

# AGENDA

## Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 1 December 2016**

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Time: **10.00 am**

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Place: **Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square,  
Hereford, HR1 2HX**

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Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Sarah Smith on (01432) 260176 or e-mail [sarah.smith1@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.smith1@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet**

## **Membership**

**Chairman**                      **Councillor AW Johnson**  
**Vice-Chairman**              **Councillor PM Morgan**

**Councillor H Bramer**  
**Councillor DG Harlow**  
**Councillor JG Lester**  
**Councillor PD Price**  
**Councillor P Rone**

**AGENDA**

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
<b>3. MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2016.	7 - 14
<b>4. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2016/17</b> To recommend the Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 for approval by Council.	15 - 66
<b>5. ADOPTION REPORT AND ADOPTION SERVICE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</b> To review the effectiveness of the adoption service and to approve the adoption service statement of purpose.	67 - 92
<b>6. 2017 / 18 CAPITAL BUDGET</b> To recommend the proposed capital budget for 2017/18 onwards to Council.	93 - 102
<b>7. HEREFORDSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b> To consider and agree the draft economic development strategy for recommendation to Council.	103 - 186





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- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 3 November 2016 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)  
 Councillor PM Morgan (Vice-Chairman)  
 Councillors H Bramer, DG Harlow and PD Price

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors BA Durkin and NE Shaw  
 Group leaders in attendance Councillors JM Bartlett, TM James, RI Matthews and AJW Powers  
 Scrutiny chairmen in attendance Councillors PA Andrews and WLS Bowen  
 Other councillors in attendance: Councillors J Hardwick and EPJ Harvey

Officers in attendance: Geoff Hughes, Jo Davidson and Claire Ward

**52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Lester and P Rone.

**53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**54. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**55. REDESIGN AND COMMISSIONING OF HOME CARE AND REABLEMENT SERVICES**

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing introduced the report. She highlighted that this was an area of significant expenditure for the council and that it was important to provide good services to allow residents to remain independent.

The joint commissioning better care fund manager gave a presentation to the meeting. Copies of the slides used were circulated as an appendix prior to the meeting.

In the discussion following the presentation the following points were made:

- that providers had indicated in their feedback to the consultation a need for between 700 and 2,000 hours of care per week to sustain a viable business, depending on the size and type of provider

- that the proposed hourly rate had been derived using a number of factors such as the national living wage, travel costs and reasonable on costs for providers; the proposed rate is consistent with those used by other authorities
- that providers had expressed a preference for a single hourly rate rather than separate urban and rural rates so long as each provider had a mix of urban and rural care packages to deliver
- that the proposed new framework would reduce the number of providers working with the council, this would give them greater certainty over the quantity of work available and allow the council to develop closer relationships with providers
- that there would be flexibility to adjust the zones in future, to take account of demographic changes for example

The cabinet member for contracts and assets argued that the council should not set an hourly rate but should allow the market to dictate the cost of the care packages. It was suggested that this approach could reduce the costs to the council.

In response it was noted that while some packages did achieve a lower hourly rate under the present system than that now proposed, other packages, particularly in more rural areas, had to be funded at a much higher rate and some were extremely difficult to allocate. Where providers did not pick up packages or withdrew from packages because they were felt to be unsustainable the council had to step in with expensive emergency measures. It was also noted that tendering individual packages required a significant amount of officer time.

In response to a question from a group leader the assistant director operations and support stated that the service redesign was part of a programme of work associated with the whole systems approach to transformation within adults and wellbeing and that it was focussed on achieving outcomes for individuals.

A group leader noted that 17% of respondents to the service user questionnaire issued as part of the consultation on the new model felt they were treated differently because of who they were. He queried whether this was a recent development or whether there had been a trend over time.

The commissioning officer adults and wellbeing responded that the figure was reflective of the cohort in general and that there had been no recent increase. He stated that this was an issue the council needed to be mindful of when introducing the new model but that there was no evidence of any serious issue that had required moving a care package to another provider.

A group leader noted that adult social care was an area under considerable strain and that increases in the hourly rate would put pressure on the budget but could make providers more viable.

In response to queries from a group leader it was stated that use of a zoned approach was not unusual for county councils and that in house provision was unlikely to deliver lower costs due to high council overheads and complex TUPE requirements.

A group leader noted that there was an assumption of community involvement, including parish councils, in supporting more vulnerable residents. He asked whether the risks associated with this had been considered and zones organised to allow parish councils to interact with a small group of providers. The assistant director operations and support explained that community involvement was not specifically linked to the proposed service model and that care and support elements were clearly defined.

In response to a question from a group leader the better care fund and integration manager explained that providers would have to pick up all packages in their zone and could not cherry pick the urban work at the expense of the rural packages.

A group leader queried if the 7.5 minutes time allowance between clients was sufficient to allow carers to deliver a good standard of care. In response it was stated that this was an average figure derived from analysis of current provision and that moving to zonal working should allow for shorter routes between visits.

The leader stated that all members of the council were conscious of the tight budget and that the council was spending tax payers' money. Best value had to take precedence but the council had to be mindful of its responsibilities to vulnerable residents.

The cabinet member for contracts and assets asked that the use of a set hourly rate be reviewed at the next opportunity with a view to reducing costs.

**Resolved that:**

- a) a redesigned model of home care as set out within the Vision and Delivery Document in appendix one is adopted;
- b) procurement of approved providers be undertaken with a recommended hourly rate as set out within the legal and financial implications sections;
- c) approval of the detailed service specification for the redesigned service and the final decision to approve acceptance of providers meeting the qualification criteria onto the framework in each zone, be delegated to the director for adults and wellbeing for the total contract period of five years;
- d) the director for adults and wellbeing be authorised to extend the existing contractual arrangements, if required and within existing budgetary provision for up to a 9 month period, until 31 March 2018.

