

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet member transport and infrastructure

Title	School Transport Operating Model (formerly known as Pilot Programme for School Transport Operating Model)
Decision maker	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251
Date of decision	31 March 2026
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	<p>This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.</p> <p>This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.</p>
A notice was served in accordance with Part 3 (Key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.	
General exception or special urgency (as defined in the constitution)	No
Purpose	To agree to commence a pilot programme for a School Transport Operating Model that will provide evidence to inform the delivery of a clear, consistent, and efficient framework for delivering the council's statutory home-to-school transport service.
Decision	That: a) Cabinet Member approves the implementation of a pilot programme for delivering school transport routes in

	<p>partnership with Hoople, Herefordshire Council's Local Authority Trading Company and;</p> <p>b) Cabinet Member delegates authority to the Chief Operating Officer of Resident Services to take all necessary actions and operational decisions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.</p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50054221</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Option 1: Continue with Fully Outsourced Transport Providers (Not recommended) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains existing contract model with local operators. • No internal resource required. • Limitations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market capacity, no ability to manage the market, price volatility • Limited control over driver training, behaviour management, and safeguarding standards 2. Option 2: Insource all transport routes (Not Recommended at This Stage) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entire service operated through the council or its arms' length company Hoople. • Limitations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires significant upfront investment • High risk without incremental testing • Lack of evidence on cost efficiency or scalability 3. Preferred Option: Implementation of a programme for delivering school transport routes in partnership with Hoople, Herefordshire Council's Local Authority Trading Company. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports a controlled and evidence-based approach • Allows comparative analysis of cost and savings, quality, and resilience. • Enables early assessment of workforce, compliance, and vehicle management processes.
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency)	8 April 2026

provisions apply)	
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Councillor:	Date 31 March 2026
Cabinet member transport and infrastructure (Councillor Philip Price)	

- a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the member which relates to the decision;
- and
- in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted.