however, now operating in a more complex economic and political environment and as such our approach to transformation will need to be agile, enabling us to respond proactively to external factors in a way which delivers the best for Herefordshire.

The diagram on the right highlights the main external influencers that will shape our Transformation Programme over the coming 12 months.



Where are we now?

Our future target operating model is underpinned by several enabling strategies that have been refreshed in line with our vision:

- Workforce Strategy
- Digital, Data and Technology Strategy
- Talk Community Strategy
- Customer Service Strategy

The golden thread between each of these strategic documents is enablement, empowerment and collaboration across residents and communities, our colleagues, our partners and service providers.

Our strategies are developed in a way which enables us to test, learn and embed new ways of working. This keeps us focused on getting ahead, delivering continual improvement and using intelligence and feedback to shape our transformation.

We have a clear future target operating model (TOM) and transformational design principles which have been communicated across the organisation, and which we use to guide our transformational work.

We have well-established Directorate-level transformation programmes, and an ambitious Capital programme, that are delivering exceptional outcomes for Herefordshire's communities and residents.

We have worked hard to develop and implement a workforce strategy that demonstrates our commitment to nurturing a culture of excellence, empowerment, and growth. It reflects our dedication to creating an environment where every member of our team can unlock their full potential and contribute to our shared success.

The council's transformation programme savings formed part of the council's planned savings of £13.4million across directorate and council-wide transformation initiatives in 2024-25.

The council has made good progress in delivering savings through service transformation with £8.8million savings delivered or in progress so far in 2024-25.



How will we continue to Get Ahead?

We will establish a single Strategic Transformation Programme aligned with our vision for the future and directorate-level improvement activity. This will ensure a slicker and more efficient approach to our work that ensures value is added through effort across the organisation.

Our Leadership Group are our experts, and leaders will be provided with the skills and tools to deliver and enable change. We will articulate the programme through clear theories of change and Transition States which guide and structure our transformation journey. These Transition States will be aligned to business planning and budget setting cycles as set out in the diagram opposite.

Transition states and Delivery Timescales

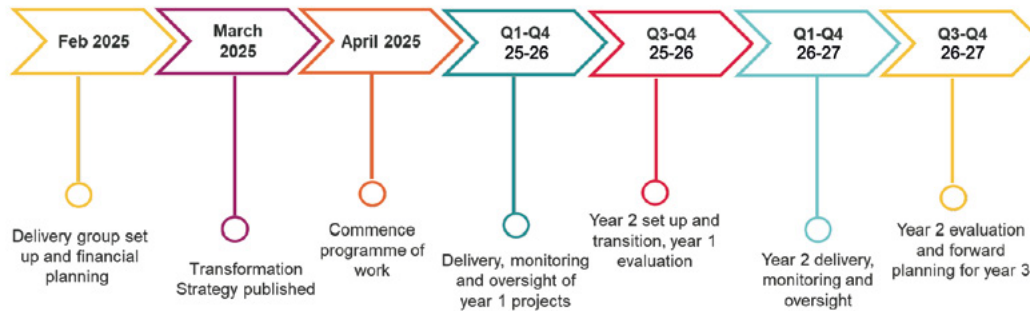
We will establish themed programmes of work and Delivery Groups that bring people, expertise and capacity together to create a force multiplying effect for the organisation.

We will proactively work to align our transformation activity with partners across the public and voluntary sector, ensuring that our role as place leaders is amplified through our Transformation Programme.

We will base our decisions on evidence and data and expected benefits will be high impact, measurable and aligned to the priorities set out in the Council Plan.

We will ensure we place equal emphasis on long term prevention and on solving the challenges we face here and now.

Transition states and Delivery Timescales



Our delivery methodology will be agile, enabling us to focus on continuous improvements that incorporate customer feedback. This ability to adjust during each cycle of change promotes adaptability and pace.

We will actively seek ideas, innovation and best practice from within the whole organisation as well as further afield.

We will embrace digital opportunities increasingly as we secure and continue to build on our strong technological foundations.

We will support all employees to engage with the ambition of the programme, to become active participants in its delivery, to deliver our One Council vision.

Our Strategic Transformation Programme

The following pages of this strategy provide the theories of change models detailing the Strategic Transformation Programme that will enable Herefordshire Council to get ahead.

Getting ahead for us means understanding and defining early the changing needs of residents and communities, strengthening our approach to commissioning, commercialisation and financial management, and implementing ways of working and digital technologies that will enable the council and Herefordshire's **communities, residents and businesses** to thrive.