**56. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - ADOPTION**

The cabinet member for infrastructure introduced the report. He noted that the adoption of a statement of community involvement was a statutory requirement.

The local and neighbourhood planning community engagement officer outlined the report and explained that there had been a focus on recognising the possibilities offered by new communication technologies while ensuring that all parts of the community are able to raise and respond to planning issues.

An additional recommendation in regard to this item was circulated at the meeting. This was to ensure consistency between the statement and the public engagement sections of the council's constitution.

A group leader suggested that listed examples of Development Plan Documents should be comprehensive and that the glossary should have separate entries for Neighbourhood Development Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents.

In response to a query it was clarified that the Annual Monitoring Report was now known as the Authority Monitoring Report.

In response to a query from a group leader it was stated that there would be an ongoing process of evaluation to ensure consultation was effective. There would need to be a judgement on a case by case basis on the quality of the response received.

The cabinet member for infrastructure stated that while it was frustrating to receive low response rates to consultations, the council had to acknowledge that residents could suffer from consultation fatigue.

**Resolved that:**

- a) **the revised Herefordshire Council statement of community involvement at appendix 1a & 1b, be recommended to Council for adoption; and**
- b) **it be recommended to Council that authority be delegated to the monitoring officer to make any consequential amendments to the statement necessary following future changes to the council's constitution relevant to public engagement to ensure consistency between the documents.**

**57. VARIATION TO THE LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER AGREEMENT (LSVT) WITH HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING LTD**

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing introduced the report. She highlighted the need to provide appropriate accommodation to allow individuals in need of support to live at home. The proposed variation of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Agreement (LSVT) would enable the delivery of around 35 additional homes for supported living.

The community capacity and wellbeing manager summarised the report. Close to 6,000 properties had been transferred from the council to an independent housing provider, Herefordshire Housing Limited (HHL), in 2002. It was sometimes necessary for properties to be disposed of that were uneconomical to maintain, unsuitable for their purpose or difficult to let. The terms of the LSVT required the council to approve any disposals and the associated disposal clawback agreement entitled it to 50% of net capital receipts. The LSVT would expire in 2020 and at that point the council would no longer have any entitlement to capital receipts arising from disposal of properties.

HHL had requested that the council agree to the disposal of up to 20 properties and to waive its clawback entitlement so that the full capital receipt could be reinvested in the development of around 35 housing units, focused on supported housing for vulnerable people. HHL had indicated clearly that if the council was not minded to waive its entitlement then the disposals would be postponed until the agreement had expired. This being the case the council would not realise any capital receipt regardless of the decision made.

A group leader asked whether the council would be likely to take a similar approach on clawback entitlements regarding properties taken on by parish councils. The cabinet member for health and wellbeing stated that the HHL situation was quite unique but any similar proposals would be considered where there was a sound business case.

**Resolved that:**

- a) **a variation of the LSVT with HHL be approved to waive the clawback of capital receipts by the council where up to 20 properties are sold, conditional upon those properties meeting specified criteria for disposal and all net receipts from sales being invested in new social and affordable housing in Herefordshire; and**
- b) **the director for adults and wellbeing be authorised to determine the criteria and conditions to which the waiver will be subject in allowing disposals.**

## **58. REVISED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEST MERCIA ENERGY**

The cabinet member for infrastructure introduced the report. He noted the efforts of council officers to review and improve the governance arrangements for the joint purchasing operation.

The head of environment and waste services summarised the report and highlighted the key governance changes. The changes proposed would bring the governance arrangements in line with the latest regulations and decisions would be subject to scrutiny by each of the member authorities.

In response to a question from a group leader the monitoring officer confirmed that the report had not been to the audit and governance committee as that committee's role was to seek assurance on the revised arrangements rather than to determine them.

A group leader requested that minutes of the joint committee be made available on the Herefordshire council website rather than just on the Shropshire Council website as the lead authority. The cabinet member for infrastructure confirmed this would be explored.

A group leader asked what opportunities the revised arrangements could open up for WME and its owners. The cabinet member for infrastructure stated that the council would receive a proportion of any surplus arising from transactions with the member authorities and an equal share of any accumulated surplus generated by transactions with non-member authority customers.

In response to a query from a group leader the cabinet member for infrastructure reported that all four member authorities were very engaged with the joint purchasing operation but that Herefordshire council had particularly pushed for the proposed governance changes.

The leader thanked officers for the time invested in producing the revised joint agreement.

### **Resolved that:**

- a) the revised joint agreement at appendix 1 setting out the role, functions and terms of reference for the joint executive committee overseeing the strategy and direction of West Mercia Energy (WME) joint purchasing operation be approved; and**
- b) the assistant director communities be authorised to agree with the other constituent authorities any further amendments to the Joint Agreement required, following consultation with the cabinet member, prior to completion and to complete the necessary deeds of variation on behalf of the council.**

## **59. END OF SEPTEMBER CORPORATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services introduced the report.

The cabinet member for health and wellbeing noted a much improved position for adult social care, although challenges remained. There was a projected overspend for 2016/17. There had been an increase in the number of reviews completed, ensuring that the right care was being provided for the right people.

The director for children's wellbeing reported that the projected overspend in children's wellbeing was stable and there was confidence that savings would be delivered in

2017/18. The inspection by OfSTED and the Care Quality Commission of services for children with special educational needs and disabilities had recognised a number of strengths and this would be reported fully on receipt of the final inspection letter.

The director highlighted that education performance was improving in every key stage, with a 3 year trend of improvement. The performance of the early years foundation stage had shown particular improvement and Herefordshire was now in the top quartile nationally.

The cabinet member for economy and corporate services highlighted the projected underspend for the ECC directorate but warned that poor weather over the coming winter months could impact on this with additional gritting costs for example. He noted that the reduction in both the headcount and the level of absence had contributed to savings. The city centre link road was reported to be progressing and the energy from waste plant was ahead of schedule.

