

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet member children and young people

Title	Recommissioning of Children's Rights & Advocacy and Independent Visitors Services
Decision maker	Cabinet member children and young people 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	28 August 2026
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	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.
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	This report seeks approval to undertake an open procurement in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) under the Light Touch Regime for the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and Independent Visitor Service. The procurement will ensure the council continues to meet its statutory duties by providing independent advocacy, representation and trusted adult support to vulnerable children and young people across Herefordshire. It will also support the transition of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service from an in-house model to an externally commissioned service, strengthening the independence of advocacy in line with national guidance and recognised best practice, while maintaining continuity of support for children and young people.
Decision	That: a) Approval is given to undertake an open procurement, in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, and the

	Council's Contract Procedure Rule (CPRs) for the provision of an externally commissioned Children's Rights and Advocacy Service (CRA) and an Independent Visitor Service (IV). b) Approval for an initial contract period of five years, commencing on 1 January 2027 (CRA) and 1 February 2027 (IV), with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months, within the approved budget. The procurement will allow for phased mobilisation, including commencement of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service, ahead of the Independent Visitor Service where operationally required. c) Authority is delegated to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to: i) award the contract(s) following completion of the procurement process; ii) take all operational decisions necessary to complete the procurement process and to manage the resulting contract(s), in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and within the approved budget and; iii) to approve the exercise of the extension option for a period of up to 24 months, subject to satisfactory contract performance, continued service need, available funding and compliance with the council's governance arrangements.
Reason for the decision	As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=50055085
Options considered	1. The council could continue to deliver the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service in house whilst separately procuring the Independent Visitor Service. This option is not recommended. Whilst this would maintain existing arrangements for advocacy, it would not strengthen the operational independence of the advocacy service from the Local Authority, in line with national guidance and recognised best practice. It would also miss the opportunity to recommission both services through a single procurement exercise, supporting a consistent approach to commissioning, improved contract management and value for money, whilst maintaining the distinct statutory functions of each service. 2. The council could undertake separate procurement exercises for the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service and the Independent Visitor Service. This option is not recommended. The services have

	previously been commissioned jointly and have been successfully delivered under a single contractual arrangement. Procuring the services separately would increase procurement activity and contract management requirements without providing additional benefit to the children and young people or the council. A single procurement exercise supports a coordinated commissioning approach, whilst maintaining the distinct statutory purpose and operational independence of each service.
Declarations of interest (see ▪ below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	4 September 2026

Councillor: Cabinet member children and young people (Councillor Ivan Powell)	Date 28 August 2026
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- 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.