

MINUTES of the meeting of General Overview & Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Tuesday 8 March 2016 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairman)
Councillor (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: JM Bartlett, Mr P Burbidge, Mrs A Fisher, CA Gandy, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EL Holton, JF Johnson, AJW Powers, A Seldon, Mr P Sell, NE Shaw, A Warmington and SD Williams

In attendance: Councillors

Officers:

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cooper, Harvey, Swinglehurst, Mr Roger Fuller

67. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Holton substituted for Councillor Swinglehurst, Councillor Seldon substituted for Councillor Harvey.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received. It was noted that two meetings of the committee had been held on 19 January 2016.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of both of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

70. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The chairman noted that further suggestions had been received from Mr McKay in regard to the self-registering of public rights of way. It was explained that two briefing notes had already been produced on related matters, and that the Chairman had arranged a meeting between Mr McKay and relevant officers to better address Mr McKay's concerns.

71. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (Pages 15 - 26)

The chairman was grateful that there had been a high level of interest in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership item.

In response to an enquiry by a member of the public, the chairman agreed that supplementary questions provided in writing would be accepted. It was agreed that responses to these questions would be included within the minutes of the meeting.

Supplementary questions and written responses provided as of 25 April 2016 are included in the printed minutes pack for this agenda.

72. SCHOOL EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE (Pages 27 - 56)

The assistant director commissioning and education introduced the item. It was explained that there was a process of verification with exam results, as such there is a delay in their presentation. Therefore the results from August 2015 were coming to the committee at this stage instead of shortly after their publication.

A more comprehensive data set on examination performance had been meant to be circulated ahead of the committee, however this had not happened. It was agreed that this would be circulated following the committee. Members expressed their disappointment that this had not been circulated earlier but were encouraged to study the data when published.

It was noted that while there had been a significant increase in the number of academies and free schools in Herefordshire, as well as a decline in the number of maintained schools, Herefordshire council still had a considerable role in co-ordinating all schools in the county.

There was discussion of the role of regional school commissioners:

- It was clarified that regional schools commissioners report the secretary of state for education and specifically monitor the performance of academies.
- They have roles in identifying and responding to underperformance and also encourage the conversion of schools to academy status.
- The west midlands regional school commissioner represented a very large geographical area.
- There was a termly meeting between Herefordshire council and the regional schools commissioner. This focussed on specific issues relating to schools including at an individual level. It was explained that this was a very important mechanism in how Herefordshire council responded to the concerns of academies.

A member of the committee questioned the role of the council working with the school academy group, and how this was funded:

- The council has responsibilities in safeguarding and championing outcomes for children regardless of their location or if they were educated in a maintained school or an academy or free school. The main role of the council was in brokerage and facilitating school to school cooperation.
- The council funds some school improvement services through this service.

A member of the committee expressed confusion over the extent to which the council should be accountable and involved in the performance of academies and free schools. Central government policy encouraged the proliferation of academies and had introduced regional school commissioners as a means of monitoring their performance. As such the role of local authorities within this was questioned given their lack of control over schools other than maintained schools.

In response the director of children's wellbeing made a number of points:

- There were likely to be changes in the role of local authorities in this situation following the results of a consultation later in the year.
- The importance of children's attainment regardless of them being educated in academies and free schools, or in maintained school was stressed.
- Education is a local enterprise, as such members should look to improve education within the local area in whatever form it takes.

- While local authorities do not have far reaching powers in regard to academies and free schools' performance, a significant amount of influence can still be used to encourage school improvement.

The head of learning and achievement gave a presentation summarising key trends in performance data.

- Performance in ofsted inspections was a success across Herefordshire. A third of students were in schools achieving good or outstanding ratings from ofsted.
- Attainment in primary phases had improved significantly and were now in line with national averages.
- Secondary phases remained above national averages.
- Key stage five performance remained strong.
- A list of ten schools which were performing particularly well, it was noted that these were spread across Herefordshire and not concentrated in one area.
- The number of children not in education, employment or training in Herefordshire were better than national averages.
- Performance in phonics had improved, however were still below the national average.
- Key areas of focus included key stage one provision. While broadly in line with the national average this area was still a focus.
- The number of children eligible for free school meals was an area of particular focus.
- There was not a problem with pupil absences, rates were in line with national averages. However there were specific areas which needed improvement. Notably the number of authorised absences was above the national average.

Cooperation with other organisations was summarised, including national leaders in education, school governors in leadership. It was also summarised that Herefordshire council works closely with ofsted and HMI in leadership improvement to address areas of underperformance. Herefordshire Council was working closely with the regional schools commissioner to spread good practice in schools.

It was noted that there are now three teaching schools in the county.

The chairman thanked officers for their presentation and also queried the referral times for speech and language services in Herefordshire. It was noted that much of the responsibility for this area falls under the clinical commissioning group. In response it was noted that this was an area under the remit of a task and finish group reporting to the health overview and scrutiny committee and that this report may be of interest.

A member of the committee made a number of points:

- requested that comparable figures for previous years performance, and national performance data be provided. The assistant director commissioning and education confirmed that such data was contained in the additional presentation to be circulated.
- Highlighted the need to ensure that responses to high rates of authorised absences did not have an inverse effect on unauthorised absences. The head of learning and achievement stated that the causes of high authorised absences were being investigated and that this would be considered.
- Queried the training for parent governors offered by Herefordshire council which had been referenced in the presentation. In response the importance of training for parent governors was stressed but it was noted that much of the responsibility for this rested with the governing body themselves. Herefordshire council offers a mentoring service for parent governors however there are a number of other organisations who provide other training for parent governors.

A member of the committee commented on the final sentence in item 8 referring to the need for early intervention triggered by financial management. It was argued that financial management does not always correlate with poor performance.

A member of the committee queried the use of financial data as an indicator of declining performance and the level of support available for this. In response a number of points were made:

- Council approaches to identifying needs were based heavily on data. Support provided involved spreading good practice between schools.
- Financial issues were often symptomatic of other issues in performance but were not considered in exclusion.
- A team of advisors would previously have a significant role in improvement; however this was now largely carried out by school leaders themselves,

A member of the committee stated that there was often a delay in the production of data, it was queried if a data based approach limited the council's ability to intervene swiftly.

The director of children's wellbeing explained that in the first instance, school improvement was the duty of the governing body. However, data was not the only mechanism used to monitor performance. Soft intelligence was also used to identify problems in schools.

Where a governing body failed to prevent decline in a schools performance, the local authority does have the ability to intervene more significantly. The length of the process of intervention varied considerably between schools.

In response to a question about the use of specialist teachers and education leaders in school improvement, it was explained that the council maintains a network of specialist leaders able to support schools. It was explained that this support is offered indirectly with the council acting as a broker.

A member of the committee noted that authorised absences was a key issue and that a breakdown of how such absences were occurring would be useful information.

A member of the committee suggested that the greater inclusion of parents in the teaching of phonics would improve performance in this area. The head of learning and achievement recognised that this could be good practice. It was noted that this is practice in some schools in the authority however this is not standard. The Vice-Chair stated that these suggestions could be incorporated into the Health Overview and Scrutiny committee's task and finish group on early years provision.

It was clarified that the data presented was the same as the presented to the monthly performance leaders meetings.

There was discussion of the provision of post 16 education.

- A member of the committee noted that while large individual Hereford sixth form colleges were highly performing institutions, the reduction in sixth form provision in surrounding local authorities, market towns, and the reduction in public transport was adding additional pressures.
- The head of learning and achievement described how post 16 performance information was very positive in terms of attainment measures. However, numbers of students achieving two substantial qualifications was below national average. It was described that there were areas in the authority where students would not achieve two substantial qualifications, even in colleges rated good by ofsted.
- The director of children's wellbeing explained that small scale sixth form colleges are not effective for all students, as supported by national evidence. While these

institutions do achieve good levels of performance they do not enable attainment for all students.

- A member of the committee raised concerns that travel times to urban sixth form colleges from rural areas with limited public transport provision would impact performance. The head of learning and achievement stated that issues of this nature had not been identified.
- It was clarified that school outcomes and improvement needs, as well as year on year improvements were key considerations in the schools capital investment strategy.
- A member of the committee stressed the importance of members considering the relationship between the schools capital investment strategy and performance.

The vice-chair noted that there was a national trend in under performance by vulnerable students in rural areas compared to urban, in large part due to greater levels of funding being available in urban areas, however Herefordshire's performance remained high. The assistant director commissioning and education noted that this was a long standing issue which is well noted.

The Vice-Chair asked that a greater amount of geographical information be made available with future performance data.

A member of the committee queried if the unclear role of governing bodies was symptomatic of resourcing for governor training in both academies and maintained schools. It was also queried if this was causing issues in concerns around performance being identified early.

The director of children's wellbeing identified that there was a very real issue with resourcing in local authority improvement functions. It was reiterated that the council cannot intervene directly into academies. This is an issue included in new legislation which was currently going through parliament. It was noted that the department for education currently worked on policy that school improvement works best at a regional and national, rather than local level.

A member of the committee noted that the centre for public scrutiny was producing a paper addressing inconsistencies across local authority responsibilities in education which would be for benefit of the committee. It was suggested that there was a need to clearly understand resourcing for schools improvement.

A member of the committee explained that it was likely that the education support grant would be reduced in the near future. As a result, members should be mindful of the statutory responsibilities in the area. While many activities in school improvement and in maintaining performance were laudable; were funding to be changed, best and fair use of taxpayers money should be considered carefully.

There was discussion of the potential for increasing numbers of English as an Additional Language students in Herefordshire due to incoming asylum seekers. The key points were made:

- The number of Syrian refugees coming into Herefordshire was expected to have a negligible impact on the provision of EAL teaching in Herefordshire with current numbers of EAL students being over 1000 while the number of unaccompanied child refugees was expected to be very small.
- Unaccompanied children were expected to make up the main proportion of refugees coming to Herefordshire. As they would count as children in care, consideration would be given to their needs in school placements as with all children in care.

- Current EAL provision was at a good standard with a number of examples of good practice.
- Concerns were raised that an influx of refugees might be focussed in urban areas and it was stressed that dispersion into rural areas should also be considered. It was noted that due to the relationship between European migration and the agricultural industry in Herefordshire, many rural areas already supported EAL provision.
- Herefordshire has a different situation in terms of EAL provision compared to many other local authorities. Many EAL students in Herefordshire are first generation migrants where as many other local authorities deal with larger number of third or fourth generation students requiring EAL provision.
- Many other local authorities had disbanded their EAL provision in response to budget restraints. It was noted that much of the responsibility for EAL provision rests with schools and not the local authority.

A member of the committee expressed a number of concerns in the governance of academies, notably in reference to the training and tracking of academy governors. In response it was noted that central government was not allowing schools to convert into single academy trust and instead encouraging multi academy trusts. Due to their scale, multi academy trusts have a greater resources for leadership and experience.

A member of the committee queried what proportion of national leaders in education represented academies and maintained schools. The head of learning and achievement confirmed that there was a roughly even distribution.

A member of the committee noted that it was an unfortunate but a reality in the context of local government funding.

A member of the committee noted issues in the use of leadership led improvements in schools and the lack of resources available for the council. It was noted that this could increase the attractiveness of academy status for schools, which may be contrary to the views of the community. In response the director of children's wellbeing noted that Herefordshire does not currently host any national academy trusts but does have multi academy trusts which have developed within Herefordshire. It was noted that governing bodies differ in opinion over the benefits negatives of academy status.

The director of children's wellbeing expressed concern that regional schools commissioners had regional targets for the creation of academies which could affect trends in the conversion of maintained schools.

The chairman queried the number of children eligible for free school meals. The assistant director, commissioning and education stated that this was a long standing issue in Herefordshire. It was identified that work was being done at a regional level and that Herefordshire council was working with HMI in this area. It was also noted that a closing the gap project had been launched in this area.

There was discussion of the need for the committee to present recommendations in relation to the outcomes of a consultation on the changing role of, and resources available for local authorities in the governance and improvement of schools.

Recommends that:

- a) **The committee makes recommendations to cabinet on how they might improve the efficiency of the school improvement framework and strategy, especially in relation to governance in light of likely reduced resourcing in future.**

- b) Council responsibilities for education are clarified and sufficiently resourced. Additionally, that the monitoring of governing bodies in meeting performance standards also be sufficiently resourced. Should the Director at any time find that resources are not sufficient, this must be reported to Cabinet and the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee at once.**
- c) A briefing note be produced in regard to authorised absences to inform future recommendations of the committee.**
- d) The committee consider the findings of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee's early years provision task and finish group in relation to referral rates for speech and language development.**
- e) The committee's suggestions in regard to the teaching of phonics be brought to the attention of the early years task and finish group reporting the health and social care overview and scrutiny committee.**

73. MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (Pages 57 - 64)

The chairman introduced Graham Wynn OBE, Chairman of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, and Gill Hamer, Director of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The chairman and Director of the Marches LEP summarised a number of key points about the organisation:

- The Marches LEP had been one of the first Local Enterprise Partnerships created and that there were now more throughout the country. LEPs had been intended in part to replace the Regional Development Agencies in providing infrastructure, housing and sustainable development.
- The Marches LEP represented a large geographical area and 30,000 businesses of varying size. It was explained that 85% of these businesses had ten employees or fewer.
- The Marches LEP was one of six members of the West Midlands LEPs. The Chairman of the Marches LEP also represented the West Midlands LEP at a national level.

The Director of the Marches LEP summarised a number of areas of LEP activity:

- In 2013 the Marches LEP had developed a strategic economic plan (SEP) including a comprehensive analysis of the Herefordshire economy. This had identified numerous areas of focus including the growth of defence and security industries in Herefordshire.
- a skills plan had been developed in cooperation with Herefordshire Council. This was in the process of being updated. Initial data gathered for the review of these documents suggested that the gap between the Marches and national performance indicators was growing to some extent. As a result the review of these documents was likely to be targeted to appropriately apply for continued funding. A key area of the skills plan under review was post 16 skills.
- The SEP had been used as the basis for funding applications. Funding which had been secured through the SEP was largely being used to generate housing.
- The Marches LEP had secured funding for growth and infrastructure packages for the three main urban areas in the Marches.
- A number of Marches LEP projects were summarised. Notably a large scale investment into skills and training packages, particularly targeting the food and

drinks industries. A tender for a similar package for high tech industries was also in process.

- Work was being done at a regional level in the provision of post 16 education. Notably institutions were being encouraged to cooperate more closely and operate economies of scale.
- Investments were being made in the improvement of broadband provision in Herefordshire.
- Work was being done in the provision of skills training for people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Herefordshire.
- It was explained that the Marches LEP was in the final stages of agreeing the HCA land deal in Telford which was a significant area of LEP activity. Funding provided for this scheme would partly return to the LEP for housing.
- The Growth Hub had been introduced recently with a physical site in Herefordshire and also an online presence provided resources for small businesses.

It was noted that Herefordshire was represented by a number of private business figures from Herefordshire as well as the leader of Herefordshire council. The governance arrangements of the Marches LEP were summarised noting the accountability and assurance framework as well as the Marches Joint committee.

The chairman thanked the representatives of the Marches LEP and invited members of the committee to ask questions.

The chairman noted that the Marches LEP was currently accountable to the Scrutiny Committees of the three local authorities participating. It was queried if it would be more efficient were there to be a single centralised scrutiny committee for this purpose. In response it was explained that at the formation of the LEP there had been opposition to the creation of a combined scrutiny committee. However this was now being considered as part of a review of LEP governance arrangements.

The vice chair queried the prioritisation of resources by the Marches LEP. In response the director of the Marches LEP explained that the accountability and assurance framework outlined the process for prioritisation in how value for money of schemes were appraised and how the impacts of a project was considered. Once projects had been considered following close investigation the Marches board would decide if a project represented good value.

The vice chair noted that Herefordshire had done well in funding from the LEP compared to other members. It was queried how delivery of projects was ensured. In response it was explained that a performance, risk and monitoring committee had been formed which included three board members. The committee received detailed reports on a quarterly basis on individual projects.

The vice chair queried the extent of cooperation between the Marches LEP and surrounding LEPs, notably with the greater Birmingham area. In response it was reiterated that the chair of the Marches LEP also represented the six LEPs in the West Midlands area at the national level, and that these six LEPs met bimonthly. There were 11 LEPs within the Birmingham 'powerhouse' area. The Chair of the Marches LEP was a member of the board on the West Midlands Connect project which was the first major project of this grouping. It was noted that this project represented a substantial geographic area. Within this context it was the role of Marches LEP board members to promote investment within the Marches within the context.

The vice chair queried how medium sized and small businesses were engaged with the LEP and how their understanding of its activity and potential resources were developed. In response it was noted that the Marches LEP represented three separate business

boards who would in turn be represented at the Marches LEP. Additionally, the federation of self-employed and small businesses, as well as the chamber of commerce were engaged with. Growth hubs had been established to provide advice and support to businesses. A range of additional engagement activity was summarised.

It was queried if there was cooperation with Wales in LEP activity. It was noted that this was difficult due to central government policy. However there was cooperation with the Welsh equivalent of LEPs. Within Wales LEP type activity had not been in place for as long as in England. It was noted that with areas of the Marches being hubs for eastern Welsh areas, there were common challenges and interests in cooperation.

A member of the committee noted that there was a lack of understanding of the Marches LEP across Herefordshire, particularly in rural areas. It was noted that Bromyard had been identified as an area with over-dependence on a single industry within the report. It was described that businesses in the area were highly dependent on surrounding road infrastructure and queried what investment would be provided to pre-existing road networks.

In response it was noted that issues in the current network of trunk roads in Herefordshire was a concern. Additionally it was explained that there was investment going into new road infrastructure in nearby Welsh areas and so it would be prudent that this be continued with the road network in the Marches.

The director of the Marches LEP reiterated the importance of diversity in business across the west midlands area and the need to support this.

A member of the committee noted that most of the projects presented by the Marches LEP were centred in large urban areas despite the rural nature of much of the Marches and Herefordshire area. It was queried to what extent were rural areas, market towns and small businesses being considered by the Marches LEP. In response the chairman of the Marches LEP explained that market towns were an important part of the Marches' strategy. In particular, ensuring market towns had sustainable futures was significant. The creation of housing enabling the provision of education was a considerable focus.

The director of the Marches LEP explained that the majority of the first wave of funding from the Marches LEP had been focussed on strategic projects in urban areas. However, it was intended that were a second phase of growth funding to be secured then this would be deployed with a greater focus on rural areas.

Representatives of the Marches LEP noted that providing funding and support for small businesses was a challenge. Much of the funding which had been secured by the LEP for small businesses was for the development of growth hubs. However additional funding was trying to be secured through European Union funding. The chairman welcomed what was being done but expressed disappointment that activity was limited in this area.