The director of resources reported that at the end of September 2016 the council was projecting a small overspend and that work was ongoing on the savings plan. He stated that he believed the council would achieve a balanced budget by the end of the financial year. The director noted slippage on capital spend and highlighted the potential impact of winter weather on projects. He also noted some small savings on borrowing costs due to low interest rates.

In response to a query from a group leader the director for economy communities and corporate stated that the overall income from car parking had increased but by less than had been forecast and the options to address this were being explored.

A scrutiny chair noted that the council had received a £2m grant for rural improvements and asked if some of this funding could be used for rural road repairs. The leader responded that a statement on the use of the grant would be made shortly.

A group leader noted that the adults and wellbeing budget had increased but the projected overspend had reduced by a lesser amount. The head of corporate finance highlighted that information had been combined in the dashboard but listed separately in the budget information.

It was noted that the children's dashboard did not have coloured RAG ratings on projects. This was inadvertent and the information could be recirculated if required. The director for children's wellbeing reported that by and large the projects listed were proceeding in accordance with the plans.

A group leader asked if some of the increase in costs in children's services could be due to actions the council had taken. The head of corporate finance responded that some of the planned savings would take time to implement. The director for children's wellbeing commented that the budget would be volatile depending on the number of children and level of need but that the number of children in care was reducing slowly. The summer period was a pressure point for the children's care budget as children were not in school and placements could come under pressure, leading to breakdowns and emergency action by the council. The council had a responsibility to step in if families could not provide appropriate care for children but renewed clarity over the thresholds for levels of intervention was delivering cost reductions.

In response to a query from a group leader the director for economy communities and corporate stated that the minerals and waste plan should be adopted in approximately 18 months time.



A group leader asked if worn white lines could be a contributing factor to the increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Herefordshire roads. The director for economy communities and corporate responded that this had not been flagged as a significant factor in accident investigation reports.

A group leader noted that the proportion of debt written off was small compared to other authorities. He asked for greater detail on the age of the debts and number and value of smaller write offs that were business rates as this could have an impact on the council in the future when business rates were retained.

The cabinet member for contracts and assets congratulated the collection team for the low levels of debt write offs.

A group leader queried if the WISH portal was now performing as expected and whether any feedback had been received showing how many people had contacted WISH directly rather than being referred through the council. The cabinet member for health and wellbeing responded that a review of the WISH service was being undertaken and that a report was expected shortly.

**Resolved that:**

- a) Cabinet notes the council is projected to spend within budget in 2016/17;  
and**
- b) Performance for the first six months of 2016/17 is considered.**

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

**CHAIRMAN**





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>1 December 2016</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Youth justice plan 2016/17</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing</b>

## Classification

Open

## Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

## Wards affected

Countywide

## Purpose

To recommend the Youth Justice Plan 2016/17 for approval by Council

## Recommendation(s)

**THAT:**

**(a) the Youth Justice Plan (at appendix A) be recommended to Council for approval.**

## Alternative options

- 1 There are no alternative options as a Youth Justice Plan is required to be produced on an annual basis.

## Reasons for recommendations

- 2 The Youth Justice Plan (the plan) forms part of the council's budget and policy framework and is therefore reserved to council to approve.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Keith Barham (YOS) (01905) 732200 or Jo Davidson (Director for Children's Wellbeing) on (01432)  
260039

- 3 The plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire County councils. The basic plan preparation is undertaken by the West Mercia Youth Offending Service according to the deadlines and from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB).
- 4 The plan sets out how youth justice services across West Mercia are structured and resourced and identifies key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement.
- 5 Under section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 each council has a duty to produce a plan setting out how youth justice services in their area are provided and funded and how the youth offending service for the area is funded and composed, the plan is submitted to the YJB.
- 6 The plan for 2016/17 was prepared in July 2016 in line with the guidance issued by the YJB.

## **Key considerations**

- 7 The youth offending service is subject to three national indicators. Performance against the indicators is outlined in the plan and actions identified to address risks to performance improvement. The Herefordshire specific information is set out on pages 28-32 of the plan.
- 8 The first time entrant (FTE) indicator which is expressed as the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system per 100,000 youth population was 566 for Herefordshire in 2015, representing a reduction of 2% from 2014 where the FTE rate was 578. Herefordshire was the only area in West Mercia to experience a reduction in first time entrants between 2014 and 2015. The general trend has been downward since 2009 when the Herefordshire rate was 1119 per 100,000 youth population. The Herefordshire rate is higher than the average rate for West Mercia, 506 and the average rate for England, 369. This is in part due to better detection rates than in other areas.
- 9 The second indicator is the use of custody indicator, which is measured as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 youth population. The use of custody performance for the year 2015/16 was 0.12. This is an improvement in performance from 2014/15 when the rate was 0.25, this compares favourable against the national rate of 0.37.
- 10 The third indicator is re-offending. There are two measures both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency rate, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends in the cohort. The second is the percentage of the young people in the cohort who have re-offended. Due to the way that the Ministry of Justice measure this indicator there is a time delay in publishing the results. The most recent data that could be included in the plan was for the cohort identified in the period July 2013 to June 2014, whose reoffending was tracked for a twelve month period until June 2015.
- 11 The frequency measure for Herefordshire for the cohort identified for the period July 2013 to June 2014 is 3.19 and this shows improved performance from the previous year when the rate was 3.43. The rate is better than for West Mercia, 3.24 and slightly worse than for England, 3.14.