Year 1 of the strategic Transformation Programme aligns with the Council Plan delivery plan for 2025-2026 which can be found here: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/herefordshire-council/3

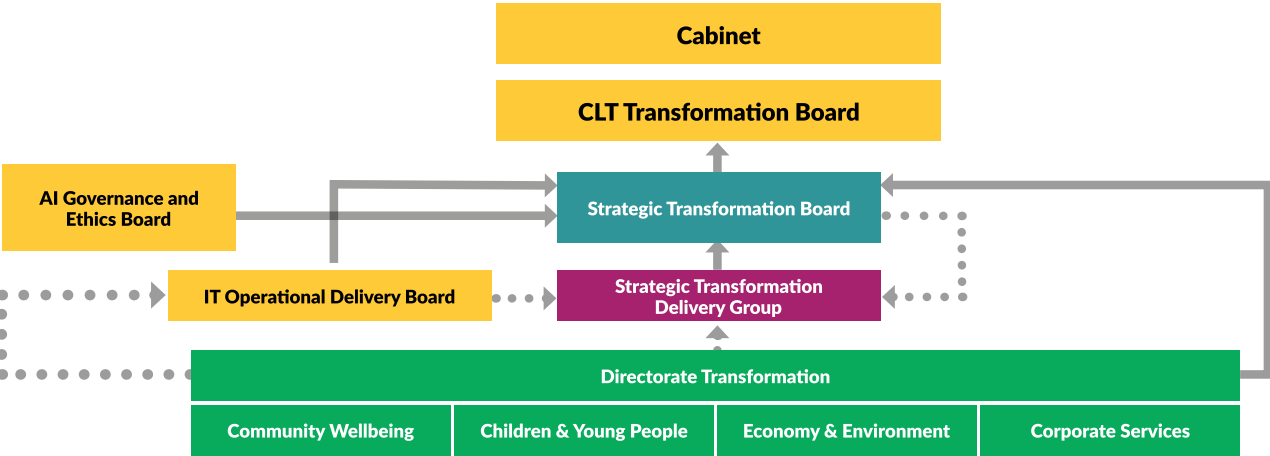
The following pages set out the specific areas we need to strengthen and improve based on our current context and what we know of the best performing councils across the country. We describe the ways in which we will work together as one council and across our partners to get there, and we detail the outcomes that we will deliver because of our work.

Measuring Success

The outcomes identified across each of the following pages show how we will measure the success of our Transformation Programme. Each programme of work set out in the following pages will be established and delivered as projects, with project plans developed and monitored by the Delivery Groups and Strategic Transformation Board.

Each project plan will identify benefits, outcomes and key performance indicators that will be measured and evaluated over time, with outcomes and learning from evaluation informing future strategic planning and driving continuous improvement.

Strategic Transformation Governance Structure



CUSTOMER		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>We need to modernise our customer service offer, in line with the expectations and changing needs of our customers. Our model needs to be flexible, enabling and responsive in recognition of our diverse and rural communities.</p>	<p>We published a customer services strategy in 2023, and we have learned a lot about our customers and how they would like to interact with us in this time. As a result, we need to make some changes to our ways of working and our customer services operating model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produce a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for customer services working with residents and businesses to ensure our approach meets varying needs and expectations. • Review and refresh the Customer Service Strategy and our customer service standards in line with the ambitions of our new TOM. • Upgrade the online and telephone payment functions to improve customer experiences. • Complete the transfer to a new CMS (Content Management System) to enable website development. • Develop the plan for digital functionality/capability which directly aligns to and supports the Customer Services Target Operating Model. • Initiate pilot programmes to test technological applications and evaluate outcomes for residents and council ways of working. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality customer service at every interaction point with the council. • Increased efficiency through technology enabling staff to better support customers with complex queries in ways tailored to customers' needs. • Improved feedback loops will support us to deliver continuous improvement. • Improved levels of customer satisfaction. • Improved customer journeys for organisations and partners who wish to do business in and with Herefordshire.
	<p>We lack qualitative insights around our current customer journeys and our customers.</p>	
	<p>We need to strengthen the foundations of our digital first approach and be bolder in relation to introducing new technology. We will ensure that the introduction of technology is complementary of a multi-channel customer experience.</p>	

IT AND DIGITAL		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>We need to improve the way we use technology across our services to ensure our workforce can make the best use of digital tools and collaboration opportunities.</p>	<p>We have taken strides forward in relation to modernising technology through our M365 migration programme and introducing AI such as Copilot and Magic Notes.</p> <p>We are currently embedding and building on the foundation work to improve our existing IT platforms and infrastructure to transform how we work and deliver services to our residents.</p> <p>We have much to learn, and we are proactively testing opportunities that come our way to help shape our thinking and plans.</p> <p>This is an area we will need to invest in – resources, time, expertise, equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the device upgrades to Microsoft365 devices for all staff and migrate files and folders • Implement the New Telephony System • Review and develop council website (in line with the Customer Service Strategy), enabled by the replacement CMS platform. • Develop the plan for digital functionality/capability which directly aligns to and supports the Customer Services Target Operating Model • Initiate pilot programmes to test technological applications and evaluate outcomes for residents and council ways of working. • Launch our AI pilot programme (this has started with implementation of Copilot and Magic Notes), with future opportunities being explored. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced productivity, collaboration, and security. • Seamless access to files from anywhere, on any device, which is particularly beneficial for remote work. Improved communication and teamwork. • 24/7 access to services through a digital-first approach. • Improved efficiency and accessibility. • Increased range of AI technology to support improvements in back-office functions. • Engagement with wider digital partners who can support us to develop and learn at pace.