A member of the committee noted the lack of awareness on the work of the Marches LEP among members. The activity of the LEP in market towns with speed networking events which had been a success. It was commented that the growth hub had to be based somewhere, while it was unfortunate that this was in Hereford and not in one of the market towns this made geographical sense with Hereford being central to the county. The growth hub had a web presence, phone presence and conducted work in the market towns which was positive.

A member of the committee stressed that members should advertise the work of the LEP to their constituents to allow them to benefit more from the services provided. The chairman suggested that this could be the basis of a recommendation by the committee.

A member of the committee queried the publication of annual reports. While the LEP had been created in 2010, the first annual report was published in 2015.

- The director of the Marches LEP explained that while the LEP had existed since 2010, considerable activity had only really started in 2015 where the LEP had begun to implement projects it had received government funding for.
- Prior to the reports the LEP's web presence and newsletters had been examples of publishing the LEPs work in the public domain. This was an area which the LEP had been asked to strengthen and was being improved upon.
- The chairman of the LEP reiterated that Shropshire County Council was the accountable body for the LEPs funding and accounts and related documentation would be held by them.

A member of the committee queried how many businesses which had been brought into the Hereford enterprise zone had been based in Herefordshire previously. The member also asked for clarification of the wording of what was meant by jobs which had been 'created directly' by the HEZ. Additionally it was queried if there had been any foreign direct investment as the result of the enterprise zone. In response, the director ECC clarified that the HEZ was itself managed by its own board. The majority of businesses within the HEZ were local expansions. One company had come from outside from a neighbouring local authority. There had been a recent piece of FDI from Turkey and the board was working actively to bring in more FDI.

The chairman praised the number of companies in the HEZ which were expansions of Herefordshire businesses.

A member of the committee argued that there were systemic problems with the LEP in terms of governance and accountability:

- It was described that the LEP represented an organisation which was not a legal entity which was responsible for tens of millions of pounds of public money, staffed by a board predominantly comprising of individuals from the private sector. It was argued that this was an underlying issue with all other governance issues identified with the LEP.
- The representation for and local knowledge of Herefordshire within the LEP was held by the leader of the Council as a member of the board and also by officers of the council.
- Concern was raised that the report identified that the leader's annual report to council was the mechanism through which members would be formally updated on the work of the LEP and notifying members in advance over projects which would be coming forward. It was argued that member's and members of the public lack of awareness in the LEPs activity was due to the failure to properly communicate these matters.

A member of the committee queried 2016/2017 projects identified in the report. The south wye transport package quoted a new housing development. It was argued that the Lower Bullingham housing development identified within the council's core strategy was already served by the A49 linkages pre-existing and clarification was sought.

- Director, Economy Corporate and Communities clarified that the Lower Bullingham site was the one identified within the report. While there was a physical linkage between the site and corresponding road networks, as was stated in the core strategy the construction of the housing site was reliant upon the construction of a full bypass. As a result the construction of the next leg of the bypass which was the southern link road was essential to this.

A member of the committee noted that the LEP not being a legal entity may cause some concern among the public. It was asked if the LEP was still obliged to respond to freedom of information and similar requests within its status:

- The director of the Marches LEP clarified that in reality, were a member of the public to request information on Marches LEP projects via a freedom of information request or similar mechanism this would be channelled through the relevant council in coordination with the LEP. While the LEP was not legally subject to freedom of information requests the Marches LEP did provide background information and support investigations such as FOI requests and would cooperate in the formation of responses.
- In response the member of the committee stressed that this represented an anomaly in the accountability of a body responsible for large sums of public money.

A member of the committee asked for clarification of the exact hierarchy between the marches joint committee and the Marches LEP board. The joint committee had been identified as being a mechanism to sign off board decisions, however it was queried what powers the joint committee had to block recommendations.

- The director of the marches LEP clarified that the Marches Board made recommendations which it was then the responsibility of the Marches Joint Committee to approve. However were the joint committee not satisfied with recommendations as presented it was the responsibility of the leaders of the three participating councils to decide whether to approve recommendations or to return them for further consideration by the board. It was explained that this had not happened at that time, however, key decision making had only in reality begun in 2015 with key projects and initiatives going forward.
- The chairman of the LEP clarified why the LEP was not a legal entity. The marches LEP was unique given its representation by the business sector, many other LEPs had emerged out of pre-existing bodies however the Marches LEP had not. At the time of its formation there had been a number of structures for LEPs available, when advice on best practice had been sought from government it had not been recommended to form a legal entity as it had been preferred to have funding accountable by being managed by a local authority. It was described that an external organisation had analysed the Marches LEP's governance arrangements and identified that the Marches LEP had made improvements in its governance arrangements.
- In response the chairman sought clarification that Shropshire council was the accountable body for much of the Marches funding, this was confirmed by the director of the Marches LEP who also clarified that for individual projects Herefordshire and Telford Councils were also accountable.

It was asked in response to public question 8, while the answer stated that LEP accounts would be available on Shropshire County Council's website, a member of the committee had not been able to locate these and Shropshire County Council had not been able to provide these upon the member's request.

- The director of the Marches LEP explained that it would be investigated as to why account information had not been available or could not be located on Shropshire Council's website as they had been in communication with the relevant information in the production of responses to questions from members of the public.
- The member of the committee expressed the importance of these documents being clearly available as they were within the public interest.

- The chairman suggested that the member propose a recommendation on these matters.

A member of the committee queried why contracts for the south wye transport package had been signed recently despite an assertion in previous Marches Board minutes that this would need to be done earlier. In response the Director, Economy, Communities and Corporate clarified that the dates referred to in the minutes concerned were no longer relevant. There had been uncertainty over the confirmation of funding due to elections in 2015. Confirmation of funding had been received subsequently enabling contracts to be signed.

A member of the committee discussed the importance of small and medium size businesses and noted the success of LEP events in market towns. The need to focus on market towns going forward was stressed. The cabinet member economy and corporate services emphasised the need for plans to be business led.

The difficulties in engaging with small businesses were stressed, however through the LEPs activity and the growth hub more small businesses were now being engaged with than had been previously. Other than reinforcing this engagement activity it was difficult to suggest other actions that could be taken. The next phase of funding would also allow for a greater level of engagement with small businesses and market towns, additionally work with the business board and enterprise zone would allow these groups to identify their own priorities.

The chairman of the Marches LEP stressed that at all opportunities the LEP tried to engage the business board given their representation. Research was being done to try and better help engagement with the business community. However working with small businesses was difficult. The time of small business owners is very limited and engaging with these groups would remain a challenge. However, the LEP will continue to pursue cooperation with these groups as they are vital to growth in the county.

In response to a query by a member it was clarified that the Leominster enterprise zone is not a special enterprise zone despite the suggestion from the park's name. As such it does not receive the with the privileges enterprise zone status this allows as is the case with the Hereford enterprise zone.

A member of the committee noted that due to the wording of the committees agenda they could not adequately word a recommendation in relation to some governance issues which had been raised by the committee. It was noted that as Herefordshire Council was the body responsible for the governance of the Marches LEP recommendations on relation to the need for the LEP to function in an open and transparent fashion, and for Herefordshire Council to communicate this in a concurrent fashion were not within the remit of this meeting of the general overview and scrutiny committee.

Resolved that:

- a) The committee commend and encourage further the engagement of small businesses within the activity of the Marches LEP.**
- b) The work of the Marches LEP in cooperation with neighbouring and other Local Enterprise Partnerships, in particular the equivalent bodies across national borders be encouraged.**
- c) That the Marches LEP ensure that the delivery of accounts and reporting is made more clear and the availability of such documentation to the public is ensured.**

- d) **That the committee recommend to the board of the Marches LEP that a summary of accounts be published in conjunction with the annual report on the activity of the Marches LEP.**

74. WORK PROGRAMME

The chairman noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy Task and Finish Group was due to report back to the committee at the next meeting. The importance of the community infrastructure levy for Herefordshire's development was stressed.

The chairman explained that a work programming and training session for members was being arranged for the coming months as well as questioning skills training. The chairman welcomed the opportunity for members of the committee to have a greater role in the work programming of the committee.

The chairman discussed work which had been done investigating gypsy and travellers sites provision within the county. The chairman stressed the legal and moral duty Herefordshire council had in this area.

It was discussed that the inclusion of the forward plan had been raised at the previous committee. The chairman stressed that this would be included with the upcoming work programming session.

A member of the committee noted a number of grammatical errors within the work programme document within the agenda.
The committee approved the work programme.

RESOLVED: That the draft work programme be noted

75. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 10 May 2016 at 10.00 am.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

CHAIRMAN

The following questions were received before the identified deadline (4.00pm Thursday 3 March 2016)

Questions from members of the public regarding item 8, Local Transport Plan

Question and Response

Question 1, from Mrs E Morwiecka

I understand that the Marches LEP have now adopted the Dept. for Transport business case value for money assessments proposals within the LEP Assurance Framework. This should mean that transport spending has to be prioritised not on projects with "high" BCRs, (benefit cost ratios) but with the "highest."

A Benefit to Cost Ratio of 3.55 for the South Wye Transport Package was reported in the Strategic Outline Business Case submitted to the LEP. With a Present Value Benefit of £92.48 million this BCR is improbably high for a new road carrying as little traffic as the Southern Link Road (AADT 6,500). Separate BCRs had not been calculated for any of the elements of the Sustainable Max option or each of the Southern Link Road options. The Marches LEP agreed allocating funding for the Southern Link Road in Herefordshire on the basis of this single BCR .

- a) Will the Marches LEP now require Herefordshire Council to calculate BCRs for alternative transport options to the Southern Link Road such as improved sustainable transport measures within the South Wye area?

Response:

The approval of funding for the scheme through the Growth Fund recognised that Government considered that the scheme demonstrated value for money. Recognising the importance of the scheme, the Department for Transport (DfT) has included it within its portfolio of 'retained' schemes and is directly overseeing the development and delivery of the scheme. Whilst the LEP continues to take an interest in this important scheme, Herefordshire Council is working directly with the DfT to take forward the scheme and develop the full business case, in accordance with DfT requirements. It is therefore not appropriate or necessary for the LEP to separately request Herefordshire Council carry out further assessments.

- b) Will the Marches LEP support alternatives to road building in Herefordshire if they are shown to deliver better value for money?

Response:

The Marches LEP promotes a range of projects that assist in meeting economic growth priorities including additional jobs and housing. Projects range from workforce skills and training initiatives, Higher Education provision, installation of Broadband infrastructure, to business support needs and infrastructure to open up housing and employment sites. Appraisal of projects will assess any application for transport, housing or skills/employment against the priorities agreed in the SEP and any national funding criteria that exist in relation to the funding scheme.

Question 2, from Mrs E Morwiecka

The previous Marches LEP Transport Assurance Framework Feb 2014 required transport scheme business cases to not only “demonstrate high value for money but also contribute to economic growth, reducing carbon emissions, reducing social exclusion, improving safety and promoting health / well being”. The Parsons Brinkerhoff report to Cabinet on the Southern Link road options clearly stated that “all scheme options will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gases due to vehicles travelling greater distances and at higher speeds”; “All route variations will have an adverse impact on walking and cycling levels in the rural area, discouraging these activities by increasing severance on existing routes and loss of rural amenity through the introduction of traffic noise and proximity to traffic”; “The four SLR options are assessed to have a moderate adverse impact on physical activity.”

a) If the Marches LEP is still committed to promoting sustainable growth by supporting transport projects that reduce carbon emissions, reduce social exclusion, improve safety and promote health and well-being would they please provide examples of proposed transport projects that meet these criteria and the way in which they do this?

Response:

The LEP remains committed to promoting sustainable growth. Indeed, elements of the South Wye Transport Package and the Hereford City Centre Transport Package will contribute to improving provision for pedestrians and cyclists as part of an integrated package of proposals to address the barriers to economic growth. The LEP will continue to consider schemes to deliver economic growth alongside wider benefits.

b) How does construction of the Southern Link Road ahead of any sustainable transport measures meet delivery of the Marches LEP criteria for “sustainable growth” and ensure that ALL transport users, including non-car owners, benefit from Marches LEP funding?

Response:

The South Wye Transport Package has been developed to provide an integrated package of measures to address the transport issues within the area and support economic growth, including at the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The package has been developed in accordance with Department for Transport guidance and includes a package of measures to be introduced to improve conditions for all transport users including pedestrians and cyclists. Whilst the scheme has been retained by the Department for Transport, which is overseeing its development, the LEP is satisfied that the scheme will contribute to our aims for sustainable growth.

Question 3, from Mrs E Morwiecka

The Local Development Order for the Hereford Enterprise Zone relates to minimising the growth of traffic on the A49 (part of the Strategic Network). However, the Parsons Brinkerhoff report route assessment states for each of the Southern Link road options “Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels”.

a) For what reasons is the Marches LEP looking to support the increase of traffic on the A49 in Hereford?

b) How does increasing traffic on the A49, contrary to the Local Development Order for the Hereford Enterprise Zone, promote growth at the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone?

Response:

The development of the South Wye Transport Package, including the Southern Link Road has included detailed traffic modelling to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme in relation to the Hereford Enterprise Zone. It is well understood that within the current highway infrastructure there are constraints upon development at the EZ due to the existing traffic conditions on the A49 and surrounding highways. The provision of the Southern Link Road as part of an overall South Wye Transport Package will enable further development to take place at the Enterprise Zone. This is because this scheme provides traffic relief and would improve the operation of the A49, reducing the capacity constraints and assisting in releasing development. The provision of the southern link road will be complemented by a range of sustainable transport measures within the south wye area.

Question 4, from Mrs E Morwiecka

With the opportunities available to reduce travelling by improving broadband access what support is the Marches LEP giving to improve broadband to the various Enterprise parks across Herefordshire?

Response:

The Marches LEP has secured £7.7m, through Growth Deal 2, towards rolling out the Broadband programme. This is estimated to secure provision for a further 39,000 premises and enable the creation of 300 jobs across the Marches. The programme does seek to target key industrial parks where possible. In Herefordshire and Shropshire, where there are some of the highest home based and self-employed business sectors nationally, roll out across rural areas is also essential.

Question 5, from Mrs E Morwiecka

The Marches LEP is apparently looking to engage with the “Midlands Engine for Growth”, which lies to the East of the Marches area.

a) What transport improvements are being promoted to improve connectivity with the transport networks across the Midlands?

Response:

The Marches LEP is one of 11 LEPs and 26 councils that are working together as partners within the Midlands Engine which covers an area from the eastern border of Wales to the Wash. Part of the programme of work is the development of a Strategy for Transportation by 2017, called ‘Midlands Connect’. Individual schemes to be promoted as part of this programme of work have not yet been identified. Please also note the response to question 6 below which mentions the work the council are undertaking as a partner in West Midlands Rail Ltd.

b) How does promoting the A49 ahead of other transport projects improve engagement with the rest of the Midlands area?

Response:

As indicated in response to 5 a) the formal process of identifying schemes for consideration as part of Midlands Connects has not yet been undertaken but the Marches LEP is already actively engaging with the Midland Connect project and will seek to promote the interests of the Marches area and secure support for additional investment as and when opportunities arise. Schemes which assist the Marches main economic centres including Hereford play their role within the Midlands economy will be of value to the Midlands Engine. The LEP maintain that, as a key connectivity route linking the north and south of the Marches, the A49 is integral to communication within the LEP, makes a contribution to wider transportation linkages, and is considered to be a key piece of transport infrastructure.

Question 6, from Mrs E Morwiecka

With overcrowding on many of the trains across Herefordshire and with its train operators recently named the country's worst for delays, what is the Marches LEP doing to improve rail services between Herefordshire, the Marches and the rest of the country?

Response:

According to the most recent punctuality data for train operating companies published by Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales and Great Western are more punctual than the national indicator average for all 23 rail franchises and London Midland was only 8th least punctual of 23 operators.

Marches LEP authorities are actively engaged with a number of cross border rail forums and seek to secure service improvements through these and direct contact with operating companies and DfT and Welsh Assembly. The LEP will also take opportunities to actively promote rail service improvements as the opportunity arises through the re-franchising process.

The Marches LEP commissioned the Marches Rail Study to review of rail provision in the Marches area to the period 2043. This Study has provided evidence of forecast passenger capacity problems which could constrain future rail use. It identified the greatest future capacity constraint issue (within the Marches area) being on the Hereford to Birmingham line. This study will support the LEP and Herefordshire Council's future lobbying opportunities for greater investment in rail infrastructure.

All of the constituent transport authorities of the Marches are also partners in the West Midlands Rail Ltd – a transport authority partnership which is seeking to take over responsibility for this franchise (currently operated by London Midland and managed directly by the DfT). If this is successful the Marches LEP transport authorities will gain greater control and influence to secure service improvements within the area and improvements on longer distance journeys and service coordination.

Question 7, from Mrs E Morwiecka

With all business rate income from the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone being paid to the Marches LEP, please confirm how much this has been worth to the Marches LEP in the last 2 years and how this is forecast to grow over the next 5 years?

Response:

The annual rates cumulative growth up to 2015/16 totalled £240k pa, this is forecast to increase to a cumulative total of £4,896k by 2020/21.

In accordance with the LEP Board recommendation of the 17 November 2014 meeting, the LEP is due to receive £100k per year from 2016/17 onwards, towards operational costs with any business rate uplift over and above that being reinvested within the Enterprise Zone in order to expedite build out.

Question 8, from Mrs E Morwiecka

The Marches LEP has been in existence since 2010. In accordance with transparency and accountability in the public sector when using taxpayers money, many LEPs publish annual financial statements. I welcome that the Marches LEP is proposing to publish an annual report in April 2016. However, comparisons to previous year's figures are always welcome. a) Where can taxpayers find the financial reports and annual statements for the Marches LEP for previous years?

Response:

The Marches LEP is not a registered company / legal entity and therefore does not produce accounts for publication. Shropshire Council is the Accountable Body for the LEP and the LEP's income and expenditure can be found in the audited annual accounts of Shropshire Council, which are published on 30 September each year.

Question 9 , from Mrs P Mitchell

What is the function of the Local Assurance Framework regarding a) the delivery of schemes promoted by the LEP authorities, and with respect to Herefordshire in particular, b) the delivery of the Southern Link Road?

Response:

The Local Assurance Framework sets out the key practice and standards for the Partnership and explains organisational management and operations, which build upon the local government system of financial management, as required by Government. The mechanism followed for project appraisal, evaluation and business case development is the Treasury Green Book. Reviews are undertaken through the Performance, Risk and Monitoring Committee and through auditing which follows local government requirements.

Question 10, from Mrs P Mitchell

What mechanisms does the LEP have to review the functioning of the Local Assurance Framework with respect to a) project appraisal, b) the Independent Technical Evaluation and c) the business case development of transport infrastructure schemes?

Response:

Please see the response to the above question.

Question 11, from Mrs P Mitchell

What procedures does the LEP have in place to address concerns on the part of councillors or members of the public about the evidence base, assumptions, strategic fit and conformity with national guidance and policy of schemes prioritised for delivery by the LEP in the SEP?