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- 12 The percentage of young people who have re-offended in Herefordshire for cohort identified in the period July 2013 to June 2014 is 44%. This is significantly higher than for the previous year at 29%. When the two measures are taken together it can be seen that although there is a higher proportion of the cohort re-offending they are re-offending less frequently. The performance is worse than for West Mercia, 33.4% and for England 37.7%.
- 13 The service implemented a tool during 15/16, which tracks re-offending of current cases in real time, allowing for the review of interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs. The management board intends to have a focus on re-offending during 16/17 and has commissioned a report to form the basis of a themed meeting to identify further actions.
- 14 The plan outlines key actions to improve service provision in 2016/17 under four main priorities:-
- (i) Improving performance and developing practice
- Implementation of a new case management system
  - Implementation of the new national assessment framework, AssetPlus
  - Reviewing and revising the quality assurance framework
  - Developing the curriculum of the junior attendance centres
  - Revising the management of risk processes
  - Evaluating a youth bureau approach for out of court disposal decision making
- (ii) Understanding our young people
- Analysis to determine the reasons behind the rising rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system
  - Build on the work undertaken in 15/16 to capture the voice of the service user and to ensure service users views are better represented at the service's management board
  - To further build on and develop the needs assessment and evidence base
- (iii) Improved joint working and Integration
- Re-establish the looked after children reference group
  - Agree a multi-agency protocol to reduce offending by and the criminalisation of looked after children
  - Developing a new protocol with providers of probation services to ensure that the approach to the transition from youth to adult criminal justice services is informed by best practice and takes account of the recommendations of a thematic inspection by HMI Probation
  - Supporting West Mercia Police in their roll out of decision making forums for looked after children
- (iv) Governance and Communication
- Transfer the hosting arrangement for the service to the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
  - Agree and implement a revised service structure

## **Community impact**

- 15 The principal aim of the youth justice system is the prevention of offending and re-offending by children and young people. The plan sets out an action plan to address the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.
- 16 The plan supports the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2015 - 2018, by planning actions to improve the outcomes for children and young people who are in the youth justice system and working to minimise the risks associated with any harm they may pose to others and any harm posed to them.
- 17 The plan directly contributes to the reducing re-offending priority in the Herefordshire Community Safety Strategic Plan 2014/17.
- 18 The plan supports priority 2 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in working to reduce offending, anti-social behaviour and re-offending by young people.

## **Equality duty**

- 19 The plan will support the Council in its overall duty to promote equality. In particular the plan makes proposals to improve the outcomes of children and young people who are conflict with the law, by ensuring that their diversity factors are assessed and assisting them in accessing services that meet their needs.

## **Financial implications**

- 20 The 2016/17 financial contribution to the YOS by the council is £197k. This contribution represents a 15% saving from the 15/16 contribution.

## **Legal implications**

- 21 This is a Key Decision to be taken by Cabinet in line with the Part 3, Section 3 of the council's constitution.
- 22 All Local Authorities have a statutory duty, as set out under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to formalise and implement for each year a Youth Justice Plan following consultation with the relevant persons (Police, Probation and Health) as set out in Section 38(2) of the Act. The plan must set out how youth justice services in the local authority area are to be provided and funded; and how the youth offending team established by the local authority are composed, funded, how they are to operate and what functions they are to carry out. Plans must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales in a form and by a date set by the Secretary of State.
- 23 The plan appended to this report, when submitted to the Youth Justice Board, will meet this statutory duty.

## **Risk management**

- 24 The risks are identified in the plan, together with the actions to mitigate them.
- 25 The hosting of West Mercia YOS was transferred to the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner on 1 April 2016. A new service structure will be implemented in the second half of 2016/17.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Keith Barham (YOS) (01905) 732200 or Jo Davidson (Director for Children's Wellbeing) on (01432)  
260039

## **Consultees**

- 26 Through their management board representatives Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police, the National Probation Service and the Office of the West Mercia PCC have been consulted and their representative's agreed the plan in August 2016.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - West Mercia Youth Justice Plan 2016/17

## **Background papers**

- None identified.





# WEST MERCIA YOUTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP



## YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

2016/17



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction from the Karen Bradshaw, Chair of West Mercia Youth Justice Service Management Board and Director of Children Services, Shropshire Council**



West Mercia Youth Justice Service (WMYJS) is partnership between the Local Authorities, National Probation Service, West Mercia Police, NHS organisations across West Mercia and the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. The service is accountable to the WMYJS Management Board, comprised of senior officers from each partner agency. The service was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 replacing the previous Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Youth Offending Service and the Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service following a review of how youth justice services were provided across the West Mercia area. A second phase of the review, completed in 2015/16, has resulted in the decision for the service to be hosted by the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

As we enter 2016/17 the partnership faces a number of challenges which include a significant reduction in funding from central government, along with reductions from partner agencies and the intention to implement a major re-structure of the service during the first six months of the year. This is combined with change programmes to introduce a new case management and information system and implement a new assessment and planning framework over the same period. The partnership is additionally awaiting the publication of the Ministry of Justice's national review of youth justice, led by Charlie Taylor, which is likely to signal far reaching changes in youth justice policy and delivery.

During 2015/16 WMYJS has, in particular, concentrated on improving the quality of assessments and plans following the findings of the Short Quality Screening of the service undertaken by HMI Probation in early 2015. Monthly audits have demonstrated a sustained improvement in the quality of assessment and planning throughout 2015/16. There is, however, a mixed picture in relation to performance against the national performance indicators. Performance in respect of the rate of young people receiving a custodial sentence has improved with the rate decreasing from 0.22 sentences per 1000 youth population in 14/15 to 0.14 in 15/16, this rate is significantly below national rate of 0.37. Although good progress has been achieved in reducing the number of young people receiving custodial sentences, the other two indicators, first time entrants to the youth justice system (FTEs) and re-offending have shown a slight deterioration, the FTE rate has risen from 431 per 100,000 youth population to 506 between 2014 and 2015, and the proportion of young people re-offending has increased from 30.7% for the July 2012 to June 2013 cohort to 34.7% for the July 2013 to June 2014 cohort, although this below the national rate which is at 37.7%. More detail on the national performance indicators is provided in section 2.7.

