

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet

Title	Purchase of accommodation to meet strategic priorities
Decision maker	Cabinet 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	13 December 2018
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	<p>To approve the acquisition of a limited number of properties to enable the council to help meet some strategic priorities.</p> <p>The council faces challenges in finding accommodation to meet the needs of some groups of vulnerable young people. Social housing providers have to prioritise commercial considerations and are unwilling to take the risk of letting homes to certain groups. Therefore, the council must find alternative accommodation solutions which are economic and sustainable in a limited range of circumstances. These include accommodating care leavers and other young people</p>

	<p>with complex needs, such as chaotic and high risk lifestyles and self harm.</p> <p>There are several other priority groups and vulnerable people who have accommodation needs and these might be best met through acquisition of property. These would require further analysis and business case, as part of governance. Capital funding for housing or accommodation will be used only where the council has significant statutory duties and other means of discharging them have been exhausted. In some instances, investment may also provide economic benefits.</p> <p>It is proposed to purchase properties from the open market and make appropriate arrangements for housing management, usage of rental income and management of risk. It is envisaged that a modest number of properties of different types and sizes would be acquired over the period to 2022.</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p>That:</p> <p>(a) the principle of acquisition of properties to meet the needs of care leavers and other people with complex needs be approved,</p> <p>(b) authority be delegated to the director for economy and place, following consultation with relevant cabinet members, the director for children and families and the chief finance officer, to approve acquisition of individual properties including those with a value requiring a key decision, and subject to the usual capital funding approval processes.</p>
<p>Reason for the decision</p>	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50023797</p>
<p>Options considered</p>	<p>1. Do not acquire properties in order to house care leavers or other young people with high risk, complex needs. This option is not recommended as it would continue the reliance on social housing providers to meet the needs of these small but complex cohorts. Providers' existing stock will seldom offer accommodation which is of suitable size and location, as this is in high demand through the housing register. In addition, providers will see the specific cohorts of vulnerable people as significantly risky tenants. Therefore, it will continue to be very difficult to find accommodation locally for care leavers with complex needs and chaotic, high risk behaviour. Lack of appropriate accommodation often leads to increased risk to the vulnerable person and</p>

	<p>others, whilst in some cases to continuation of very expensive specialist placements.</p> <p>2. The council provides grant aid to housing providers to source accommodation and underwrites the risk of default. This option is not recommended as providers would still be unlikely to accept the wider risks and complexities arising from accommodating care leavers with high needs and similar groups of vulnerable people. These risks and complexities include self-harm, violent or aggressive behaviour and third party involvement in supporting people. In addition the capital costs to the council of this option might not be significantly lower. This approach has proved viable in addressing other types and levels of need but would not be attractive to housing providers for these user groups.</p>
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	19 December 2018

<p>Councillor:</p> <p>Leader of the Council (Councillor JG Lester)</p>	<p>Date 13 December 2018</p>
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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 by the relevant local authority's head of paid service.