Response:

Assurance is provided through Treasury Green Book Appraisal and the approval of the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee to any schemes put forward for consideration by Government. Government takes the final decision on areas of work which support national policy guidance and might be funded for delivery.

Question 12, from Mrs P Mitchell

In its role of enabling the delivery of major infrastructure schemes, does the LEP submit evidence to planning inquiries that result from transport infrastructure schemes it has prioritised?

Response:

The LEP has not currently submitted evidence to planning enquiries but can choose to make a written representations/submit a letter, like any other stakeholder or member of the public.

Question 13, from Ms V Wegg-Prosser

What are the Committee's concerns about the functionality of the Marches LEP in the light of the reassurances minuted [p.3] by the Board on 24/11/15? The reassurances are that :-

“... Government had put LEPs in funds to assist developers who have good housing / job-creating projects that were stalled for financial or other reasons. It was expected that LEPs would be funding schemes that had failed to attract funding from other sources. It was expected that developers would make a profit. The role of the LEP was that of enabler.”

Response:

The LEP cannot speak for the Committee. The minute referred to above makes reference to a specific loan fund (in our area it is called the Marches Investment Fund), financed by Government in 2012 in each LEP area, which came with set government guidance around application and use.

Question 14, from Ms V Wegg-Prosser

Can it be confirmed that the Marches LEP Group Structure presented in Appendix 1 is up to date? For example, the document suggests that the Local Transport Body is part of the structure, yet it was minuted [p.5] at the 24/11/15 Board meeting that the LTB was being replaced with an advisory sub group.

Response:

The Group Structure in the Accountability and Assurance Framework is currently up to date, although some Chair names need to be updated. However at the LEP Board meeting on 26 January 2016 it was agreed to recommend that the Local Transport Body be replaced by a Transport Sub Group. The DfT gave greater control over local transport investment to newly formed Local Transport Bodies in early 2012. The government then removed that ability to influence from LTBs in 2013 and gave it to LEPs. In following months, most LTBs disbanded. The Board's recommendation to disband the formal Body will be incorporated as an amendment within the Assurance Framework following approval by the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee in April.

Question 15, from Ms V Wegg-Prosser

Have the Growth Deal contracts (enabling the 2016/17 release of funds) been signed, and if so, when?

Response:

The contracts are in the process of being signed now. The South Wye Transport Package Project was signed on 18 February 2016.

Question 16, from Ms V Wegg-Prosser

Could the GOSC please obtain a copy of the report on outputs and business rate income for the HEZ which the Performance Risk and Monitoring Committee asked to see in October 2015, and ensure that Herefordshire Council, without delay, place on its website links to ALL the Marches LEP Board Minutes and Reports (including this PRMC one) which, in accordance with its Assurance Framework, demonstrate the LEP's accountability to members of the public via Herefordshire Council. Delays in placing such reports etc on the Marches LEP website should not be tolerated.

Response:

Minutes are signed off at the following meeting and are thereafter placed on the website. Appropriate links have been added to the Herefordshire Council website to aid transparency and avoid the need for duplication.

Receipt of the following supplementary questions was agreed by the Chairman

Questions from members of the public regarding item 8, Local Transport Plan

Question and Response

Supplementary Question 1, in reference to Question 2 from Mrs E Morawiecka

In the Call in of the Cabinet Decision by Herefordshire Council on 18th Dec 2014 the minutes record that Herefordshire Council stated *“Subject to a preferred route being selected, this would be progressed alongside a complementary package of measures to achieve the overall objectives of the package. The complementary measures include provision for cyclists and pedestrians, public transport and public realm measures and will be outlined within the planning submission for the SLR element of the package. the delivery of these elements will be essential to the success of the overall SWTP and funding has been secured to enable them to be delivered alongside the SLR.”*

The current planning application by Herefordshire Council for the Southern Link Road includes no complementary package of measures for cyclists, pedestrians, public transport, etc. which are identified by the Council as essential to the success of the South Wye Transport Package. Apparently *“The LEP is satisfied that the scheme will contribute to our aims for sustainable growth.”*

To ensure the “complementary package of measures” are being progressed and delivered alongside the road project would the Marches LEP please confirm:-

- a) what exactly are the complementary measures that have been designed and agreed with the Marches LEP to support the current planning application for the Southern Link Road and to meet the aim of contributing to sustainable growth?**

Response: Proposals for a package of complementary active travel measures are currently being developed by the Councils consultants and will be consulted on in the autumn subject to the determination of the planning application for the Southern Link Road. Measures being considered include improved landscaping on existing routes in the South Wye area, provision for cyclists on these roads and improved pedestrian facilities to reduce severance in the area. Public exhibitions will be held later in the year to set out possible measures and encourage feedback from the public which will inform the preferred package of measures and the detailed design of these schemes.

- b) to ensure social inclusion for all, including non-car owners, how much of the SWTP funding allocated by the Marches LEP is ring fenced for delivery of these complementary measures, separately from delivery of the road?**

Response: The estimated cost of the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) is £34m with cost of the Southern Link Road (SLR) estimated at £28m and Active Travel Measures estimated costs of £6m.

- c) how much Growth funding has been allocated by the Marches LEP for funding the road extension from the A465 to the B4349, which was not part of the original SWTP?**

Response: The Marches LEP has allocated Growth funding of £27m to the overall SWTP. This includes a road scheme from the A49 to the B4349 and a package of complementary measures as outlined above. The grant is not separated out to individual sections of the road scheme.

Supplementary Question 2, in reference to Question 3 from Mrs E Morawiecka

The answer states “this scheme provides traffic relief and would improve the operation of the A49, reducing the capacity constraints and assisting in releasing development”.

This answer seems to be at odds with the traffic modelling for the Southern Link Road produced by the Council’s Consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff who clearly state that

“Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels”.

Would the Marches LEP please explain what information they have to support their answer, in particular:-

a). how increased traffic along the A49 will provide traffic relief and improve the operation of the A49?

Response: The text quoted in the above question is from South Wye Transport Package Preferred Option Report (November 2014). The increase in traffic referred to takes place over short sections of the A49, focused on the approaches to the proposed junction with the Rotherwas Access Road. This reflects traffic choosing to travel via this section of road to access the new SLR. For most of the A49, and more generally within the local area, there is a reduction in traffic flow. The planning application for the SLR sets out the transport benefits of the SLR and demonstrates:

- Significant reduction in traffic on rural rat runs between the A465 and the A49, including Haywood Lane, B4348 and lane between B4348 and Haywood (with consequent increases in traffic on routes leading to the SLR roundabouts);
- Significant journey time improvement on journeys to the HEZ from south-west of Hereford in comparison to the existing route via Walnut Tree Avenue and Holme Lacy Road (Approximately a 50% reduction in travel time). The redistribution of traffic also leads to a modest journey time improvement along the existing route;
- An overall reduction in traffic flows on key urban sections of the A49(T), the A465, Walnut Tree Avenue, Holme Lacy Road, and the newly-created cul-de-sac section of Clehonger Road; and
- Without the SLR, journeys times on key corridors in South Hereford will continue to worsen significantly over time).

b). how increased traffic on the A49 promotes growth at the Hereford Enterprise Zone, when this is contrary to the Local Development Order?

Response: Already answered in the response above.

Supplementary Question 3, in reference to Question 7 from Mrs E Morawiecka

a). where has the Marches LEP accounted for these business rate receipts please?

Response: Business rate income is required to be accounted for by the authority receiving the funds, in this case Herefordshire Council, with the LEP element separately identified. The income is recorded in the councils collection fund.

The Marches LEP has not yet received any business rate uplift.

b). With the Chancellor’s changes to business rates announced in his Budget 2016, cutting income available to Herefordshire Council for local, accountable public services how binding is the contract between the Marches LEP and Herefordshire Council over the use of business rates income from the HEZ?

Response: The provisions are set by the Local Government Finance Act 2012, not the local area partners.

c) With the creation of just 254 jobs net to date since the Zone was created, is the total anticipated spend over the period of the project the best use of business rate income for Herefordshire Council and its' residents?

Response: As previously commented a proportion of business rates generated by the Enterprise Zone are being reinvested within the Enterprise Zone in order to expedite build out, this will generate further business rate income from the Enterprise Zone and lead to the creation, when fully built out, of approximately 4,200 private sector jobs. The Council, and the LEP, consider this to represent the best use of the business rate income generated via the Enterprise Zone mechanism.

Supplementary Question 4, in reference to Question 8 from Mrs E Morawiecka

Please note that the financial statements 2014/15 for Shropshire Council state *“The Council is part of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) along with Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin. The Council acts as accountable body for the LEP and therefore receives grant income on behalf of the LEP and processes expenditure in line with the grant schemes. The Council has concluded that the role of accountable body is to be deemed as an agent, and therefore the net grant held should not be accounted within the Council’s accounts.”*. **(Link to financial statements is here**

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/1799488/Statement-of-Accounts-2014-15.pdf> a). a). Why does the answer from the Marches LEP contradict the audited accounts of Shropshire Council?

Response: As stated in our response to question 8 above, Marches LEP are not a registered company / legal entity and therefore is not required to produce accounts for publication. Shropshire Council does assume the role of accountable body for the LEP and ensures that all transactions relevant to the LEP are accounted for separately to Shropshire Council’s own accounts. In line with CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, the Council does not account for the full Marches LEP’s transactions in its Statement of Accounts. The Council does however, along with Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire Council, account fully for any grant funding they receive from the Marches LEP to fund specific projects. Each Council’s set of accounts are subject to external audit.

There has been no requirement for the Marches LEP to produce its own set of accounts since it was formed in 2010, however due to the significant increase in funding received by the Marches LEP in 2015/16 due to the Growth Deal Funding now being processed through the LEP, it has been agreed that accounts should be prepared in order to be fully transparent about how funding is being committed and spent. Therefore the statement of accounts for the 2015/16 financial year will be produced in June 2016 and then issued to the Board before formal publication on the website.

b). The Marches LEP Accountability and Assurance Framework states (para 5.5) “Account for these funds in such a way that they are separately identifiable from the accountable body’s own funds and provide financial statements to the LEP Partnership Board as required”. To confirm compliance with its own procedures and that of the Accountable bodies, at what meetings of the Marches LEP board were the financial statements for the organisation presented by Shropshire Council and approved by the board members of the Marches LEP?

Response: The Marches LEP board financial statement for 2015/16 will go to the 26 July LEP Board.

c) Please confirm the expenditure against budget and the output performance of the SEP growth programme to date?

Response: This information will be published in the LEP Annual Report on 27 April 2016.

Supplementary Question 5, in reference to Question 11 from Ms P Mitchell

Who are the people in Government who are indicated in the final sentence in the reply to Question 11, that is people who have responsibility for addressing concerns raised by councillors and members of the public about schemes prioritised for delivery the LEP in the SEP. Please provide the names and contact addresses for the appropriate people in all the relevant departments of Government.

Response: As previously commented the government takes the final decision on areas of work which support national policy guidance and might be funded for delivery. The LEP puts forward schemes for consideration by government. The LEP are not made aware of individual civil servants who are responsible for reviewing submitted schemes or for addressing concerns raised by councillors and members of the public about schemes prioritised for delivery by the LEP.

Supplementary Question 6, in reference to Question 1a and Question 15 from Ms V Wegg-Prosser

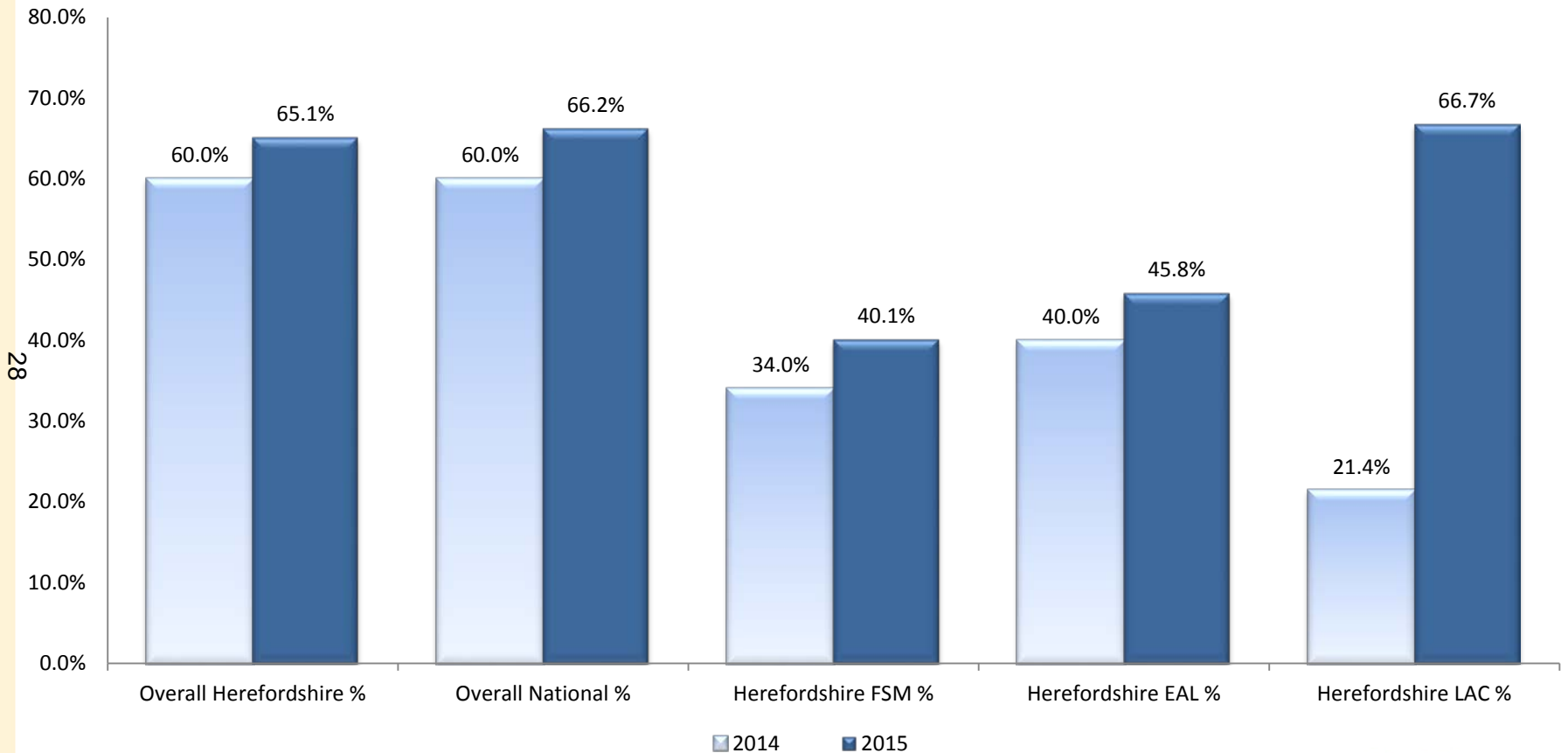
Noting that the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee met on 19 March 2015 and then not until 15 February 2016, and that this is the accountable body for which Herefordshire Council provides governance support, and that (in accordance with the answer to Q 1 A) the development and delivery of the SWTP is being directly overseen by the Department for Transport, what exactly was the nature of the signing of the SWTP contract (answer to Q 15) by the Marches LEP when planning permission has not been granted, the sustainable transport elements (fundamental to the funding approval of the scheme) have not been described or costed, the minerals and waste costs have not been estimated, and indeed the choice of route is still in doubt? Did the signing simply involve moving the scheme away from the LEP and passing it over to the DfT?

Response: The government funding for the SWTP scheme is routed via the LEP (through Shropshire Council as Accountable Body) and the LEP has therefore contracted with Herefordshire Council, as the recipient of the funds, as noted in the response to question 15. Effectively the LEP are the conduit of government funding to Herefordshire Council following the decision taken by DfT to support the SWTP project as a retained scheme.