Although the FTE rate is to a large extent outside of the direct control of the youth justice service the service will be working with the Police during 16/17 to identify the main factors driving not just the increase but also the differences in the rates between the local authority areas in West Mercia. The service is piloting a bureau approach to out of court disposal decision making in Shropshire, and at the time of writing it is too early to ascertain whether this is having a positive effect on diverting young people from formal justice system sanctions, where it is appropriate to do so, but the management board look forward to receiving the evaluation of the pilot which is due at the end of the calendar year.

The re-offending rate is volatile and varies year on year in a range between 30% and 34% with no real overall trend either upward or downward. The service implemented a tool during 15/16, which tracks re-offending of current cases in real time, allowing for the review of interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs. The management board intends to have a focus on re-offending during 16/17 and has commissioned a report to form the basis of a themed meeting to identify further actions.

The management board welcomed the work undertaken by the service during 15/16 to capture the voice of the service user, this included a revised service user feedback process, the implementation of a new compliments, comments and complaints process and the use of the ViewPoint survey. Some summary feedback is given in section 2.6, but the headline statistic from the ViewPoint survey was that 88% of young people said that the work with the service had made them less likely to offend. Further work is required in 16/17 to ensure that voice of the service user is better represented at the management board. Some comments from service users or their carers are provided in speech bubbles throughout the body of this report.

The service and management board do not work in isolation in reducing offending by children and young people and improving the outcomes for children and young people who have entered or at risk of entering the youth justice system. The board is committed to promoting more integrated and joint work between the service and other agencies at the local area level, in particular with social care services, especially in relation to looked after children who are over represented in the youth justice system. In 16/17 the looked after children reference group of the board will be re-established. It is planned to agree a multi-agency protocol to reduce the offending by and the criminalisation of looked after children. Work is also planned with the National Probation Service to improve the arrangements for young people transitioning from youth to adult criminal justice services. Other key relevant plans are the Children and Young People's Plans, Community Safety Strategies and the Health and Wellbeing Plans for each area and the Safer West Mercia Plan. The management board recognise the need to make strategic alliances with other relevant boards and governance bodies.



**Karen Bradshaw – Chair of West Mercia Youth Justice Service Management Board**

## 2. REVIEW OF 2015/16

### 2.1 Changes in Service Delivery Arrangements

Following a review of service delivery arrangements undertaken during 15/16 the four Local Authorities and partner agencies agreed to transfer the hosting arrangements for the WMYJS to the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The review agreed a new structure for WMYJS which is to be implemented during the first 6 months of 2016/17. A diagram of the new WMYJS structure is included in section 3 of this plan.

I felt my child was safe when they were with YOS (parent of service user)

### 2.2 Review of Key Developments 2015/16

The YOS Management Board agreed four main overarching priorities for 2015/16. The following were achieved during 2015/16.

#### (i) Priority 1 - Improving Performance and Developing Practice

- Monthly auditing of assessments and plans undertaken independently to teams line management was implemented which resulted in a increase in compliance to the service's quality standards
- The Junior Attendance Centre serving Worcestershire and Herefordshire was re-establishing following being closed since December 2014
- A short screening tool was developed to identify young people who are either at risk of becoming victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) or potential perpetrators of CSE.
- Piloting a bureau approach to pre-court decision making in Shropshire
- The development of a new service Operations Manual which includes comprehensive recording guidance.
- The merger of ICT systems to bring the whole service onto a single ICT platform

**(ii) Priority 2 - Understanding our Young People**

- Tracking tools for re-offending, education, training and employment and victim work were developed and implemented.
- Through a newly established participation development group new service user feedback processes were put in place including end of intervention feedback questionnaires, the “Tell Us” comments, compliments and complaints process and a “Think Participation” resource was developed for practitioners.
- Further development of the annual WMYJS needs assessment

I stopped offending. Kept drinking to a minimum. I think before I do things now. (service user)

**(iii) Priority 3 - Improved Joint Working and Integration**

- Continued focus on joint issues between WMYJS and social care and Police for looked after children, in particular through the work of the Management Board sub group and participation in the Police LAC decision making process pilot in Shropshire.
- Piloting joint WMYJS and Children Social Care workshops in one authority area
- Agreement of a multi-agency protocol to ensure young people charged and denied bail are transferred to local authority accommodation

**(iv) Priority 4 - Governance and Communication**

- Completion of the West Mercia review of youth justices services with decisions to transfer the hosting of the YOS to the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, and a agreed new structure to be implemented during 2016/17
- Joint management team and management board workshop based around the learning points from a discretionary serious case review
- Introduction of practice presentations at management board meetings
- Confirmation of a health (CCG) representative for the YJS management board.

## 2.3 Innovative Practice

WMYJS has been working with West Mercia Police in the Shropshire area to pilot an approach to decision making for LAC, particularly those in children homes where the offending has occurred in the context of the placement. The process is due to rolled out across the Police strategic alliance area of Warwickshire and West Mercia during 2016/17. Although not innovative in itself WMYS has been piloting a bureau approach to pre-court decision making in Shropshire which compliments the work of the LAC forum.

## 2.4 Thematic Inspections

During 2015/16 the WMYJS Management Board has considered the findings from the following thematic inspections; A Inspection to Assess the Effectiveness of the Reporting, Monitoring and Learning from the Youth Justice Boards Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Incident (CSPPI) Procedures and Transition Arrangements: A Follow Up Inspection. Processes are to be put in place to address the youth justice partnership and service specific recommendations in the CSPPI report and it has been agreed to develop a new local transition protocol with NPS which will take into account the recommendations of the transitions report.

## 2.5 Youth Offending in West Mercia

More detailed information on offending types, offenders by age and gender and numbers and offenders by proportion of youth population for each local authority area are contained in appendices 1 to 4 of this plan.

