

**Written statement of a key decision**  
**Cabinet**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Review of fostering allowances and fees for foster carers</b>
Decision maker	Cabinet Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: <a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251</a>
Date of decision	17 December 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	This report is seeking approval for an increase in allowances and fees for foster carers approved by Herefordshire Council.
<b>Decision</b>	<p><b>That:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Fostering fees and allowances are increased to the amounts detailed in Appendix A from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021;</b></p> <p><b>(b) The Director of Children and Families is given delegated authority to approve annual increases in fostering fees in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the section 151 Officer;</b></p>

	<p><b>(c) The fostering fees and allowances policy is approved and implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (Appendix B); and</b></p> <p><b>(d) Council approved foster carers receive a 100% exemption to their Council tax from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.</b></p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p><a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50035639">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50035639</a></p>
Options considered	<p>1. Do nothing. A comprehensive review of current fostering fees and allowances has been completed comparing the Council's level of payment with those of neighbouring and regional authorities. This has highlighted that the Council pays lower fees and allowances than these authorities which is likely to impact on our ability to recruit and retain foster carers.</p> <p>2. Increase fees and allowances at a lower level than proposed. Fostering services operate in a competitive market place. The service needs to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers to meet needs of children and young people in care. Allowances and fees need to be equal to or better than our local competitors if possible.</p> <p>3. Increase fees and allowances at a higher level than proposed. Any short term advantage of paying higher than competitors is likely to be very short-lived as the market would adjust and ultimately drive up the cost of foster placements locally. It is therefore proposed that the Council approve allowances and fees that are comparable with other authorities and our competitors and that the focus continues to be on providing a quality service that attracts and retains foster carers alongside the package of financial support offered.</p>
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	23 December 2020

<p>Councillor: .....</p> <p>Leader of the Council (Councillor David Hitchiner)</p>	<p>Date 17 December 2020</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.