Learning & Achievement

2015 Performance Data

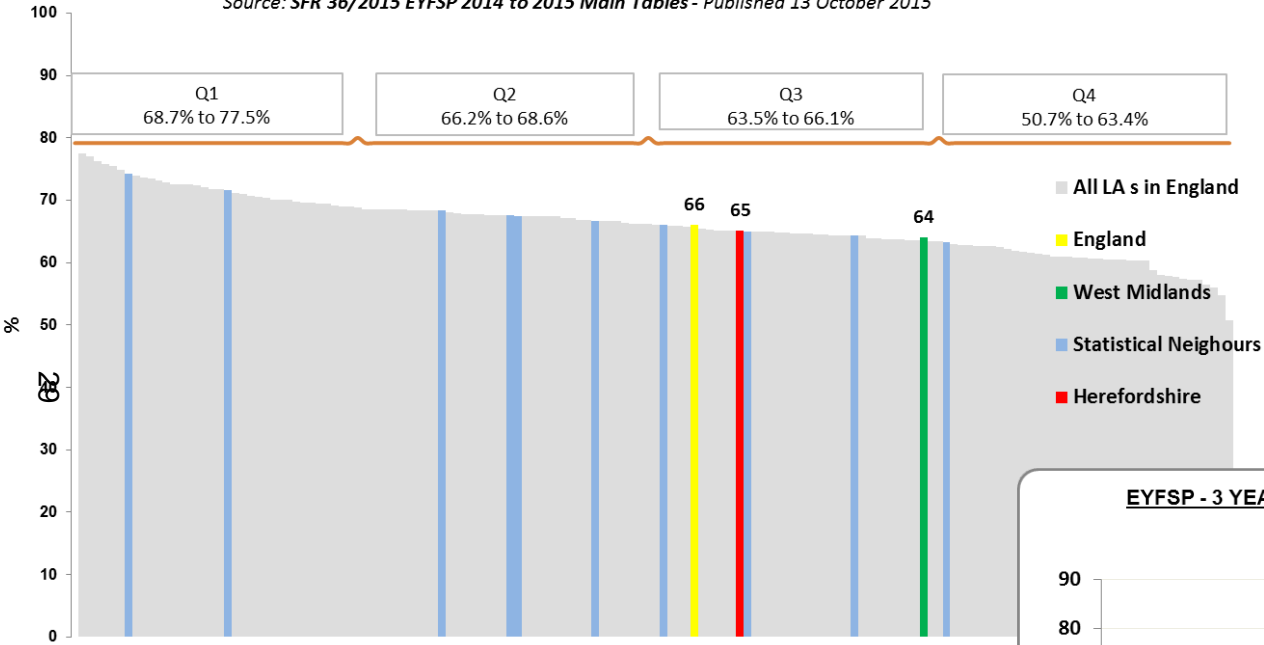
EYFS – GLD



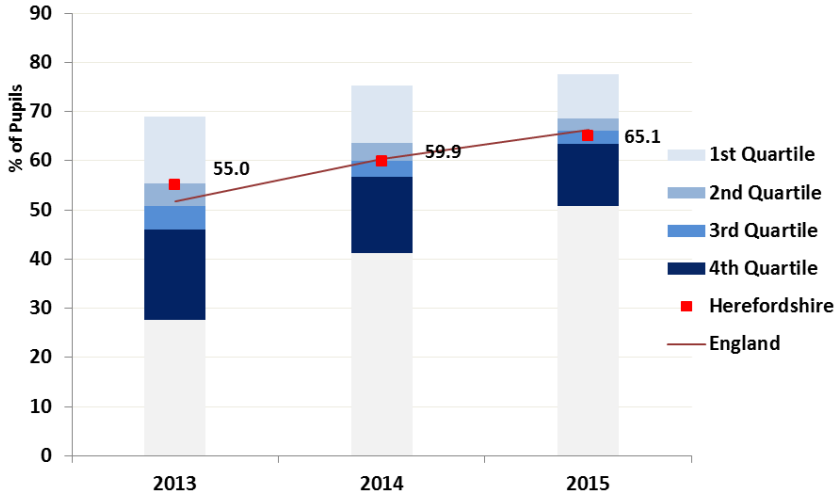
Overview

EYFSP 2015: % achieving a Good Level of Development

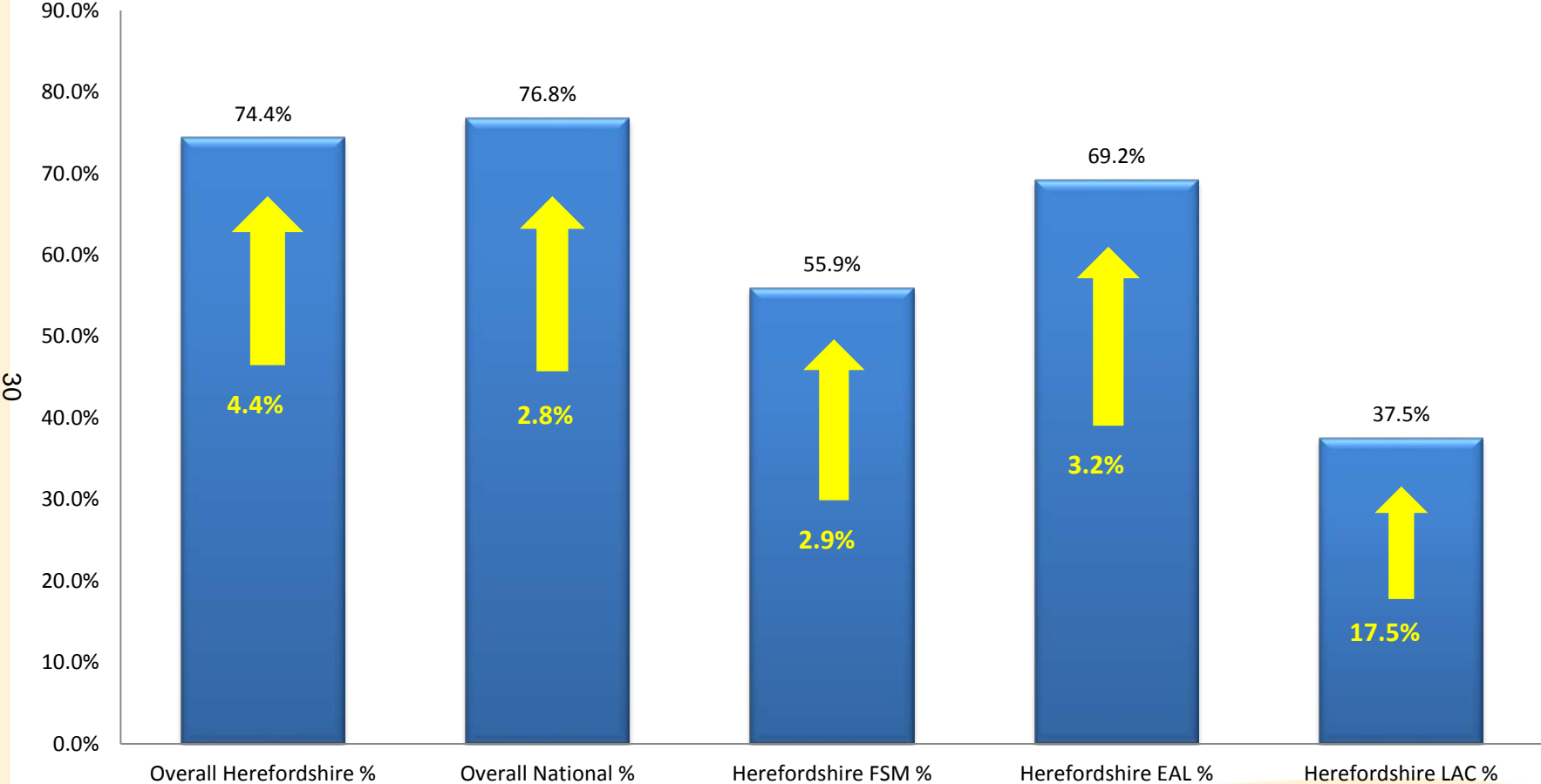
Source: SFR 36/2015 EYFSP 2014 to 2015 Main Tables - Published 13 October 2015



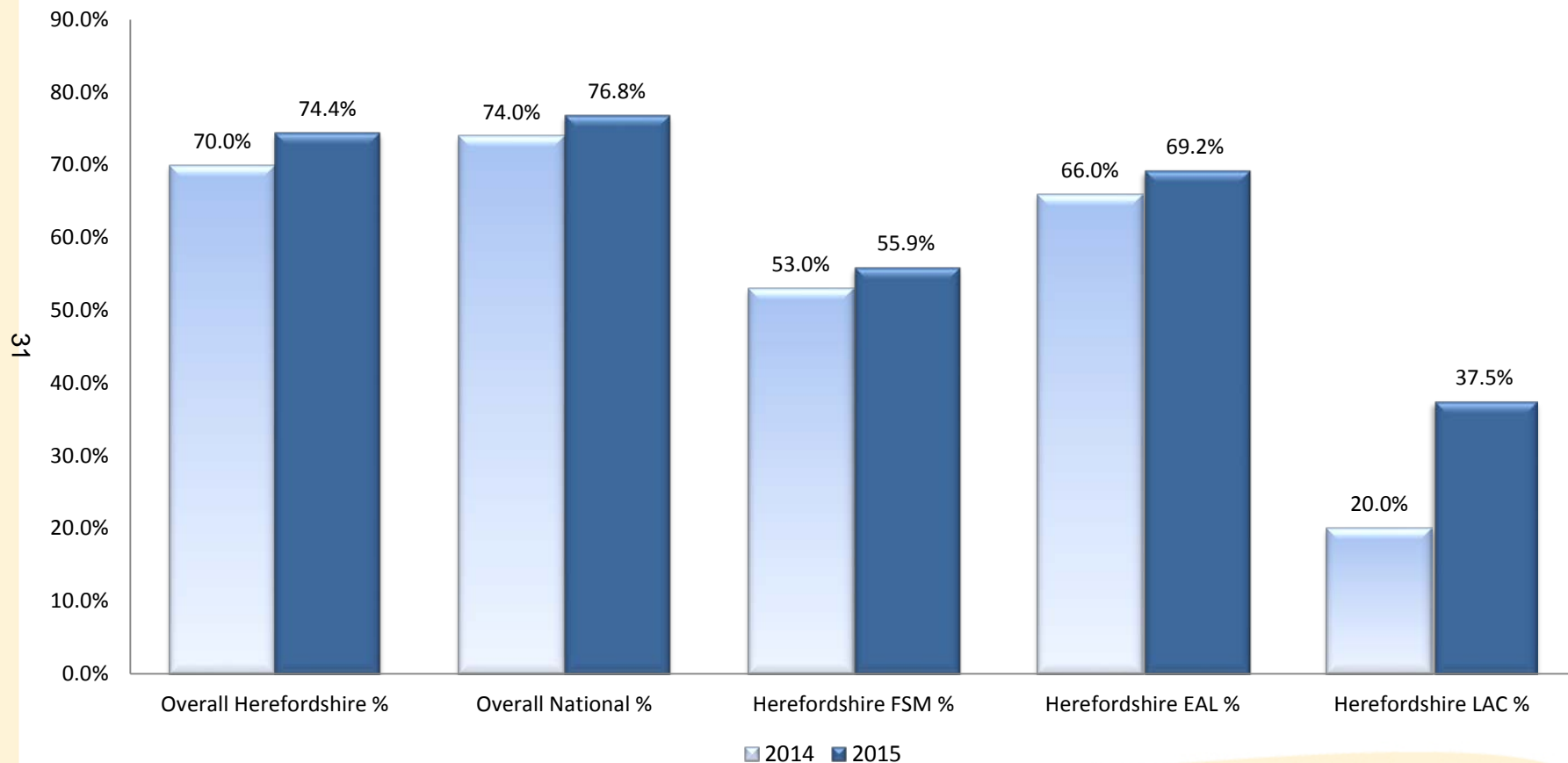
EYFSP - 3 YEAR TRENDS % of All Pupils achieving a Good Level of Development



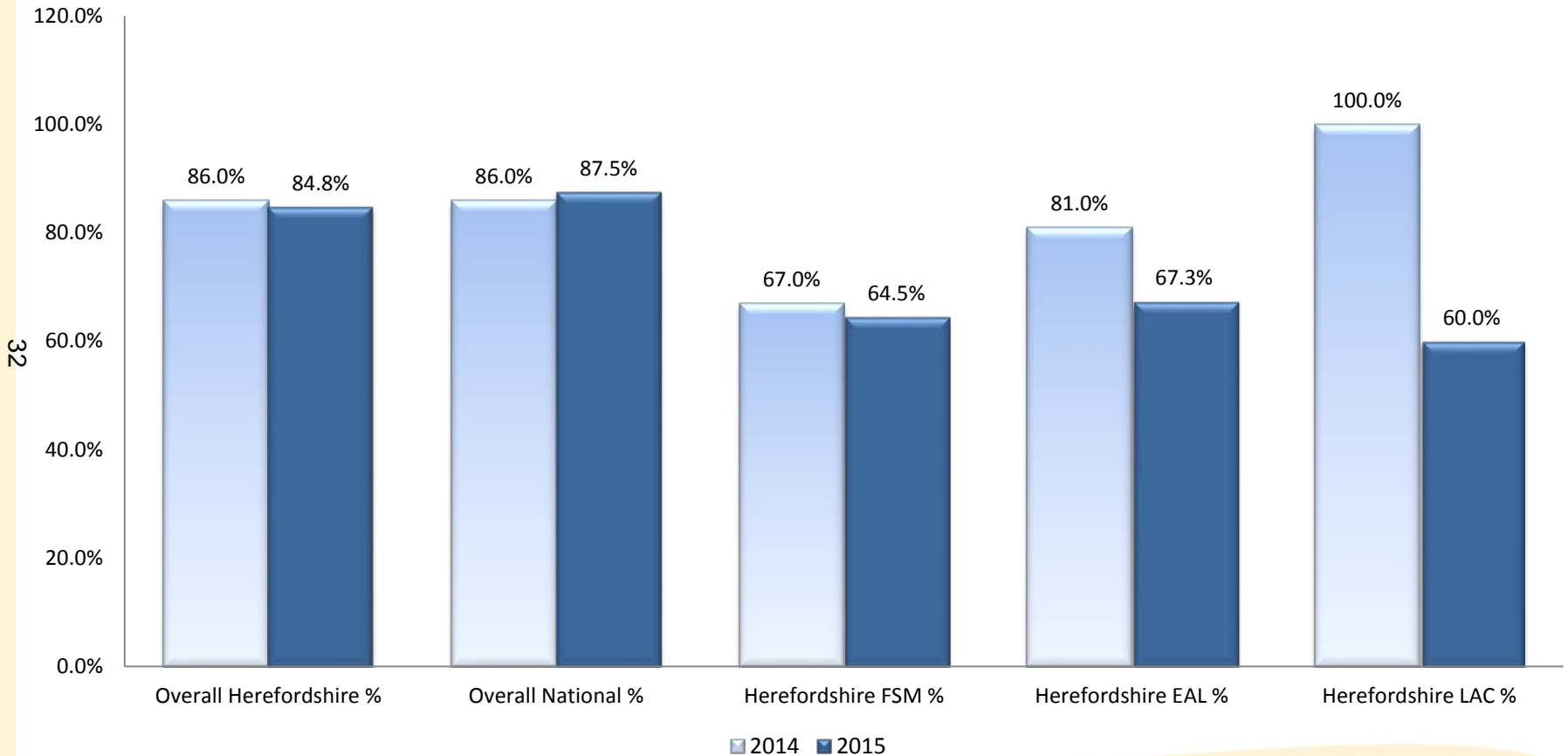
Year 1 Phonics



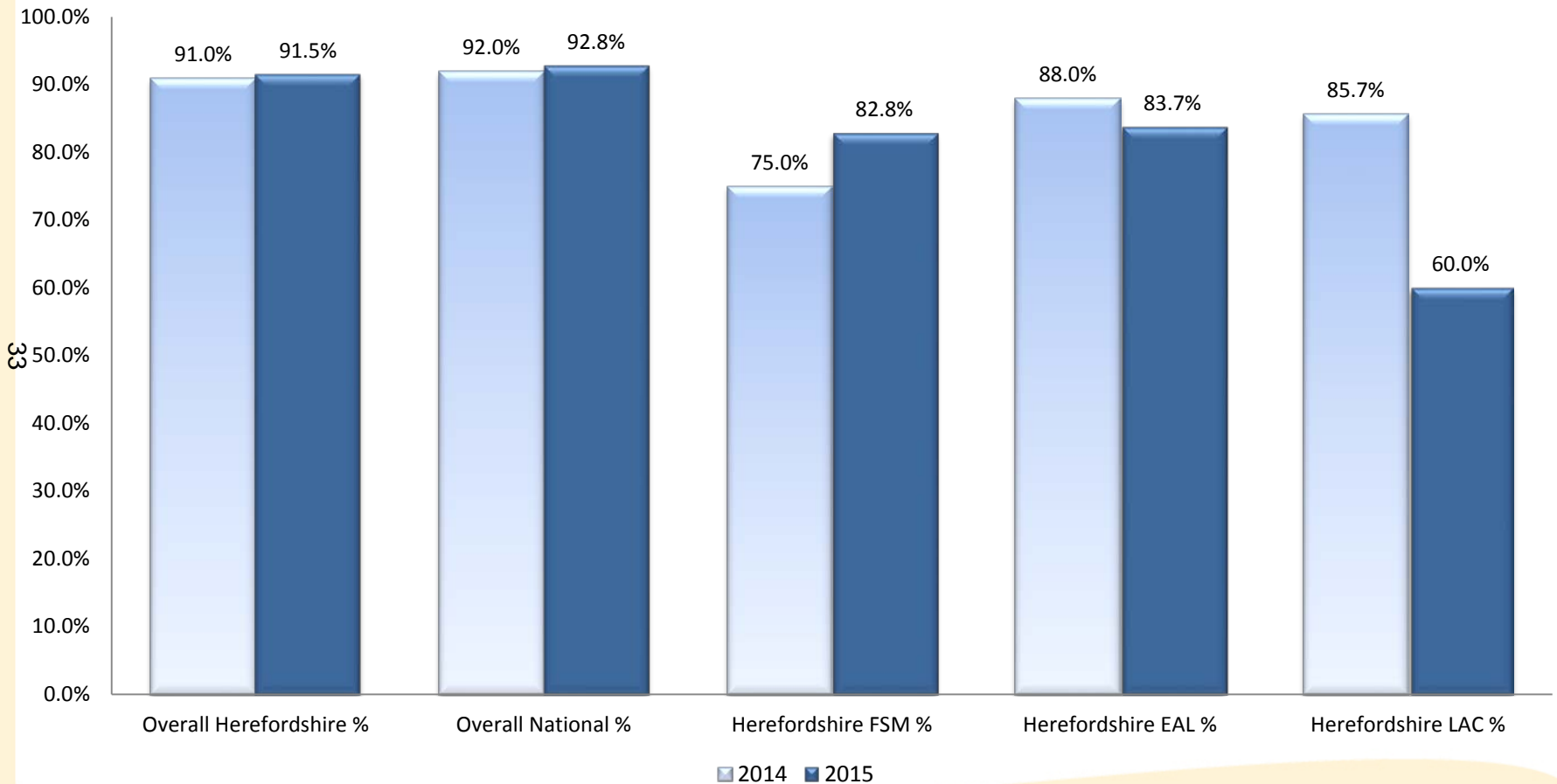
KS1 – Level 2+ in Reading



KS1 – Level 2+ in Writing

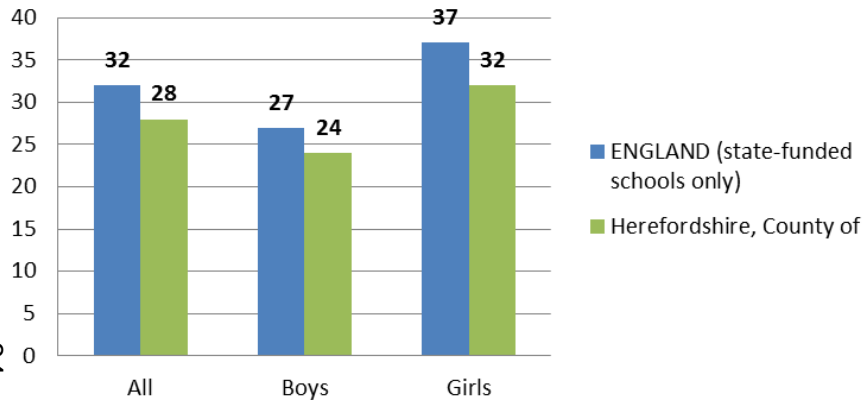


KS1 – Level 2+ in Maths

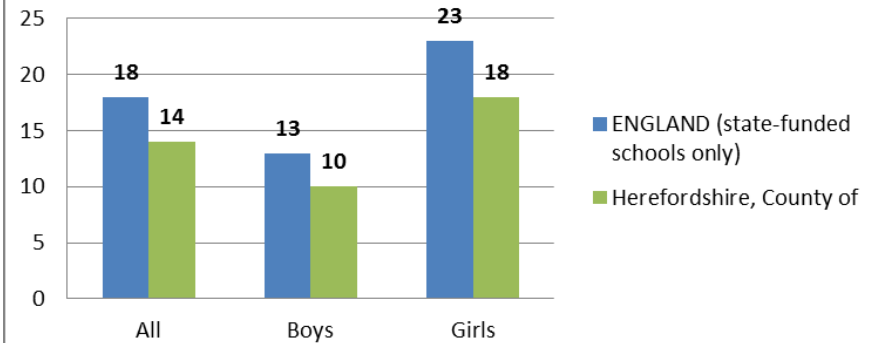


KS1 – achieving Level 3+

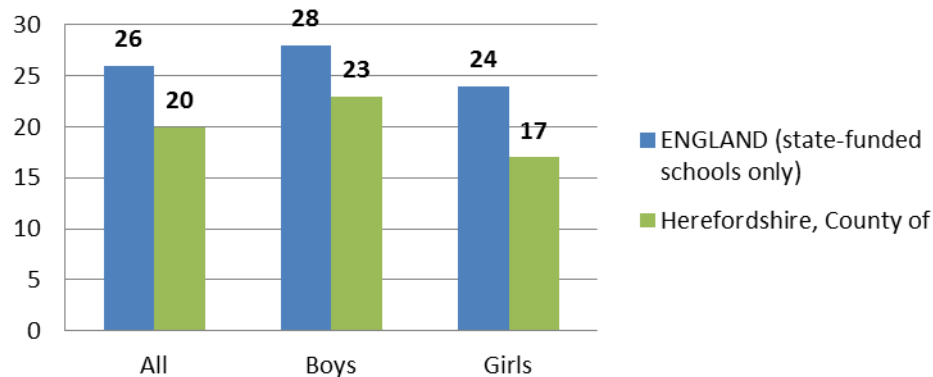
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 3+ in reading at KS1 2015