- In West Mercia there has been a 67% reduction in the number of young people committing offences over the past ten years from 3995 young people offending in 2005 to 1310 in 2015.

### Case Study - Reparation Project

WMYJS were approached by a parish council and asked to renovate a bus shelter.



Following a risk assessment, four young people worked on the preparation phase



Meanwhile other young people made flower boxes at the workshop in Telford

This then all came together in a renovated bus shelter with uniform paintwork, varnished benches and a freshly painted interior.



The local community have been thrilled, are looking after the flower boxes and the Parish Council were very pleased with the work done. They have agreed to circulate this success to other parishes to increase the potential work available to young people in future.



- The majority (82.4%) of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time in 2015 were aged 14 or over
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of first time entrants to the youth justice system during 2015 were female
- The four most prevalent offence types are violence against the person, theft and handling, criminal damage and drug related offences.
- Just over a third of young people (36.3%) receiving outcomes in 2015 that required YOS interventions were children in care
- Whilst there are some variations across the local authority areas the four most prevalent assessed areas of risk and need are thinking and behaviour, family and personal relationships, lifestyle and mental health and wellbeing.
- Young people from outside of West Mercia have a significant impact on the levels of youth crime in West Mercia. Out of area young people were responsible for 15.2% of all offending resulting in a substantive outcome in 2015.
- In 2015 just under half (49%) of young people receiving outcomes that require YOS interventions have mental health or emotional well being issues.

## 2.6 Views of Young People

The following data is taken from a ViewPoint survey of 76 young people who were subject to court orders managed by West Mercia YJS undertaken during the last six months of 2015/16.

- 88% said that the work with the WMYJS has made them less likely to offend
- 97% said that the service given to them by the WMYJS was good most or all of the time
- 92% said they had enough say what went into their intervention plan
- 44% said they needed help with school, training or getting a job, of those needing help 90% said they received the help needed
- 29% said they needed help to cut down drug use and of those needing help 80% said they received the help needed.
- 19% said they needed help with relationships or things about their family, of those needing help 85% said they received the help needed.
- 19% said they needed help to deal with strange or upsetting thoughts, of those needing help 85% said they received the help needed
- 46% said they needed help to understand how to stop offending, of those needing help 97% said they received the help needed

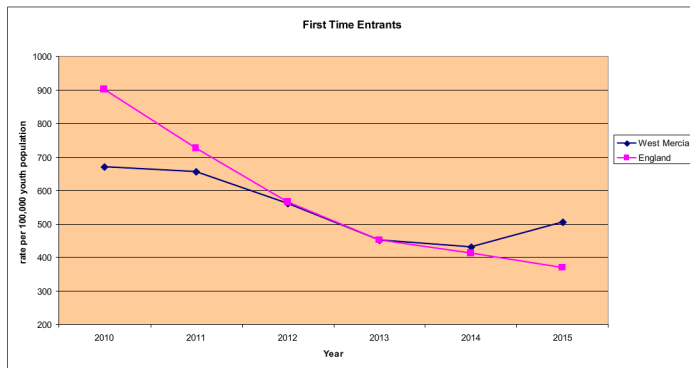


## 2.7 Performance Review

Youth Justice Partnerships are subject to three national indicators;

- First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
- Use of Custody
- Re-Offending

### (i) First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTE)



The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (Youth Caution, Youth Conditional Caution or

Conviction). A lower figure denotes good performance.

The rate of FTEs across West Mercia for 2015 was 506, which is an deterioration on the performance for 2014 when the FTE rate was 431. The rate in West Mercia for 2015 is higher than the national rate of 369.

The percentage reduction in the rate of FTEs in West Mercia over the period 2010 to 2015 has been 26%.

### Case Study – The Pilot Youth Bureau



This is a pilot scheme that aims to assess all young people coming to police notice, issuing the fairest and most effective decision and where necessary, intervention to reduce the likelihood of further offending.

The Youth Bureau involves a Police decision maker, WMYOS staff, a panel member (a trained and vetted member of the community) and other professionals where relevant.

The young person and their parents/carers then attend to receive the decision and implement any intervention straight away.

This pilot is due to report in autumn 2016

Case one – Sexting - A sixteen year old school boy with no previous offending history who forwarded an indecent image to a friend and like many other young people, he had not realised that he had committed an offence until he was dealt with by Police.

He was extremely remorseful and naïve. Prior to the bureau being in place, he may well have received a caution direct from police. This would have also attracted sex offender registration. The ongoing restrictions would then have affected his future employment prospects.

WMYJS were able to offer an enhanced community resolution along with a package of intervention around safe internet use and appropriate internet safety interventions.

There have been no further allegations about this young person.

Case two – Racial Harassment - This relates to a fifteen year old Shropshire school girl who racially abused the victim. There had been some minor contact with police previously.

On this occasion she was assessed by WMYJS and it was clear that there were vulnerability issues. These impacted on her ability and consequently her understanding of the impact of her behaviour.

As a result of the Bureau an enhanced community resolution has been able to be issues supported by an intervention programme delivered by WMYJS to address self esteem, impact of her behaviour on others and referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for assessment and support.

Had this young person been dealt with by the police alone it is likely that she would have received a youth caution, no further support and the identified issues would have continued, potentially leading to further harm to the community

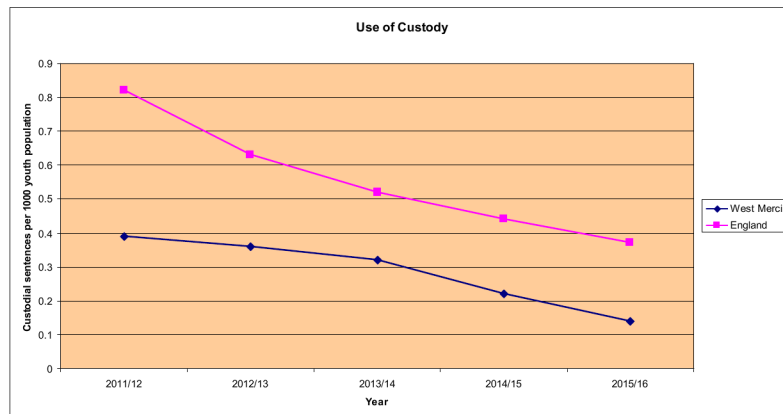
There have been no further allegations about this young person.

