

Written statement of a non-key decision
Cabinet member children and families

Title	Mobilisation of new Edge of Care approach for children and young people
Decision maker	<p>Cabinet member children and families</p> <p>Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here:</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251</p>
Date of decision	20 December 2019
Report exemption class	Open
Purpose	<p>To approve initial investment in a new approach to support children and young people that are on the edge of care (EOC), whether that be at risk of becoming a looked after child, or with the potential to safely cease being looked after and return home with the appropriate support.</p> <p>Families that might need some help and support will often say that they don't want to be taken into safeguarding or care services. They would rather be able to cope better with the challenges they face with support from their extended family, friends, and community. While improvements have been made to Herefordshire's safeguarding system in recent years, the County's numbers of looked after children (LAC) has continued to be higher than comparator areas, which causes significant financial pressure for the council. Cabinet has recognised that the council can do more to support families to safely take care of their children. This is in conjunction with work that the council has already done to improve social care practice and expand the early help and family support services.</p> <p>It is therefore intended to make an initial investment of up to £184k in 2019-2020 for the establishment of a new Edge of Care / Home (ECHO) service. Alongside existing approaches, ECHO will be a five to ten-year initiative. Further investment from 2020 onwards to be made through the council's medium-term financial strategy.</p>
Decision	<p>That:</p> <p>(a) The use of earmarked reserves of up to £184k for the mobilisation of a new ECHO service during be approved for the initial spending plan for 2019-2020 as set out paragraphs 24 and Appendix 1 of this</p>

	<p>report</p> <p>(b) Within the approved funding envelope (above), operational management of the initial spending plan for 2019-2020 is delegated to the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Family Support.</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/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50032400</p>
Options considered	<p>1. Do nothing. The council has already invested in additional family support resources, in-house fostering capacity and social care practice improvements, including more timely consideration of reunification opportunities for individual LAC. Each of these initiatives is expected to have a positive impact on reducing the number of LAC in Herefordshire, for example there has been a reduction in the number of new LAC over the five-years to March 2019 from 130 to 95 children per year. However, further improvements will be needed if Herefordshire's LAC rate and spend per capita is to be reduced to expected levels in the medium rather than longer term.</p> <p>2. To not use the earmarked reserves. This would delay the implementation of the new approach approved by cabinet.</p>
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	3 January 2020

<p>Councillor:</p> <p>Cabinet member children and families (Councillor Felicity Norman)</p>	<p>Date 20 December 2019</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.