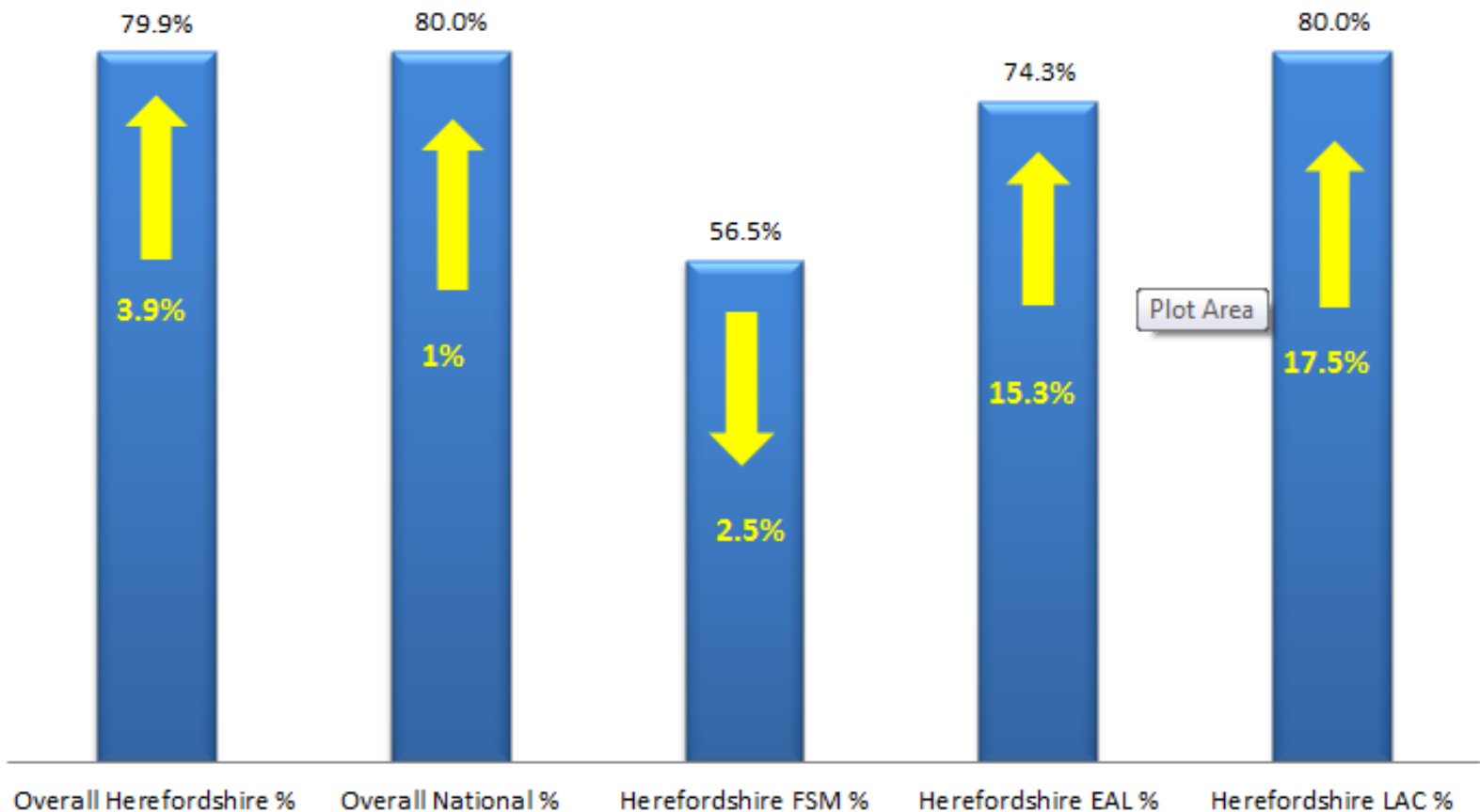
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 3+ in writing at KS1 2015



Percentage of pupils achieving Level 3+ in maths at KS1 2015



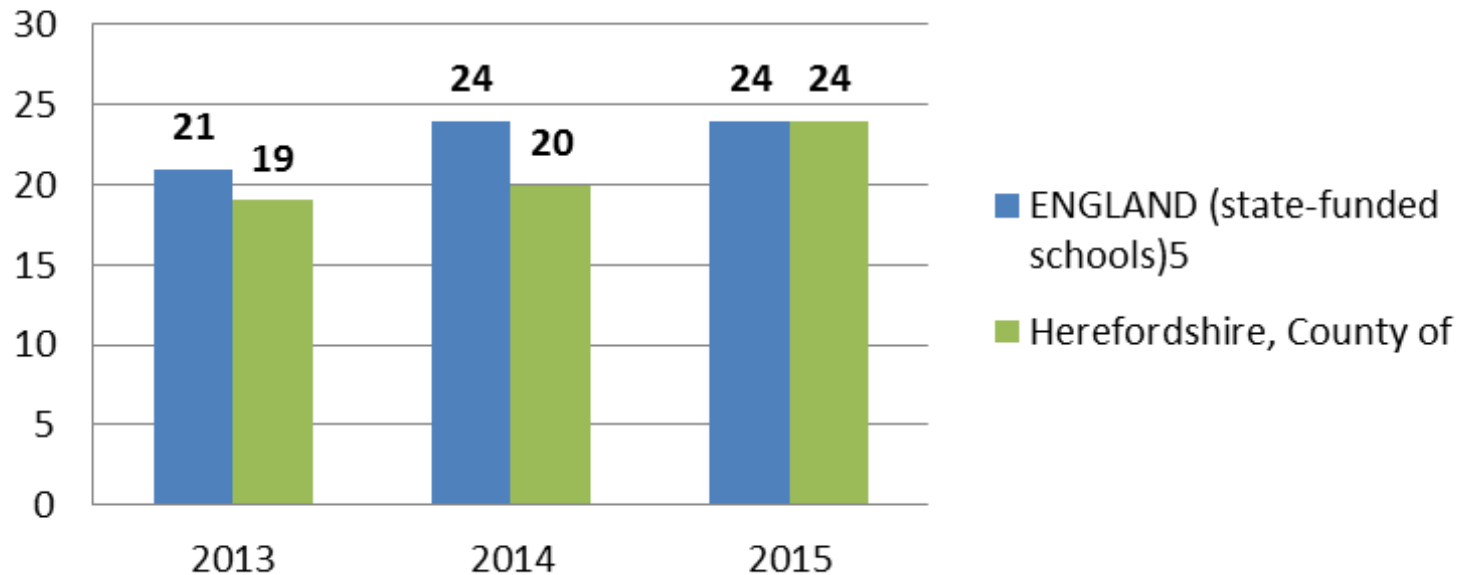
KS2 – Level 4+ in RWM



35

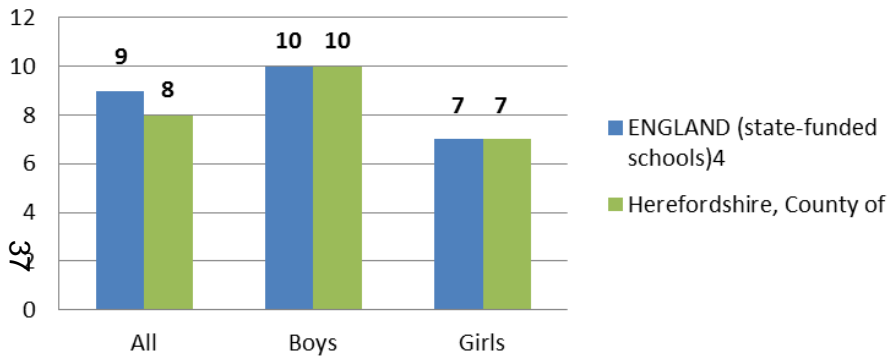
KS2 – achieving Level 5+

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in reading, writing(TA) and maths at KS2 2015

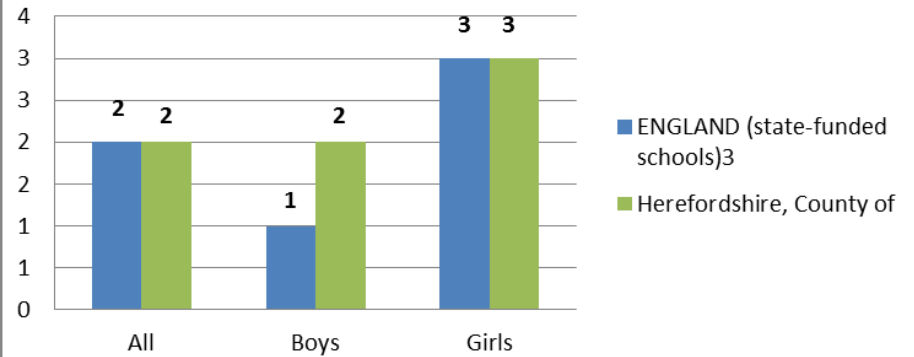


KS2 – achieving Level 6

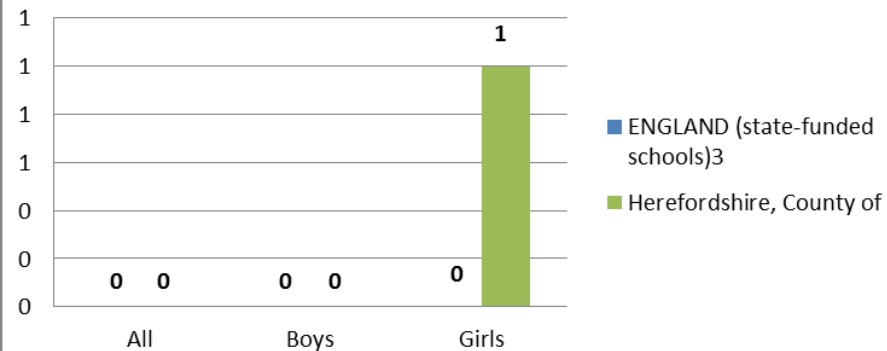
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 in maths at KS2 2015



Percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 in writing (TA) at KS2 2015

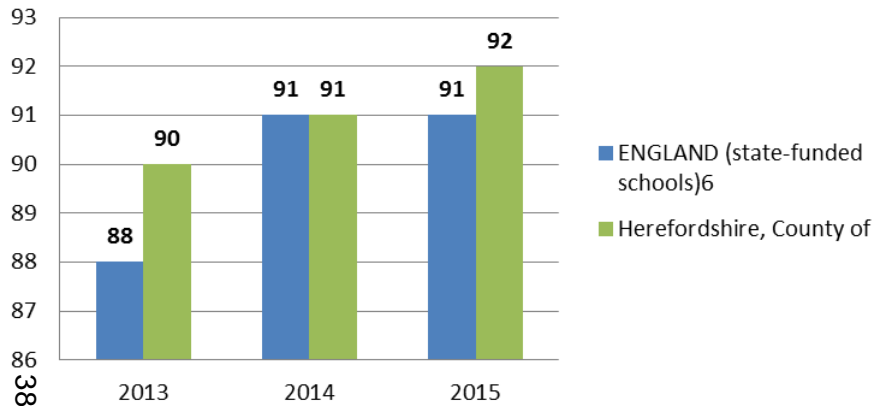


Percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 in reading at KS2 2015

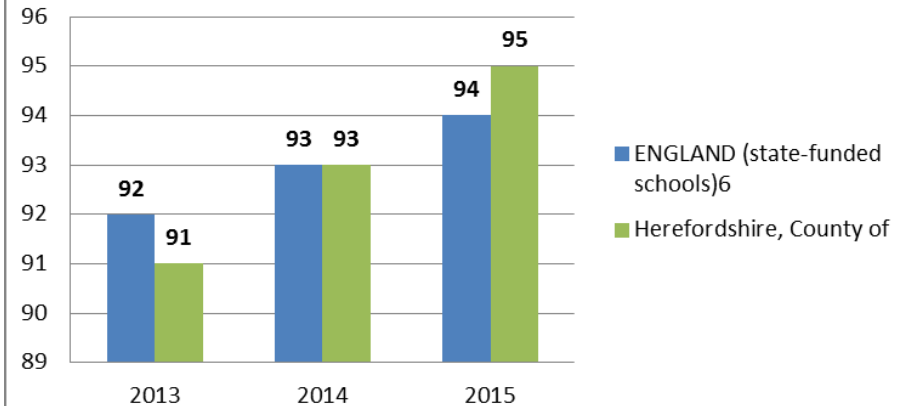


KS2 – progress

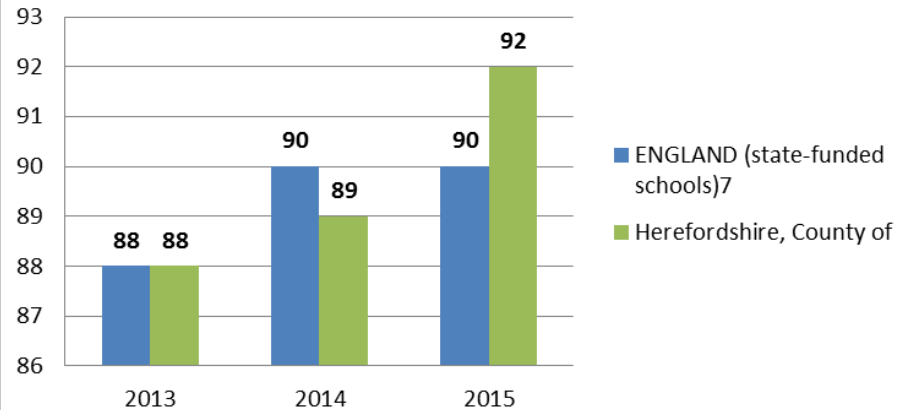
Percentage of pupils making two levels of progress in reading between KS1 and KS2



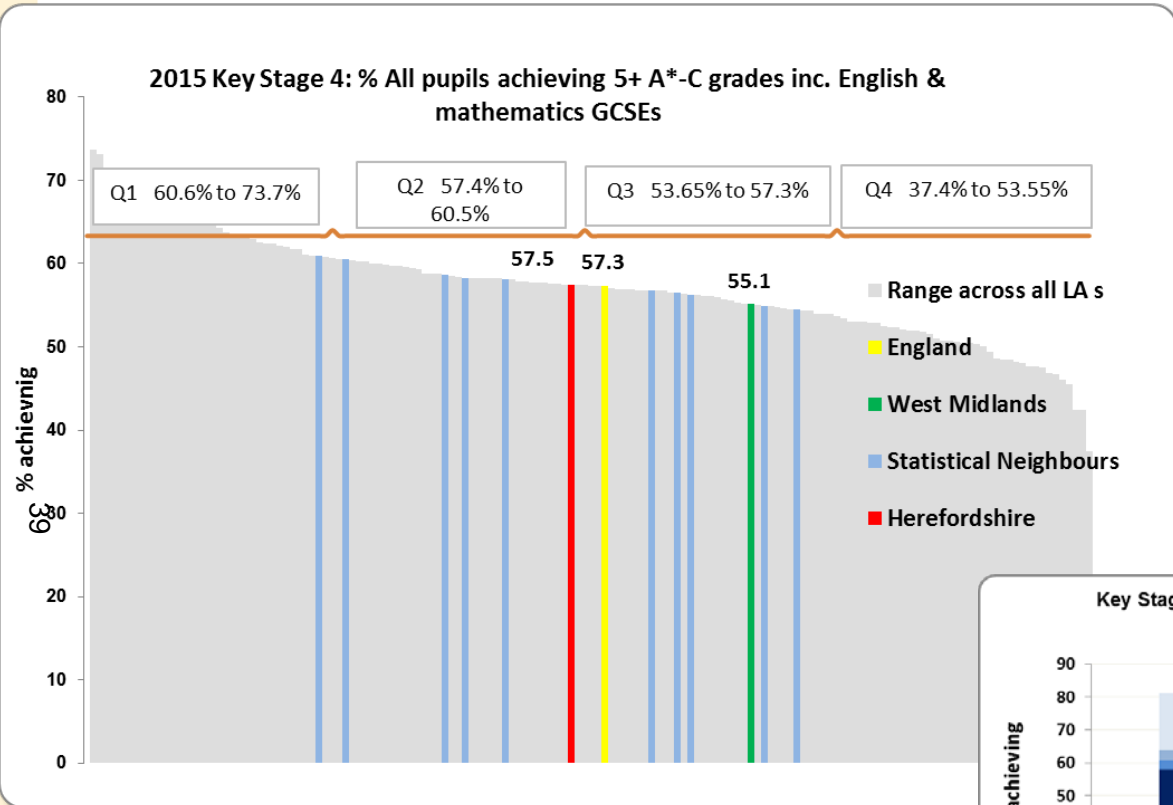
Percentage of pupils making two levels of progress in writing between KS1 and KS2



Percentage of pupils making two levels of progress in maths between KS1 and KS2

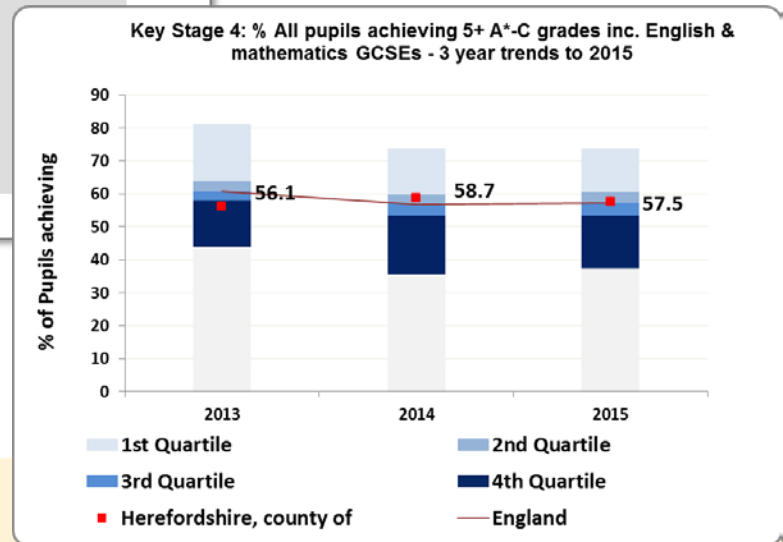


KS4: % Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE including English and Maths