Within West Mercia there are differing FTE rates between the four Local Authority areas, with the highest being 641 and the lowest 386. Some initial analysis undertaken in 2014 demonstrated that the highest rate was in part, a result of higher detection rates and a lower proportional use of the informal disposal of Community Resolution. Further analysis is required to ascertain the reasons behind the rise in the FTE rate experienced during 2015

I haven't offended again since being with YOS. I have learnt about victim awareness and having to put yourself in someone else's shoes. (service user)

The first time entrant rate is to a great extent outside of the control of the WMYJS, however WMYJS, jointly with West Mercia Police are piloting a bureau approach to out of court decision making in Shropshire which aims to divert low level offenders from formal justice sanctions through the use of restorative processes.

## (ii) Use of Custody



The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. West Mercia has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences. A lower figure denotes good performance.

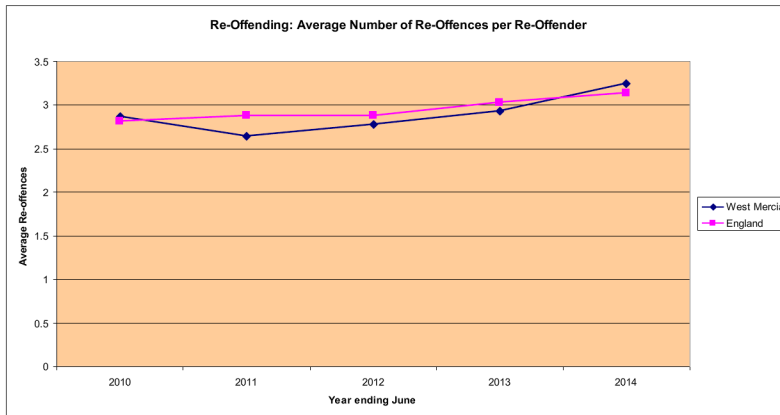
For 2015/16 the use of custody rate for West Mercia was 0.14 against the rate for England of 0.37, West Mercia performance is, therefore, significantly better than the national performance. The West Mercia rate for 15/16 has improved from 14/15 when it was 0.22.

Over the four year period of 2011/12 to 2015/16 the rate has reduced from 0.39 to 0.14, a reduction of -64% which compares favourably to the reduction of -55% for England over the same period

The actual fall in custodial sentences was from 46 in 2011/12 to 16 in 2015/16, a reduction of 65%.

### (iii) Re-Offending

There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per re-offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the cohort identified in the year ending July 2013 to June 2014. In both measures a lower figure denotes good performance.

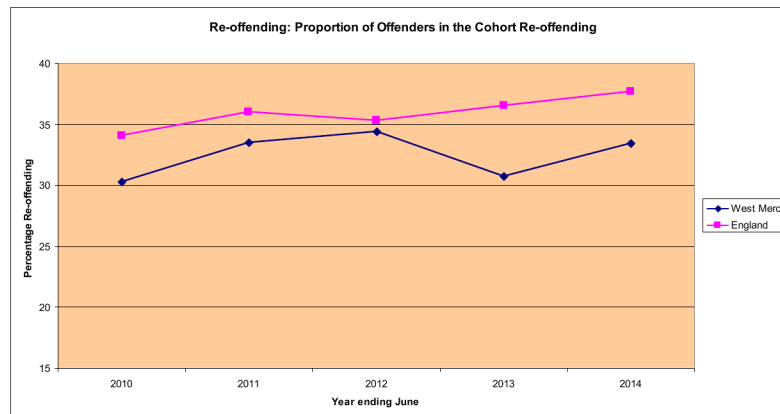


For the year ending June 2014 the frequency measure performance for West Mercia was 3.25, compared to national performance 3.14.

A comparison over the five year period of the years ending June 2010 and the year ending June 2014, shows a 13% increase in the rate from 2.87 to 3.25, over the same period the rate for England has risen by 12%.

The binary measure performance for the year ending June 2014 for West Mercia is 33.4% compared with national performance of 37.7%.

A comparison over the five year period for the year ending June 2010 to the year ending June 2014, show that this measure is volatile varying year on year in a range between 30% and 34%. The national rate also shows a year on year variation over the same period but within the range of 34% and 38%.



It should be noted that the cohort size is falling, from 1975 young people in the June 2010 cohort compared to 811 young people in the June 2014 cohort. The number of re-offences has also decreased over the same period from 1718 to 882 a decrease of -49%.

In 2015/16 the YOS implemented a re-offending tracker tool, which provides re-offending information in real time allowing for review of the interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs. Early

information from the tracker tool has identified that only a small proportion of young people re-offend leading to a further conviction whilst subject to a YOS intervention, between September and December 2015 only 3.6% of young people subject to YOS interventions were reconvicted of a further offence.

### 3. RESOURCES AND STRUCTURE

#### 3.1 Income

The Youth Offending Service has a complex budget structure comprising of partner agency cash, seconded staff and in kind contributions and the Youth Justice (YOT) Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The table below outlines the agreed contributions for 2016/17.

