

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet

Title	Better Ways of Working Revised Implementation
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	23 July 2020
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>The report is to review and recommend further delivery of the "better ways of working" (BWOW) initiative that enables employees to work flexibly and to consolidate use of premises. This decision reflects on the impact and implications of Covid-19 on the plans that were set out and agreed by Cabinet on 27 February 2020.</p> <p>The report specifically relates to the future occupancy of the Elgar House offices and the Nelson House building with a focus on Plough Lane as the key office location, along with maximising the potential of home working and use of multi-</p>

	<p>agency offices in the market towns. The report reviews the required financial investment and associated savings, along with work practices that will enable effective use of workspace in the long and short term.</p> <p>A key intention of BWOW is to reflect contemporary work practices that enable adaptable and flexible working arrangements that supports the workforce, aids staff morale and increases productivity. The proposed approach to BWOW also supports the council's ambitions to reduce carbon emissions with a decreased number of sites using utilities and staff having less travel to work.</p> <p>The recommendations are in place to approve the revised BWOW proposals. Particularly to give notice on the Elgar House lease in time to meet the break clause otherwise the tenancy would continue until July 2023.</p>
Decision	<p>That:</p> <p>(a) based on an increase of home working, notice is served to terminate the lease of Elgar House by activating break clause making a base budget saving of £205k and disposing of the Old Priory in Leominster creating a base budget saving of £90k;</p> <p>(b) Disposal of other sites in Hereford when operationally appropriate covering 1a, 8 and 10 St Owen's Street and Union Street offices creating a combined base budget saving of £100k with delegated authority to assistant director, technical services in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets;</p> <p>(c) the timescale to serve notice on Nelson House is delegated to assistant director, technical services in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets;</p> <p>(d) base budget of £60k is realigned from property services site running costs to cover annual revenue expenditure associated with the new model of working at Plough Lane;</p> <p>(e) the Ryefield Centre in Ross on Wye is retained as a council base in the south of the county; and</p> <p>(f) revised approved capital spend for BWOW of up to £850k based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reconfiguration and improvement works at the Ryefield Centre up to the value of £500k in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets and Ross-on-Wye Town Council;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocation of up to £350k to deliver the better ways of working project through delegated authority to the assistant director corporate support in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets.
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=50034383</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the lease for Elgar House continues. This is not recommended as there is a window of opportunity to serve notice in August 2020 to break the lease in February 2021 – if not broken at that point it will mean a further two years of lease costs. With the demonstration that home working is possible, less office space is needed creating a saving as well as an optimal way of working for the majority of employees and reducing the council's carbon footprint. 2. In the cabinet report of February 2020 entitled "Better Ways of Working Implementation" the recommendation was that notice is served to vacate the Nelson House building from 30 September 2020. This timescale may still be relevant, however the recommendation in this report gives flexibility as to when the office is vacated – with a three month notice period required. This flexibility will give time (if needed) to understand the impact on vacating Elgar House. The risk is that notice could be served on the council terminating the lease of Nelson House. 3. A decision was made on 12 March 2018 to decommission the Ryefield Centre in Ross-on-Wye. As an alternative option this decision could still proceed creating a revenue saving and income from the sale of the property. However, within the new proposals the Ryefield Centre would become a strategically located base in the south of the county with extended office use as an MAO and meeting / collaboration space. The Ryefield centre costs in the region of £60k per annum to operate therefore to be viable the centre would need to share costs with another organisation or offset costs with a range of services using the site. Opportunities to share the building with another public sector organisation is being explored through the One Public Estate programme. 4. The spend on BWOW has been reviewed meaning less spend on the original items (such as furniture) and

	redirect to improvements at Ryefield Centre.
Declarations of interest (see ▪ below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	29 July 2020

Councillor: Date 23 July 2020 Leader of the Council (Councillor David Hitchiner)

- 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.