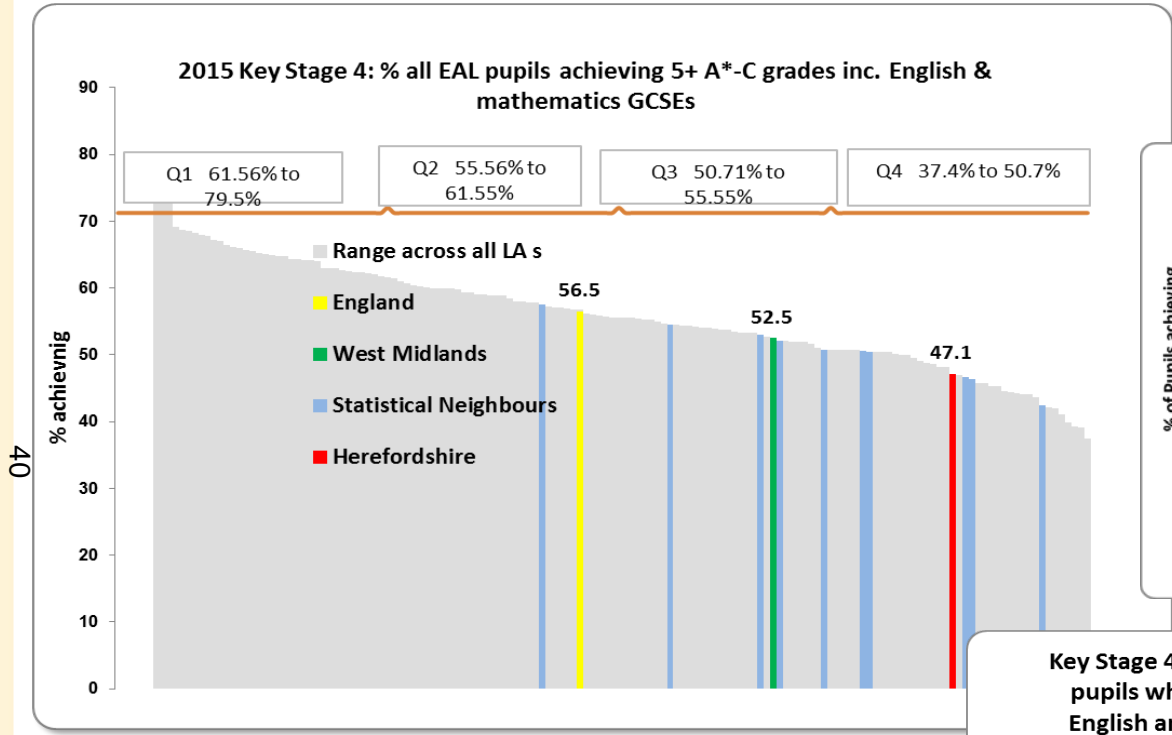


Warning: Figures from 2013/14 onwards are not comparable to previous years

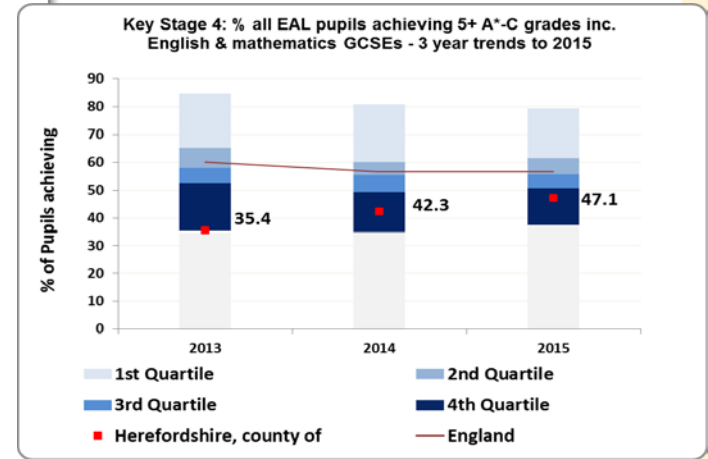
Approximate number of extra pupils required to reach the top quartile: 56



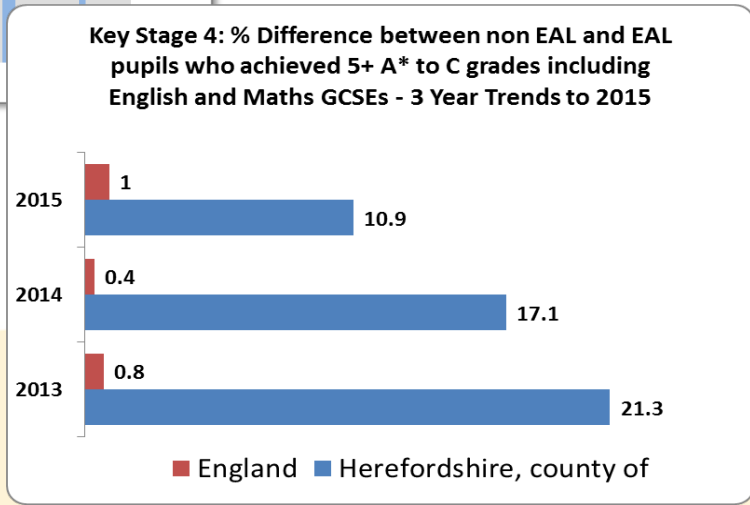
KS4: % EAL Pupils achieving 5+ A* - C GCSE including English and Maths



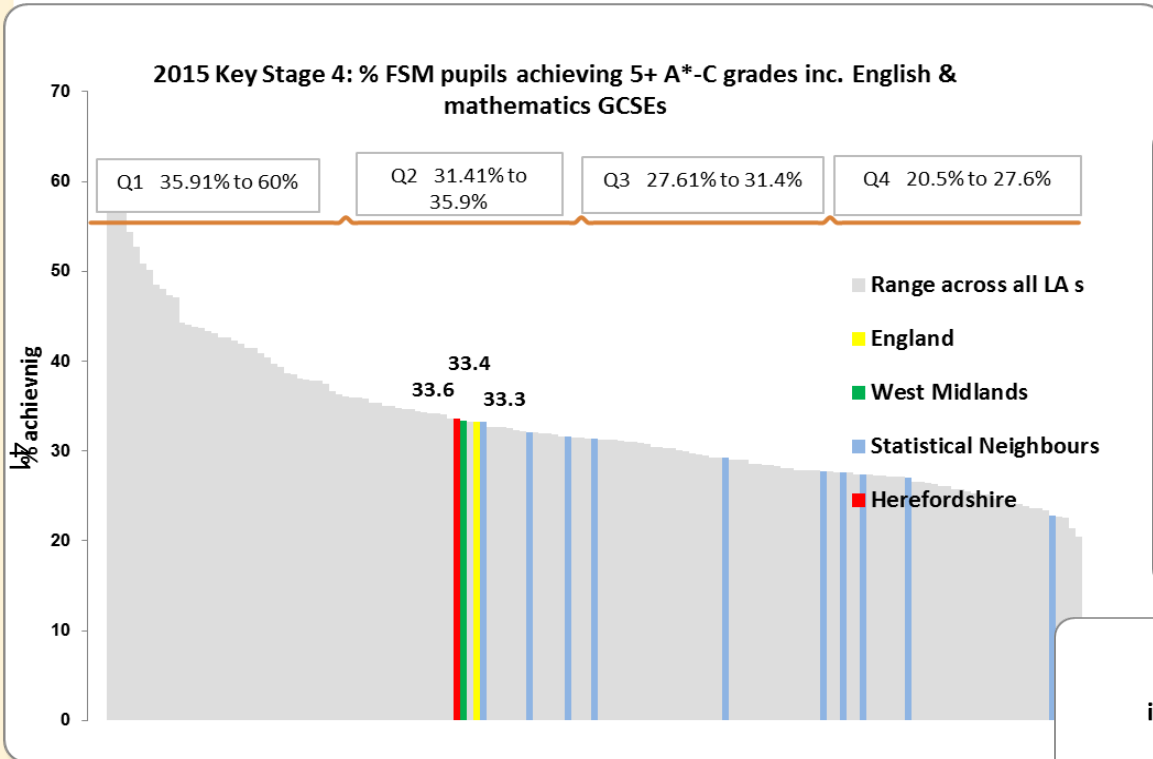
Warning: Figures from 2013/14 onwards are not comparable to previous years



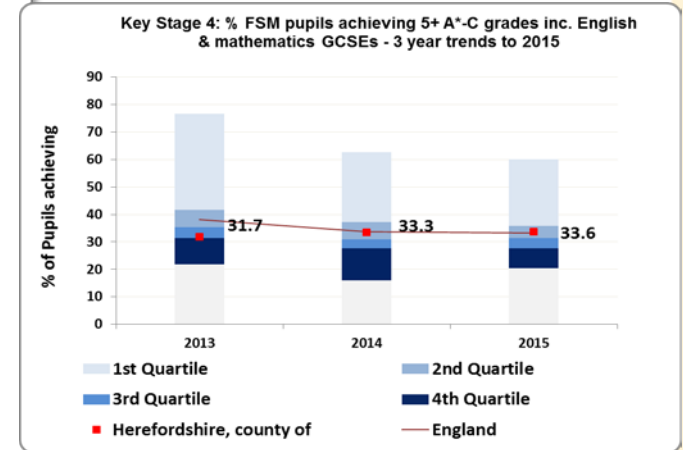
Approximate number of extra pupils required to reach the top quartile: 13



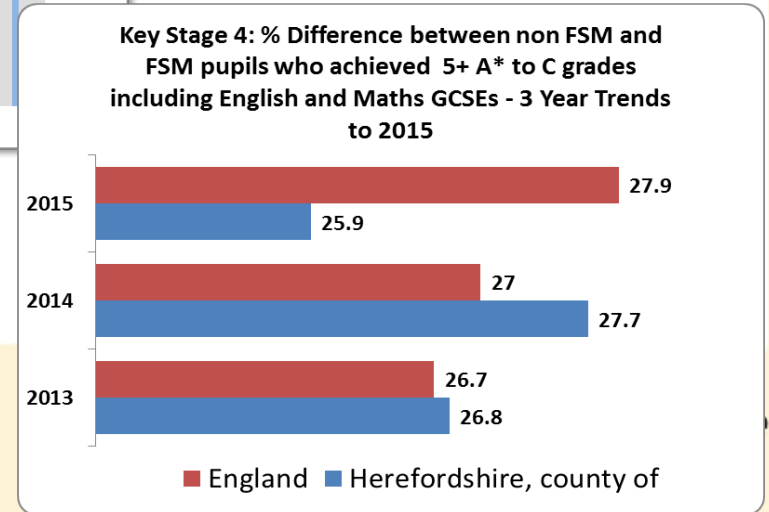
KS4: % FSM Pupils achieving 5+ A*- C GCSE including English and Maths



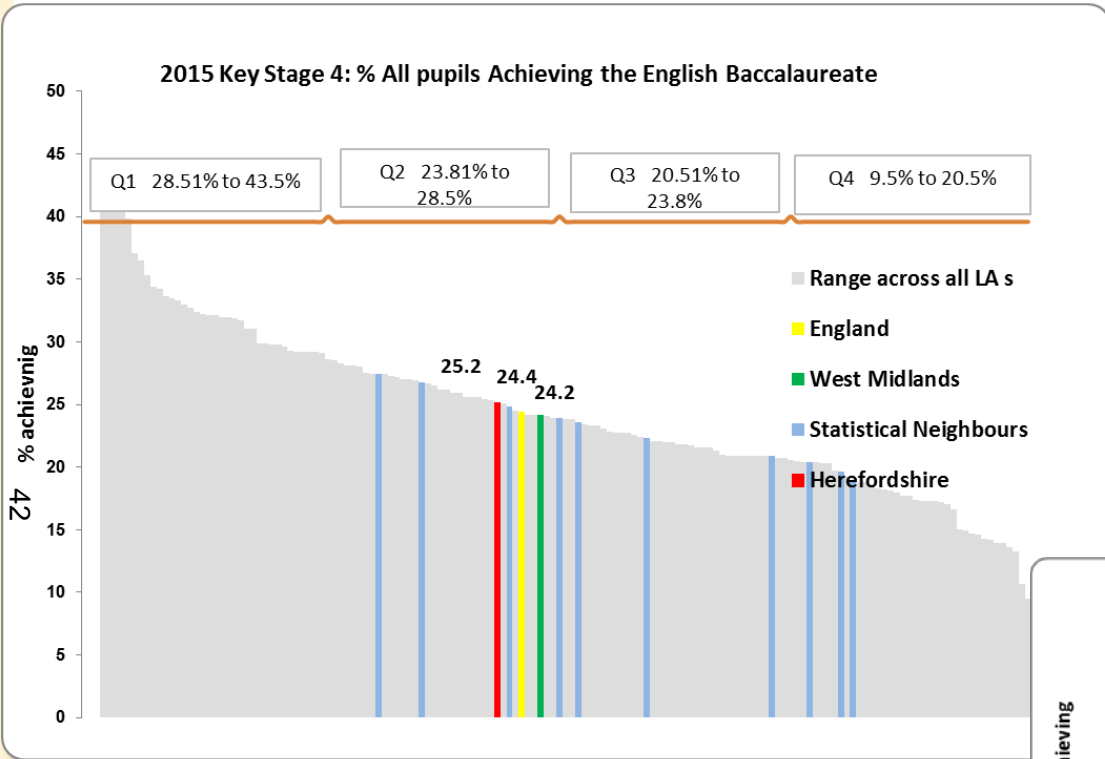
Warning: Figures from 2013/14 onwards are not comparable to previous years



Approximate number of extra pupils required to reach the top quartile: 4

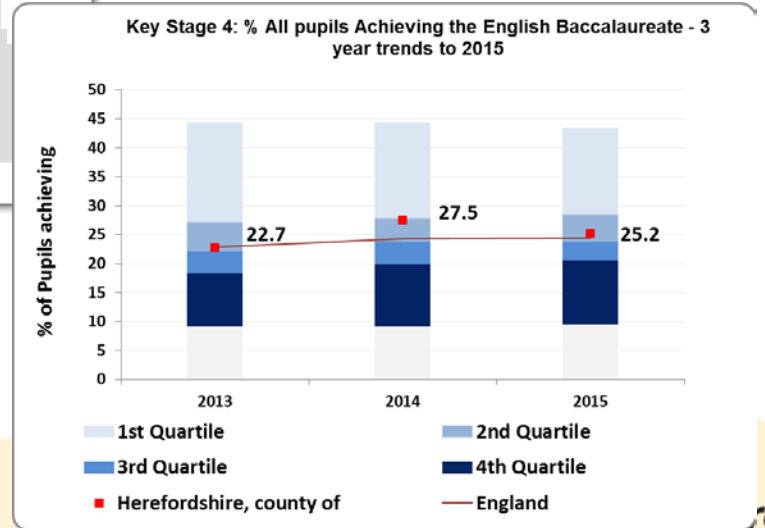


KS4: % Pupils achieving in the English Bacallaureate



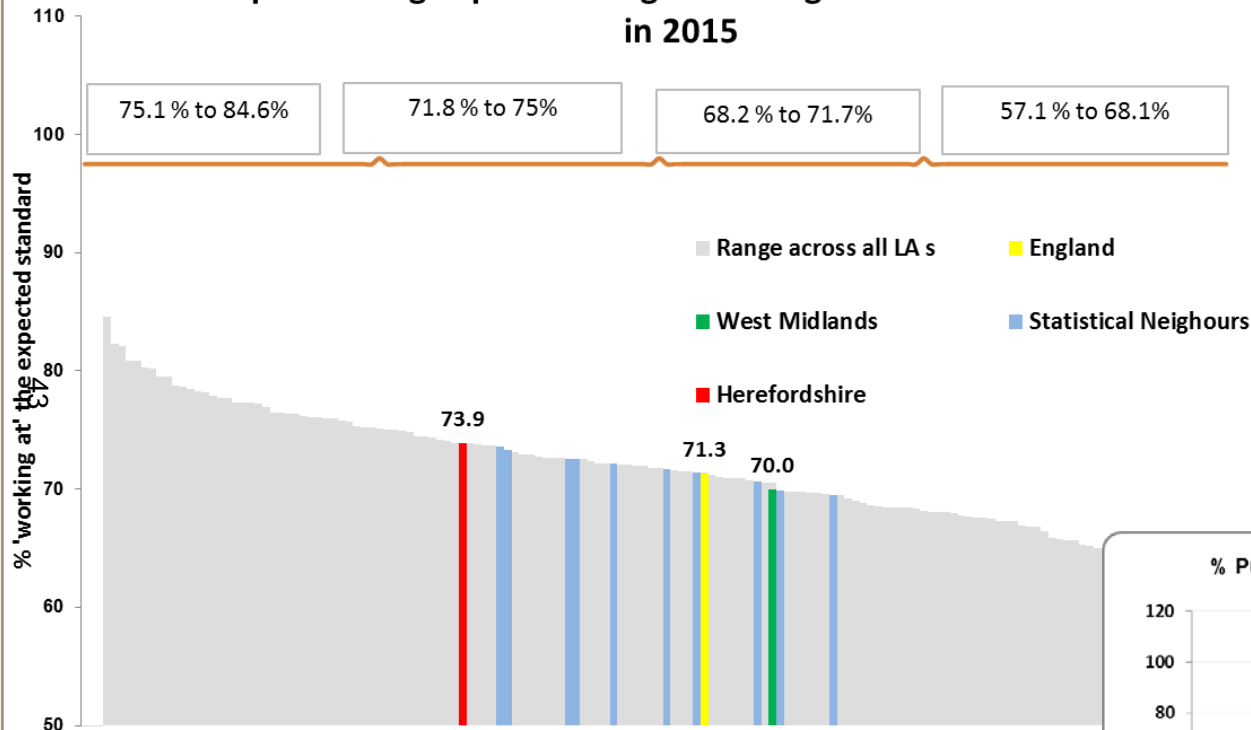
Warning: Figures from 2013/14 onwards are not comparable to previous years