COMMERCIALISATION		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>We need to strengthen our approach to commissioning, procurement and contract management to ensure we are delivering the best for Herefordshire through our third-party contracts.</p>	<p>We have done a lot of work to strengthen our approach to contract management and commissioning; however, the quality of practice is inconsistent across the organisation.</p> <p>We need to maximise commercial opportunities and develop our commercial knowledge and skill.</p> <p>We lack a clear strategic commissioning operating model that we can communicate to partners and providers across all sectors.</p> <p>We have gaps in policies and processes that ensure that the council maximises service cost recovery and realises value for money.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our organisational commissioning and procurement model and develop and launch a strategic commissioning and commercial strategy and target operating model. • Implement a revised Service Level Agreement with Hoople to ensure best value and alignment with future target operating model. • Refresh and re-launch contract management tools and resources. • Develop and embed a consistent approach to reviewing and setting fees and charges across the council. • Develop and embed a council-wide approach to debt management. • Develop a long-term commissioning framework for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened cost and contract management ensuring value for money. • Strengthened approach to securing social value and community benefits through council contracts. • Improved strategy and approaches to commissioning with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. • Increased and improved market and supplier engagement processes and mechanisms. • Enhanced ability to create strategic partnerships across supplier networks. • Enhanced ability to contribute to growth and wellbeing agendas through commissioning activity.

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIP		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>The ability to design, develop and deliver new models of service delivery requires strengthened partnerships with communities, town and parish councils, Herefordshire's VCSE networks and active citizenship. We have models of good practice across Herefordshire and aspire to build a consistent approach that enables and supports communities to thrive.</p>	<p>Our Talk Community model and revised strategy lay a strong foundation for community engagement and activation.</p> <p>We require a more strategic approach to delivering social value across the council to maximise its impact, enhance community resilience and support local VCSE organisations.</p> <p>Establishing a diverse and thriving voluntary sector is critical to shaping and strengthening our approach to prevention.</p> <p>There is currently no clear, cohesive volunteering policy that supports a consistent approach to volunteer engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long-term commissioning framework for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. • Co-produce a comprehensive volunteering policy that provides clear guidelines and best practices, ensuring a consistent, supportive experience for all volunteers and maximizing their impact within the community. • Implement the Herefordshire Councils Charter and reference group. • Develop a council-wide approach to grant management and grant maximisation. • Deliver the Talk Community Strategy – year 1 objectives. • Build an improved understanding of our resident and communities' requirements through strengthened approaches to community engagement and consultation. • Co-design and establish a young people's council and young people's consultation guidance with children and young people. • Further develop and embed co-production approaches to support adults and carers with lived experience to be part of strategy development and service improvements. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved strategy and approaches to commissioning with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. • Improved understanding of residents' needs and aspirations to help inform council and partnership strategy. • Young people will be active participants in shaping and delivering the future target operating model for the council. • Increased breadth of volunteering opportunities and stronger volunteer networks. • Increased range of VCSE and community-based services, support and activity. • Strengthened partnership working between the council, wider councils and communities. • Enhanced ability to contribute to growth and wellbeing agendas through commissioning activity. • Strengthened approach to prevention and early intervention.

DATA, INTELLIGENCE AND PERFORMANCE		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>Limitations in our performance information and organisational intelligence leads to limitation in our ability to plan strategically for the long-term, understand and demonstrate impact, learn and improve.</p>	<p>We need to strengthen our corporate performance and intelligence function to so that we become a data-driven council.</p> <p>This information is essential to driving improvement activity that flows into front line and support services.</p> <p>A stronger performance and intelligence function will not only support our learning but support us to demonstrate the impact of our work and this transformation strategy on communities and council finances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy to include approach to Develop and implement the plan to deliver the Data and Intelligence Strategy. • Undergo an external review of our performance and intelligence function. • Undertake a data maturity assessment to support our strategic planning for improvement. • Implement the new performance management system for KPI and delivery plan milestones. • Implement a benchmarking system that supports our learning and improvement activity as part of performance review. • Implement new data visualisation technologies such as Power BI to support and enable ongoing performance monitoring across services. • Build a robust and fully compliant data warehouse to meet statutory and operational data needs for children and adults' social care. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of residents' needs and aspirations through established feedback loops to help inform council and partnership strategy. • Improved real-time awareness of the impact of our strategies and services providing greater opportunity to revise approaches and spot strategic opportunity. • Increased understanding across services and pathways over time. • Strengthened organisational intelligence to build into the strategic planning process. • Increased opportunity to identify system-wide strengths, challenges and opportunities. • Increased opportunity to learn from others who have successfully implemented new ways of working relevant to Herefordshire's context. • Improved ability to communicate outcomes and benefits of council strategy and plans. • Further enhancements to the council's financial management processes.

