

March 2026 – Ward Report – Sutton Walls

It has been one of the wettest periods any of us can remember. This has had a devastating effect on the County's roads, and

It has also been the unfairest government funding settlement that we can recall.

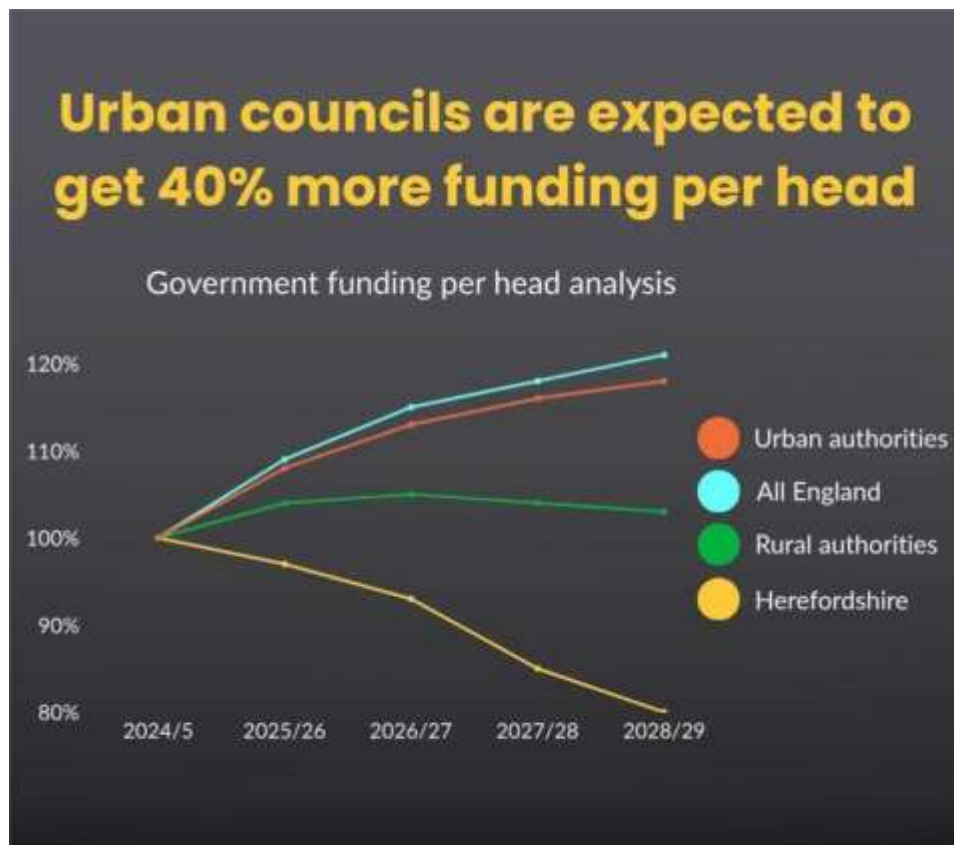
Consequently, Budgets and Roads overshadow every other activity in the Council – it seems correct therefore to concentrate on these two subjects.

A Challenging Budget setting for Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council voted through the 2026/27 revenue budget at its meeting on the 13th of February. There were no opposition amendments to the proposed budget with all councillors recognising it was the best that could be delivered given the Government's reduction of financial support to Herefordshire.

The revenue budget sets out a responsible plan to close a £30 million funding gap next year, due to the outcome of the Government's 'Fair Funding Review' not meeting the costs of the growing and more complex needs of our communities, and rural setting. This new formula equates to Herefordshire residents getting 32% less funding per head from Whitehall than those in urban areas. To balance the budget, the council identified £20 million in savings and approved a 4.99% council tax increase to meet the costs of delivering services to residents. Financial support for council tax bills will be provided to 6,500 households in the county. It leaves a challenging budget to find 20 million pounds of savings in year

I make no apologies for including again the graph



opposite which shows the poor settlement Herefordshire has received for the next three years.

Residents will be aware that both of our neighbouring authorities - Worcestershire and Shropshire - are in worse financial positions. Worcestershire voted through a 9% council tax rise and is borrowing 100 million pounds from the government at 6% interest- taken out of their revenue account.

Our budget for next year reflects what residents told the council during the Budget and Council Tax 2026/27 consultation, with highways being their top priority. In response, the capital programme includes one of the council's largest ever investments in the roads network, including a £5 million resurfacing program and hopefully more than £24 million in Department for Transport maintenance grants to cut reactive repairs, reduce backlogs and improve road conditions countywide.

The meeting also agreed the capital (long-term spending) programme which invests in the county's assets and infrastructure – from roads resurfacing, highways maintenance and housing. Emergency and temporary accommodation received the largest addition to the capital programme in 26/27, meaning, in the future, less reliance on private landlords and reducing the costs to the revenue budget. There will also be investment in the restoration of the county's historic buildings and continued support for the Hereford Bypass.

Continued investment in natural environment protection, delivering two more wetlands schemes to support biodiversity recovery and nutrient neutrality. Expanded drainage, attenuation and flood alleviation works, Public Rights of Way and bridge repairs and Ash Dieback management.



[PLEASE report potholes and concerns](#)

[Report problems on the road](#)



www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road

[Check on progress of a defect](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road)

[herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/pothole-road-defect-progress-map)

**Report a serious pothole, flooded road or highway obstruction-
Balfour Beatty Living Places: 01432 261800**

Making a claim for vehicle damage :

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/highway-claims

Footpaths issues –

- PROW - PROW@herefordshire.gov.uk
- PROW No – 01432 383 550

Report fly tipping. It will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via the council website on the links below as your www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/fly_tipping

Business Rates and Costs

The Government recently issued a revaluation of business rates to all our local businesses and some of our small businesses have seen significant increases of 50% and more. A meeting has been arranged with our MP with a view to putting pressure on the Government to review this. Together with rises in National Insurance, National Minimum Wage and electricity and other costs this revaluation puts our valued community businesses under enormous pressure. If there are any other similar businesses impacted in the ward, please contact me so we can build up our evidence base.

The Leominster Business Hub was formally launched on 2nd February at an event attended by the Leader of Herefordshire Council, Councillor Jonathan Lester, (second on left) and representatives from the local business community.



The hub offers local businesses the opportunity to speak directly with a Growth Hub Officer, access guidance on grants and finance, and use practical facilities including meeting rooms, co-working space, hot-desking and high-speed Wi-Fi, at either low or no cost.

The Business Hub is part of Herefordshire Council's wider approach to supporting local economic growth and helps connect local businesses directly to the wider Herefordshire Growth Hub network, providing access to specialist guidance and support.