Approximate number of extra pupils required to reach the top quartile: 17

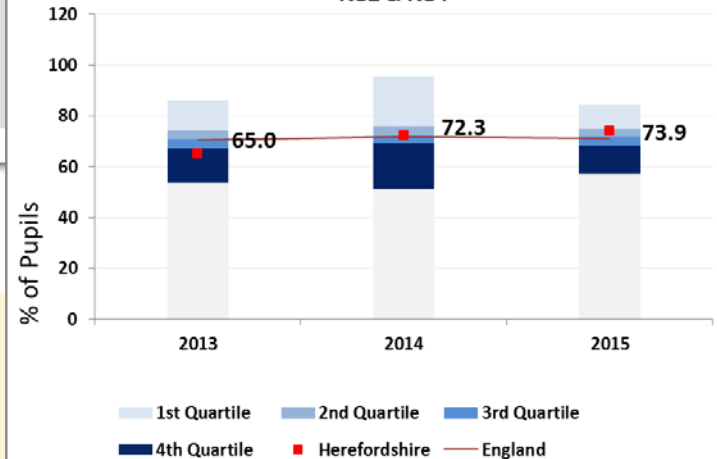


% Pupils making Expected Progress in English between KS2 & KS4

% Pupils making Expected Progress in English between KS2 & KS4 in 2015

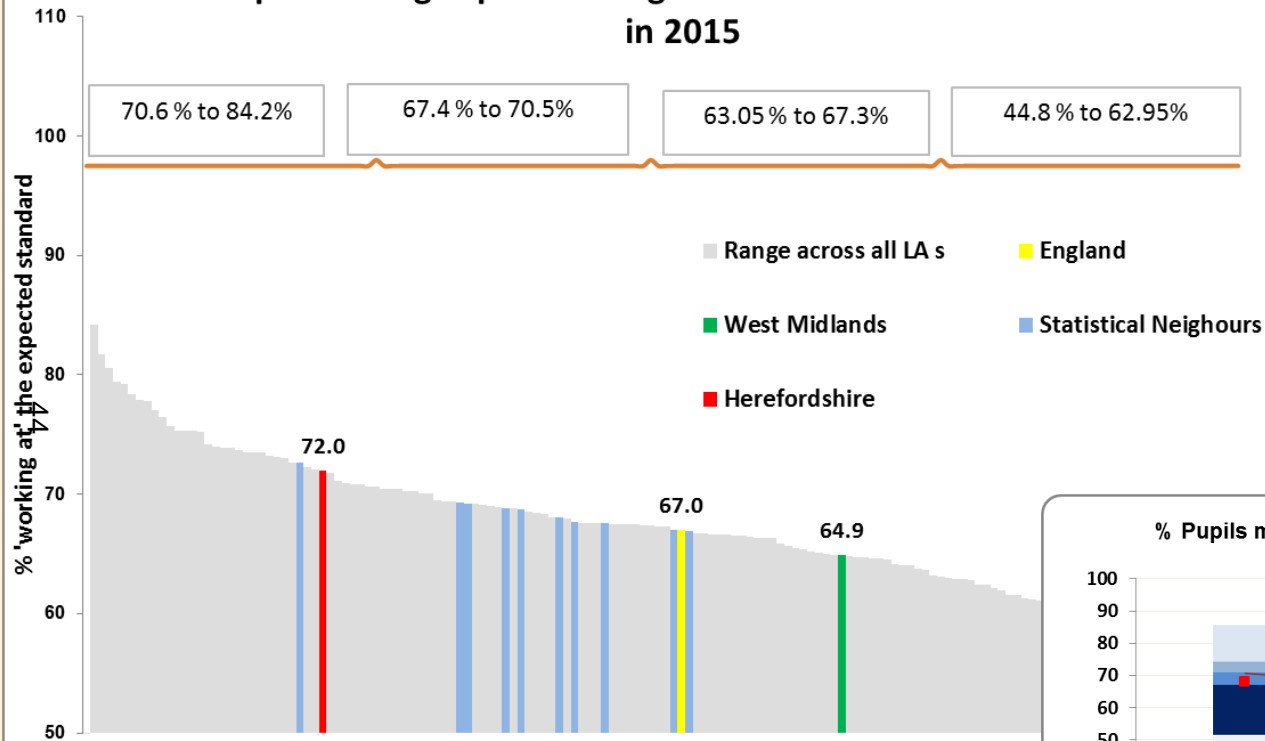


% Pupils making Expected Progress in English between KS2 & KS4

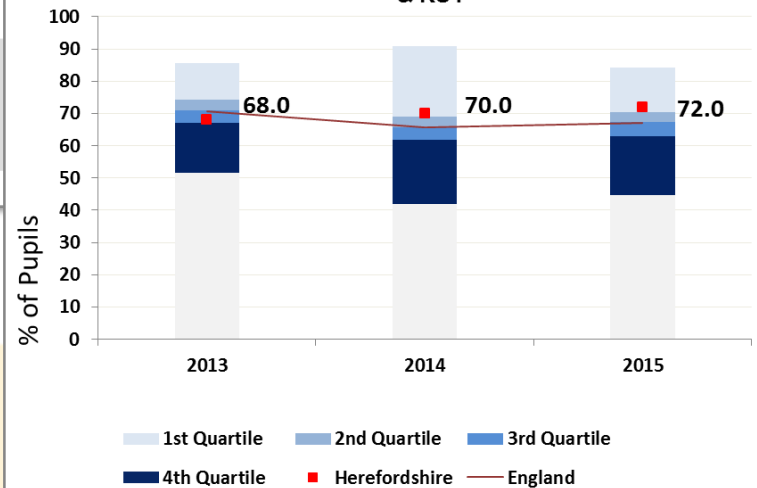


% Pupils making Expected Progress in Maths between KS2 & KS4

% Pupils making Expected Progress in Maths between KS2 & KS4 in 2015



% Pupils making Expected Progress in Maths between KS2 & KS4



Inequality performance gaps – Pupils eligible to Free School Meals (FSM)

		Herefordshire			England		
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Early YEARS Foundation Stage - % achieving GLD	non FSM	58	63	68	55	64	?
	FSM	34	34	40	36	45	?
	Performance gap	24	29	28	19	19	
KS1 - L2+ Reading	non FSM	90	92	91	91	92	92
	FSM	76	73	76	79	80	82
	Performance gap	14	19	15	12	12	10
KS1 - L2+ Writing	non FSM	86	88	87	88	89	90
	FSM	68	67	65	73	75	77
	Performance gap	18	21	22	15	14	13
KS1 - L2+ Maths	non FSM	91	93	93	93	94	94
	FSM	79	75	83	84	85	86
	Performance gap	12	18	10	9	9	8
KS2 - L4+ Reading, Writing, Maths	non FSM	74	78	82	79	82	?
	FSM	49	59	57	60	64	?
	Performance gap	25	19	25	19	18	

Inequality performance gaps – pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

		Herefordshire			England		
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Early YEARS Foundation Stage - % achieving GLD	non EAL	57	62	67	54	63	?
	EAL	32	40	46	44	53	?
	Performance gap	25	22	21	10	10	
KS1 - L2+ Reading	non EAL	90	90	91	89	91	91
	EAL	71	86	76	86	87	88
	Performance gap	19	4	15	3	4	3
KS1 - L2+ Writing	non EAL	85	86	87	86	87	88
	EAL	61	81	67	82	83	85
	Performance gap	24	5	20	4	4	3
KS1 - L2+ Maths	non EAL	90	92	92	92	93	93
	EAL	79	88	84	89	90	91
	Performance gap	11	4	8	3	3	2
KS2 - L4+ Reading, Writing, Maths	non EAL	71	77	80	76	79	?
	EAL	63	59	74	73	77	?
	Performance gap	8	18	6	3	2	

Recorded levels of absence across Herefordshire Schools

2014-15 Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms:

PRIMARY

Statistical Neighbour	% Overall absence
East Sussex	4.6
Cornwall	4.3
Suffolk	4.2
Dorset	4.1
Norfolk	4.1
Somerset	4.0
Gloucestershire	4.0
Herefordshire	3.9
Devon	3.9
Wiltshire	3.9
Shropshire	3.8

Statistical Neighbour	% Authorised absence
Cornwall	3.9
East Sussex	3.9
Suffolk	3.6
Herefordshire	3.5
Shropshire	3.5
Somerset	3.5
Devon	3.5
Wiltshire	3.5
Gloucestershire	3.5
Norfolk	3.4
Dorset	3.3

	% Overall absence	% Authorised absence	% Unauthorised absence	% Persistent absence
England	4.0	3.3	0.7	2.7
West Midlands	4.1	3.3	0.8	2.8
Herefordshire	3.9	3.5	0.4	1.9

2014-15 Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms:

PRIMARY

Statistical Neighbour	% Unauthorised absence
Dorset	0.7
Norfolk	0.7
East Sussex	0.7
Suffolk	0.6
Somerset	0.5
Cornwall	0.5
Gloucestershire	0.5
Herefordshire	0.4
Devon	0.4
Wiltshire	0.4
Shropshire	0.3

Statistical Neighbour	% Persistent absence
East Sussex	3.3
Gloucestershire	2.7
Dorset	2.5
Suffolk	2.5
Somerset	2.4
Norfolk	2.4
Cornwall	2.3
Wiltshire	2.2
Herefordshire	1.9
Shropshire	1.9
Devon	1.8

	% Overall absence	% Authorised absence	% Unauthorised absence	% Persistent absence
England	4.0	3.3	0.7	2.7
West Midlands	4.1	3.3	0.8	2.8
Herefordshire	3.9	3.5	0.4	1.9

2014-15 Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms:

SECONDARY

Statistical Neighbour	% Overall absence
Cornwall	5.8
East Sussex	5.7
Norfolk	5.6
Wiltshire	5.6
Gloucestershire	5.4
Suffolk	5.3
Dorset	5.3
Herefordshire	5.3
Devon	5.2
Somerset	5.1
Shropshire	5.0

Statistical Neighbour	% Authorised absence
Cornwall	4.9
Wiltshire	4.6
East Sussex	4.5
Gloucestershire	4.5
Herefordshire	4.5
Devon	4.4
Norfolk	4.3
Suffolk	4.3
Dorset	4.3
Shropshire	4.3
Somerset	4.2

	% Overall absence	% Authorised absence	% Unauthorised absence	% Persistent absence
England	5.2	4.0	1.2	5.5
West Midlands	5.1	4.0	1.1	5.4
Herefordshire	5.3	4.5	0.8	4.9

2014-15 Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms:

SECONDARY

50

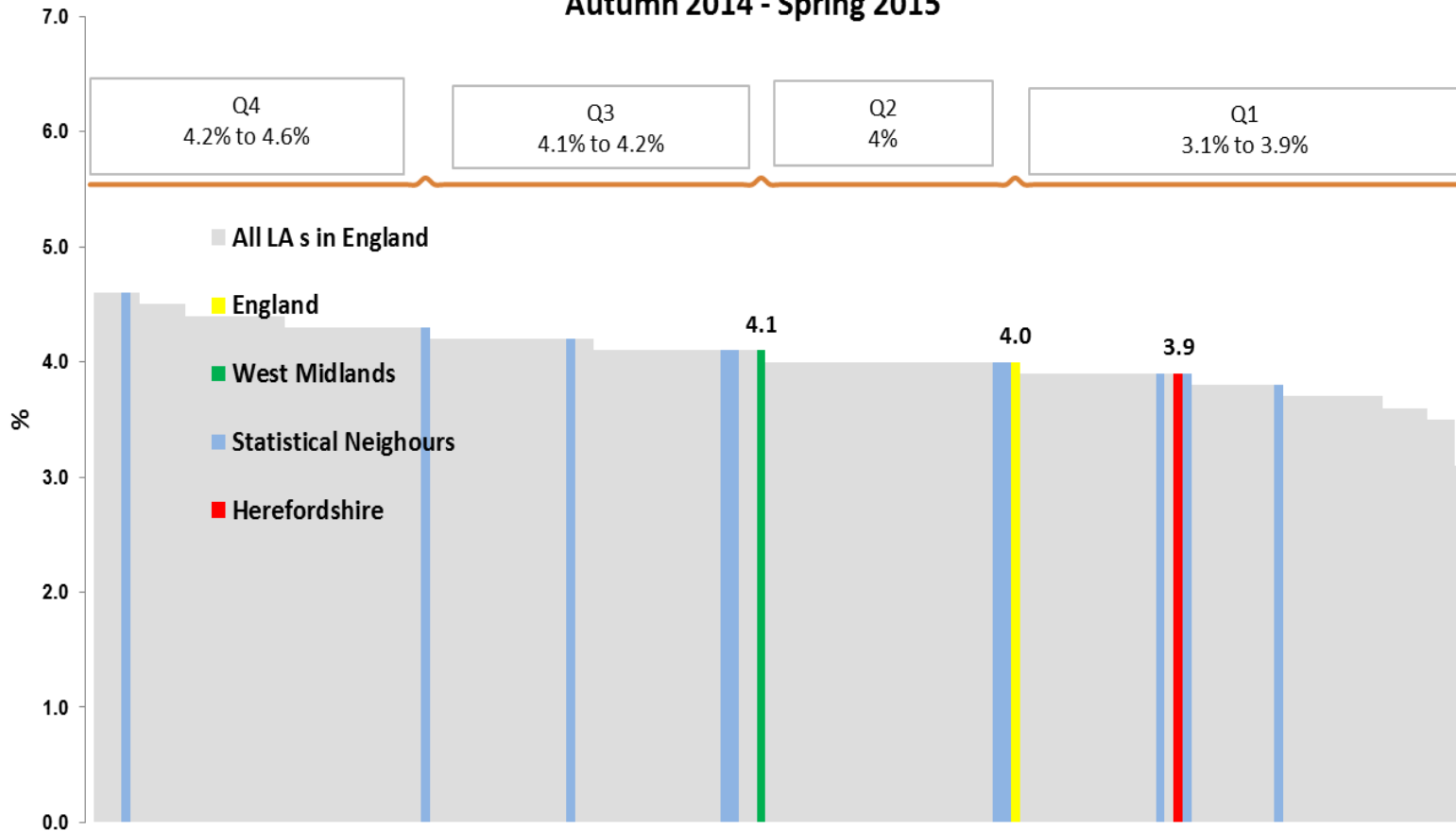
Statistical Neighbour	% Unauthorised absence
Norfolk	1.3
East Sussex	1.2
Wiltshire	1.0
Suffolk	1.0
Dorset	1.0
Cornwall	0.9
Gloucestershire	0.9
Devon	0.9
Somerset	0.9
Herefordshire	0.8
Shropshire	0.7

Statistical Neighbour	% Persistent absence
Cornwall	6.2
East Sussex	6.2
Wiltshire	6.1
Norfolk	5.9
Gloucestershire	5.8
Dorset	5.3
Somerset	5.2
Suffolk	5.1
Shropshire	5.0
Herefordshire	4.9
Devon	4.9

	% Overall absence	% Authorised absence	% Unauthorised absence	% Persistent absence
England	5.2	4.0	1.2	5.5
West Midlands	5.1	4.0	1.1	5.4
Herefordshire	5.3	4.5	0.8	4.9

Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance

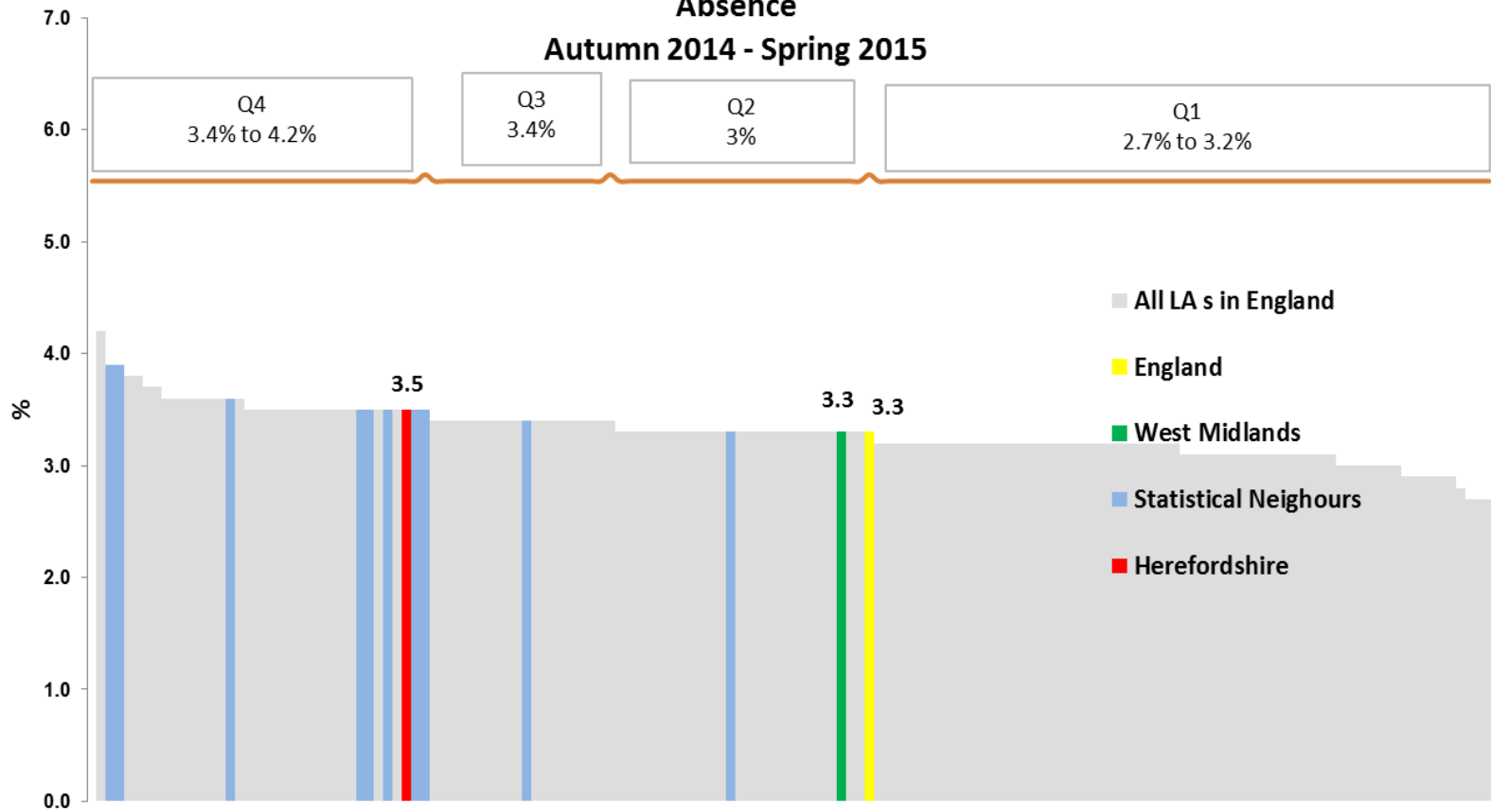
Pupil Absence for State-funded Primary Schools: % Sessions missed for overall Absence
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2015