WORKFORCE		
What do we need to improve?	Our context	How will we get there?
<p>We are committed to nurturing a culture of excellence, empowerment, and growth. It reflects our dedication to creating an environment where every member of our team can unlock their full potential and contribute to our shared success. Embedding organisational culture is never 'complete,' and in order to drive innovation and transformation we need to develop an engaged, agile and resilient workforce.</p>	<p>The council's approach to change in recent years has been broadly incremental and the events of 2020 resulted in a rapid and fundamental transformation of our workforce and working practices.</p> <p>The wider employee engagement and health and wellbeing offer is becoming more crucial as we seek to be an employer of choice that attracts and retains top talent.</p> <p>Identifying and addressing skill gaps and talent shortages within the council is critical for maintaining excellent services for residents. As is ensuring that we prioritise future skills in areas such as commercialisation and contract management that support the future council operating model.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our recruitment practices reflect best practice and value for money. • Review our approach to temporary and interim appointments to get better value for money. • Incorporate the council's THRIVE values into our recruitment processes. • Review and develop the content of the council's recruitment microsite 'the spirit of Herefordshire'. • Review the council's approach to recruitment payments and market forces supplements. • Identify any improvements in the application process for candidates and recruiting managers so that the process is as smooth as possible. • Become an employer of choice. • Review the impact of the workforce strategy and progress made towards its stated objectives. • Deliver the improvements identified in the employee survey. • Launch the council's scheme to recognise long service and exceptional achievement. • Launch a programme of leadership training for managers and aspiring managers. • Design and implement Herefordshire council staff awards. <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in numbers of staff recruited to and retained by the council. • Reduced vacancy rates. • Reductions in numbers of agency staff. • Workforce diversity and representation in leadership roles. • Continual improvement in staff survey results. • Strengthened employee engagement networks and a growing offer. • External awards and accreditation. • Maintained low absence rates. • Increased wellbeing and engagement score.

Transformation to support financial sustainability

The council's Transformation Programme will support the future sustainability of the council and its services; delivering efficiencies and savings through improvements to systems, processes and enhanced use of technology.

Nationally, local authorities continue to face significant financial pressures as demand and cost for statutory services rise, increasing the challenge of prioritising resources to deliver transformation and service improvements. Unprecedented demand for services means we must transform the way we work and transformation activity will play a key role in meeting our financial challenges, closing the estimated funding gap in future years and strengthening financial resilience.

The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy will support transformation activity and timely, reliable financial analysis, forecasting and planning will inform how resources are allocated and prioritised to enable change and realise financial benefits.

Efficiencies and savings will be delivered through transformation of service delivery, maximising income and service cost recovery, reviewing expenditure and identifying commercial and commissioning opportunities. This activity will focus on:

Smarter service delivery: reviewing how we provide and procure services, improving quality whilst reducing costs to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

High demand services: increasing early intervention and identifying cost-effective support solutions to improve outcomes, increase independence for service users and reduce overall demand.

Contract efficiencies: identifying opportunities to realise efficiencies in commissioned contracts, aligning multiple contracts, recommissioning based on current and future needs rather than historic practices.

Innovative delivery models: reviewing how we operate and approach service design and delivery, exploring alternative and non-traditional models to deliver activities more efficiently.

Process automation: implementing automation and artificial intelligence technologies, enabling innovation through the use of digital tools to build a data and intelligence-led organisation.

Commercial activity: optimising commercial activity and the provision of traded services, increasing the value we achieve through our commercial contracts and strategic procurement.

Income maximisation: identifying opportunities to maximise all sources of income, enhancing traded services, reviewing fees and charges to ensure full cost recovery.

Transformation savings will be supported by detailed plans, subject to robust check and challenge to ensure savings are realistic and achievable, and the delivery of financial benefits will be monitored and reported as part of routine budget monitoring arrangements.

The Transformation Strategy will ensure that we continue to identify opportunities to ensure a lean, financially stable and resilient council for the future.

The background is a complex, abstract composition of glowing yellow and orange lines and circles. The lines are thin and vary in opacity, creating a sense of depth and movement. The circles are of various sizes, some solid and some with a gradient, adding to the dynamic feel. The overall color palette is warm, with a gradient from dark green on the left to bright yellow and orange in the center, and a hint of pinkish-red on the right. The text is centered and framed by two thin orange lines.

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