51

Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance

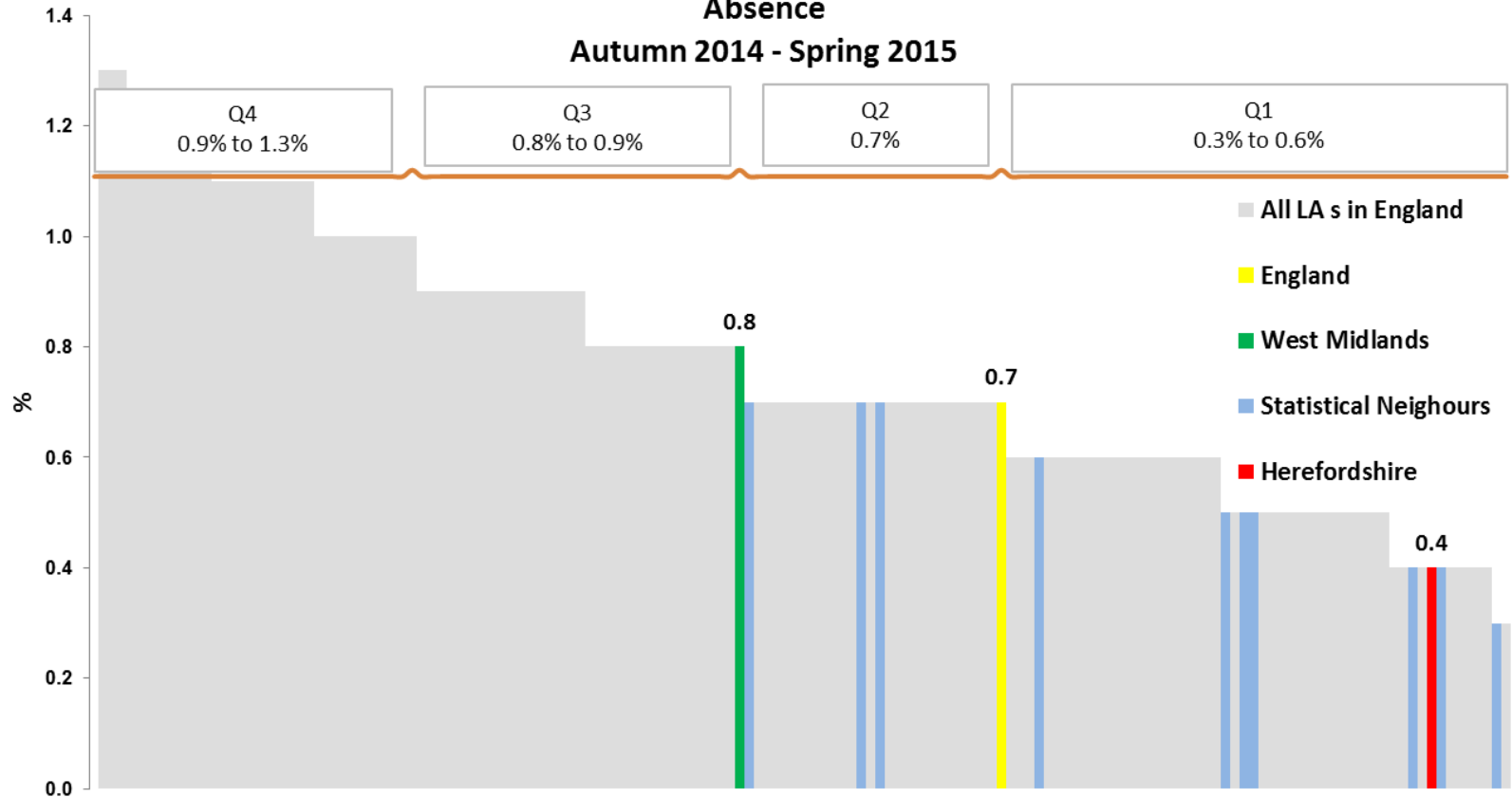
Pupil Absence for State-funded Primary Schools: % Sessions missed for Authorised Absence
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2015



52

Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance

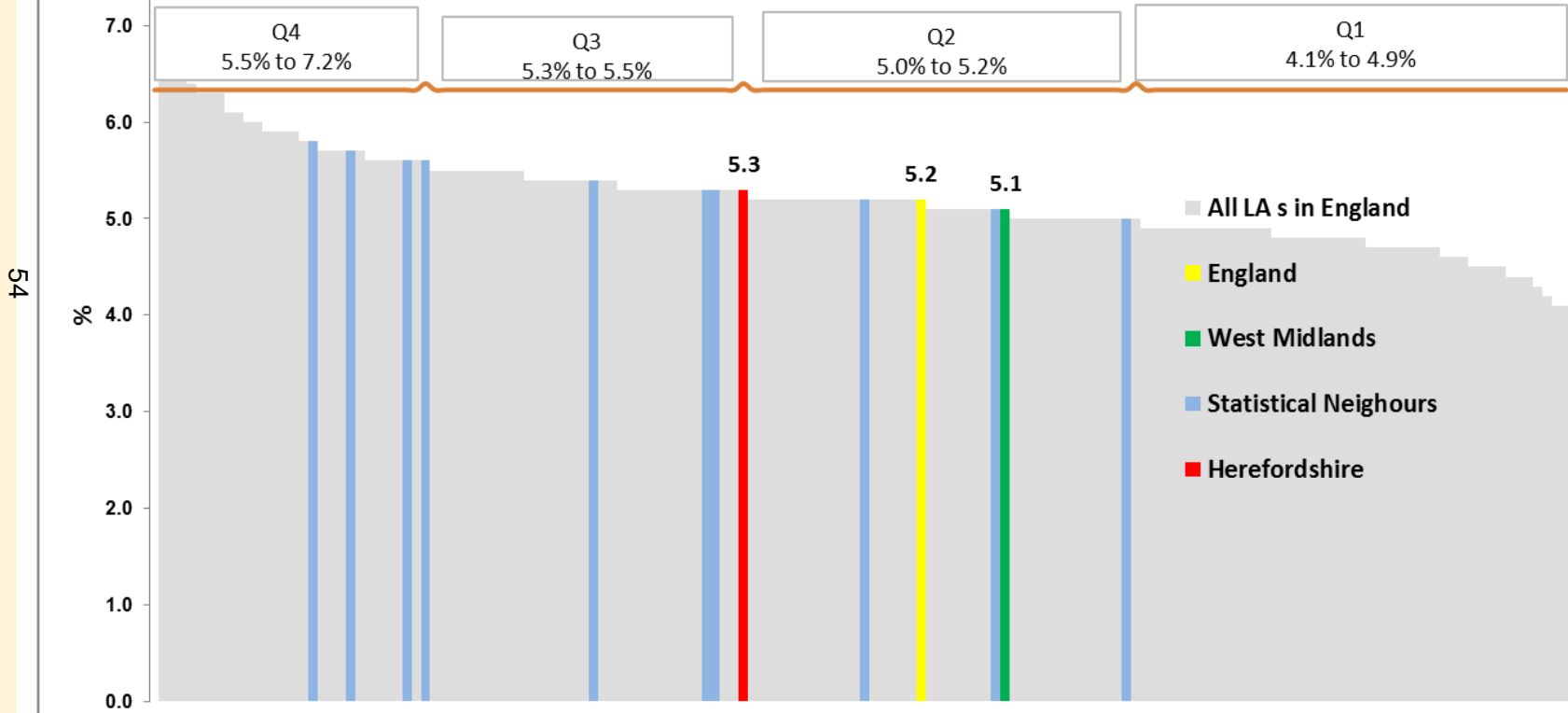
Pupil Absence for State-funded Primary Schools: % Sessions missed for Unauthorised Absence
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2015



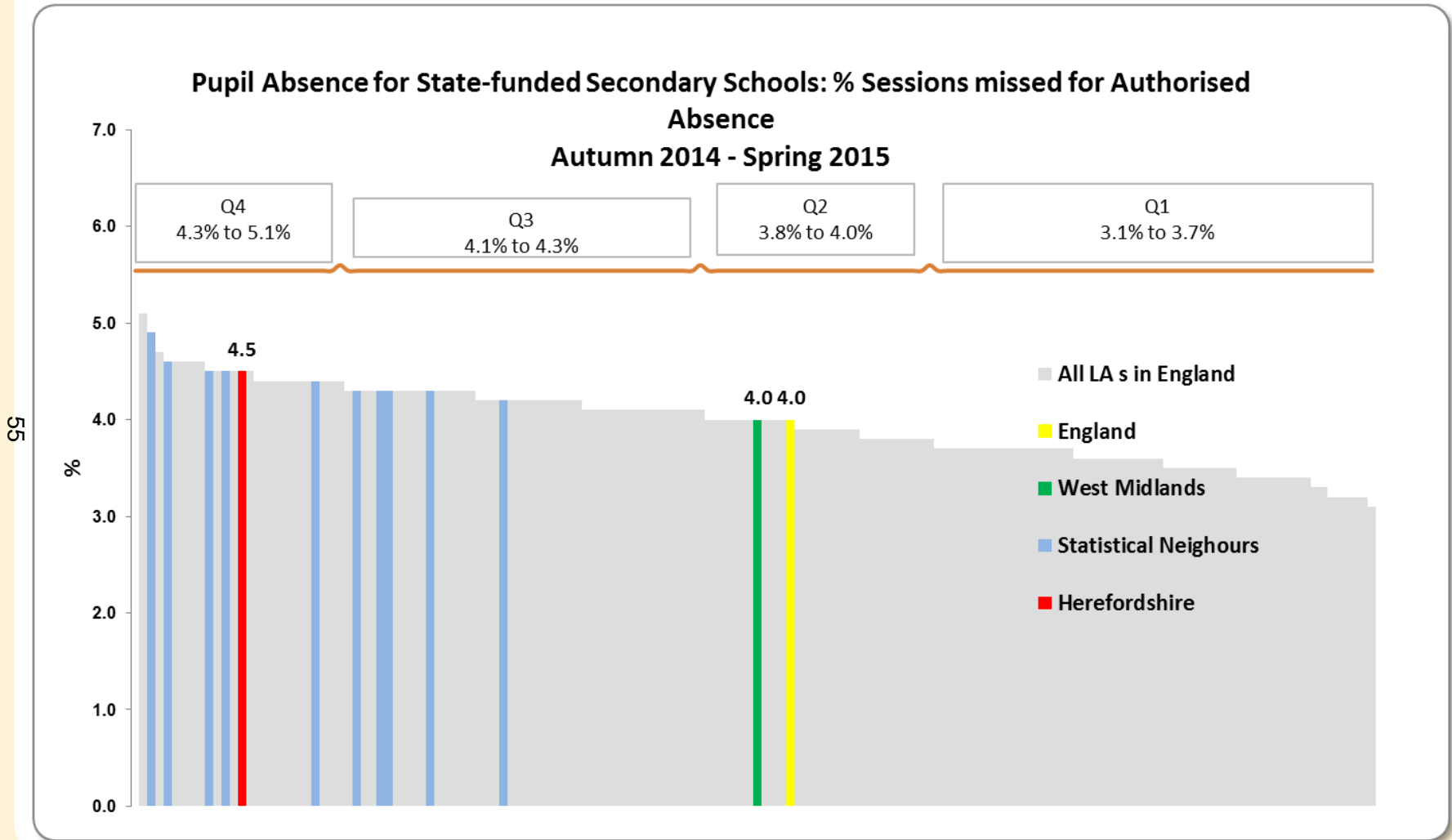
53

Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance

Pupil Absence for State-funded Secondary Schools: % Sessions missed for Overall Absence
Absence
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2015

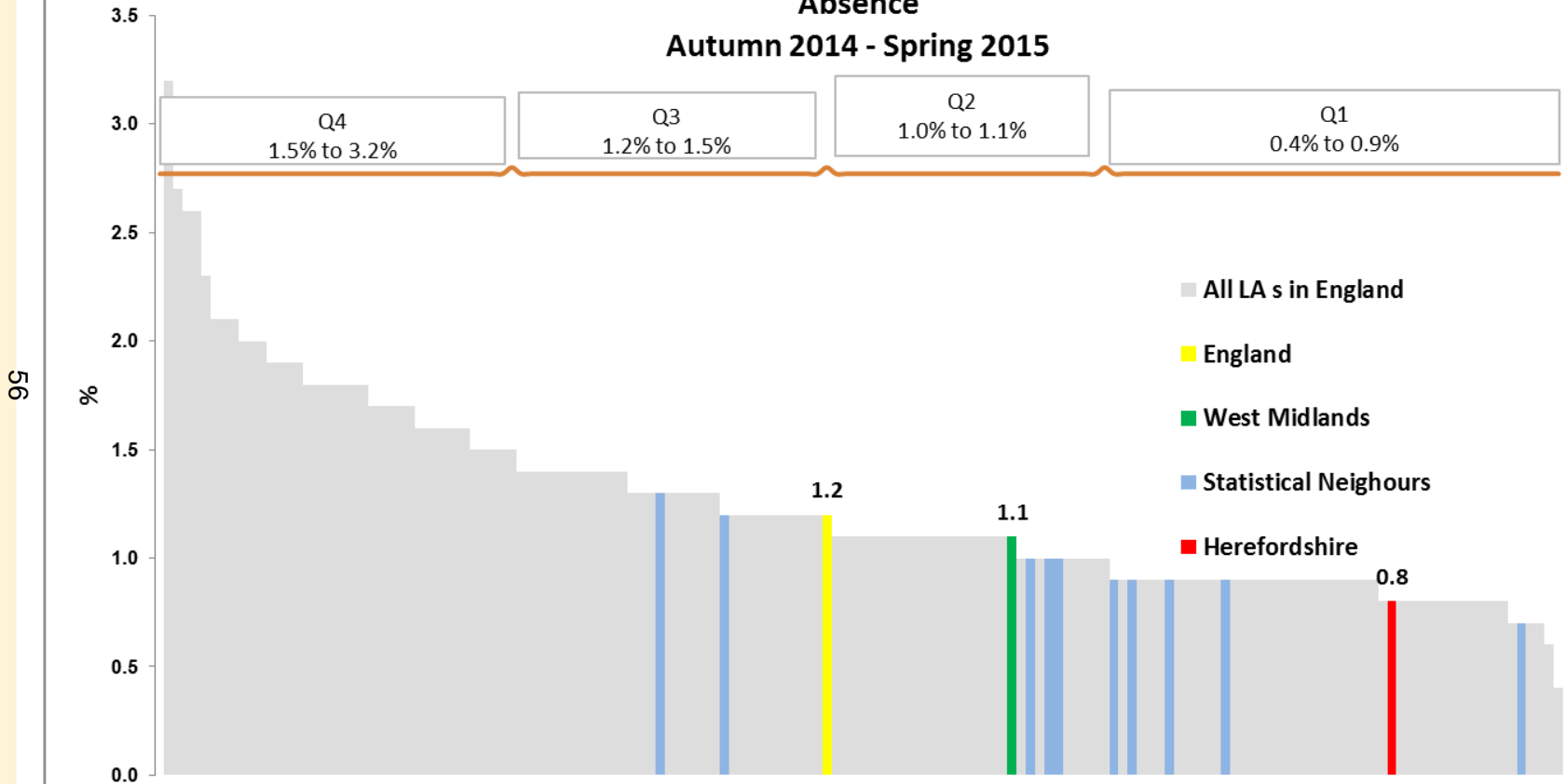


Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance



Absence in Herefordshire Schools – Quartile Performance

Pupil Absence for State-funded Secondary Schools: % Sessions missed for Unauthorised Absence
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2015





Gill Hamer
Director Marches LEP

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)



- Government's Local Growth White paper – Oct 2010
- Marches LEP one of 24 announced Oct 2010 – now 39 in place
- LEPs - non-statutory bodies - assumed many of the responsibilities of Regional Development Agencies i.e. promote & fund economic development in their local area
- Marches LEP covers the local authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin (2,300 sq. miles) - 666,700 popln
- 29,800 enterprises – 85% less than 10 employees
- Self- employment high & low unemployment

Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

- Strategic Economic Plan in 2013/14. Signed off by Government April 2014
- The SEP set out the economic priorities for the LEP – <http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/>) & growth potential sectors – advanced manufacturing & engineering, food and drink/agri- tech, defence & securities
- SEP used to inform projects put forward for Growth Deal in 2014
- Developed separate skills plan
- European Structural and Investment Funds Plan for new EU programme

LEP Projects



Under Growth Deal 1 in July 2014 - Marches LEP secured £75.3m of Local Growth Fund. First three projects underway in 2015/16.

- **Telford Growth Point Package** - Improvements to key junctions; utilities and infrastructure delivering three employment and housing extension sites – 2 year project - value £17.3m (Growth Deal £13.89m)
- **Hereford City Centre Transport Package** - A new link road, enabling a major mixed-use development, integrated with the city centre, delivering retail, leisure, tourism, employment, housing and other development – 4yr project – value £40.65m (Growth Deal £16m)
- **Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package** – Four major junction upgrades on main arterial routes, managing traffic and transport initiatives to reduce congestion – 6 yr. project – Value £12.18m (Growth Deal £6m)

LEP Projects



2016/17 projects

- **Telford Eastern Gateway** - M54 J4 improvements and on-site infrastructure delivering 31 hectares of serviced employment land only 12 miles from the new Jaguar Land Rover engine plant.
- **Oxon Link Road** – Link road to support the growth of Shrewsbury through two large green-field urban expansions accelerating the release of land for employment and housing.
- **South Wye Transport Package** - Transport improvements to the southern elements of the Hereford transport network which supports the Enterprise Zone and a new housing development.
- **Telford Bus Station** - Relocation of bus station as part of the town centre redevelopment, opening up new retail space and improved connectivity.
- **The Marches Skills Capital Programme** – to support delivery of a programme of projects ensuring the Marches has world class skills training infrastructure and increased capacity to deliver the highest quality training. (Secured £3.3m for spend in 2016/17)

LEP Projects



- **Growth Deal Extension in January 2015 for Broadband** - An additional £7.7m for broadband infrastructure was secured
- **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) – 2014 – 2020** Marches allocated circa £97m (now valued at circa £80m). The LEP partners now working up projects
- **HCA Land Deal – Telford** – under negotiation for approx. £44.5m
- **Enterprise Zones** – Hereford EZ (Skylon Park) with a focus on defence and securities sector won EZ status in 2011
- **Marches Investment Fund** - Recycling loan fund – value circa £8m
- **Growth Hub** Launch of website & helpline 21/10/2015 . Physical Hubs Telford, Hereford, Shrewsbury

Governance



- Marches LEP Board – 15 Members led by a private sector Chairman, Graham Wynn OBE
- All Board members are champions for LEP priorities – Housing, Skills, Business Support, Manufacturing, Business Boards, Enterprise Zone, Access to Finance, Community and Voluntary
- Board meets every 2 months. Range of subgroups – Performance, Risk & Monitoring, Skills Board, Growth Hub, Agri Food, 3 Business Boards in three Local Authority areas
- Accountability and Assurance Framework signed off by Government March 2015
- Marches Enterprise Joint Committee – 3 Council Leaders and LEP Chair (non-voting) – democratic accountability for LEP Board recommendations

Thank you

<http://www.marcheslep.org.uk>

01743 462 026