I felt treated as a person and not a criminal (service user)

Agency	Staffing costs Secondees (£)	Payments in kind – revenue (£)	Other delegated funds (£)	Total (£)
Local Authorities <sup>1</sup>			1,228,499	1,228,499
Police Service	237,892		63,000	300,892
National Probation Service	126,066		115,066	241,132
Health Service	129,860		51,894	181,754
Police and Crime Commissioner			180,293	180,293
YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant			1,140,721	1,140,721
<b>Total</b>	<b>493,818</b>		<b>2,779,473</b>	<b>3,273,291</b>

In addition to the YJB Youth Justice Grant outlined in the table there is a further grant for the running of the Junior Attendance Centres of £50,318.

<sup>1</sup> Where YOTs cover more than one local authority area YJB Youth Justice Plan guidance requires the totality of local authority contributions to be described as a single figure.

### 3.2 The YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant

The YJB Youth Justice (YOT) Grant is provided for the provision of youth justice services with an aim of achieving the following outcomes; reducing re-offending, reducing first time entrants, reducing the use of custody, effective public protection and effective safeguarding. The grant will form part of the overall pooled partnership budget for WMYOS, which is used to deliver and support youth justice services across West Mercia. The outline draft budget for 2016/17 is provided below, the expenditure against the Youth Justice Grant is included in this budget.

I've also done work around my victim and have met him face to face this made me feel like I could get my own apology across and I faced up to my actions (service user)

This draft budget has been profiled on the service structure at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, and will be re-profiled mid year to take account of service re-structure.

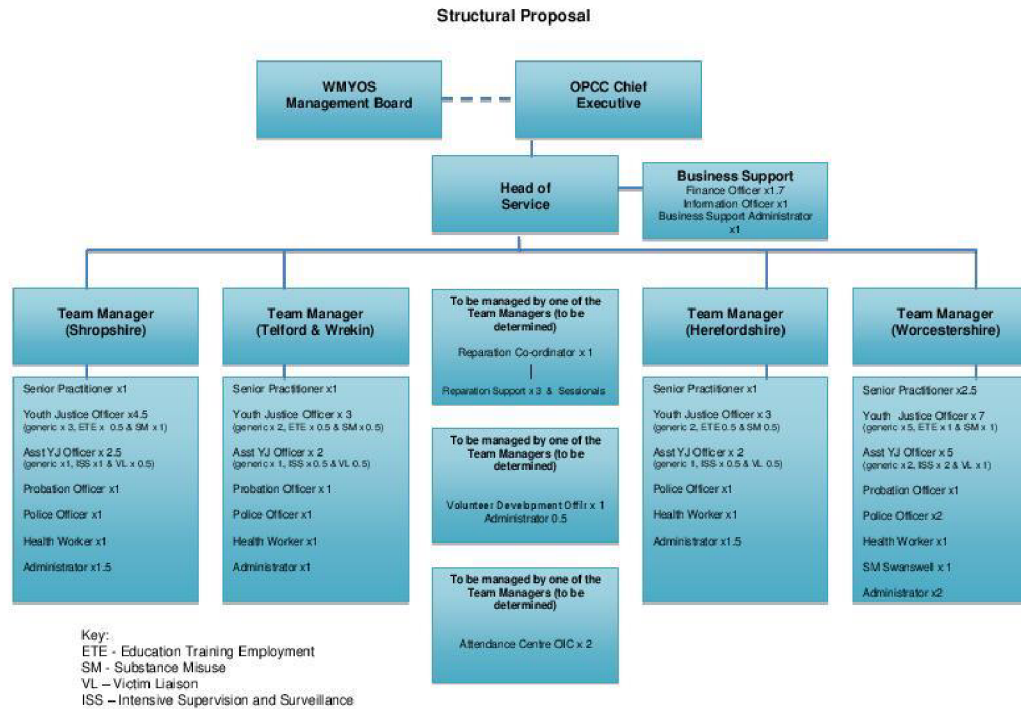
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Category	Budget (£)
Salary and Wages	2,410,276
Travel and Expenses	122,880
Training and Development	23,680
Accommodation	197,356
Voluntary Associations	0
Commissioning	82,730
ICT	86,530
Other	35,150

West Mercia YJS is due to implement AssetPlus, the new national assessment tool for YOTs in June 2016, this will also coincide with the implementation of the ChildView information system. It has been agreed that the implementation costs of these two systems are to be met from reserves.

### 3.3 WMYJS Structure and Staffing

The West Mercia Youth Offending Service currently comprises five multi-agency service delivery teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas (two teams in Worcestershire) to deliver the majority of services supported by a central services team. In the first six months of 2016/17 a revised structure is being implemented which will comprise four area teams aligned to the Local Authority areas. A structural diagram of the new structure is given below.



The YOS is compliant with the minimum staffing requirements outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as can be seen from the structural diagram above. There are four HCPC registered Social Workers within the staffing group.



### 3.4 Staff and Volunteers by agency, gender and ethnicity

The tables below show staff and volunteers by agency, gender and ethnicity. This data is at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

My attitude has improved towards my dad, I have calmed down a little bit. (service user)

PAID STAFF BY AGENCY							
Agency	Local Authorities	National Probation Service	Police	NHS Trusts	Voluntary Sector	Agency	Total
No of Staff	69	1	5	1	4	2	82

PAID STAFF BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY						
GENDER		ETHNICITY				
Male	Female	White	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Asian/Asian British	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	Other Ethnic Group
28	54	78		3	1	

VOLUNTEERS BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY						
GENDER		ETHNICITY				
Male	Female	White	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Asian/Asian British	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	Other Ethnic Group
37	57	89	2	2	1	

### 3.5 Staff and Volunteers Trained in Restorative Justice

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 there are 63 staff and 32 panel members trained in Restorative Justice (RJ) conferencing, 8 staff are trained in managing complex cases and 5 managers have training in RJ supervision and management. There are 4 members of staff who are trainers in RJ, and 18 staff have received specific training in victim liaison and contact.

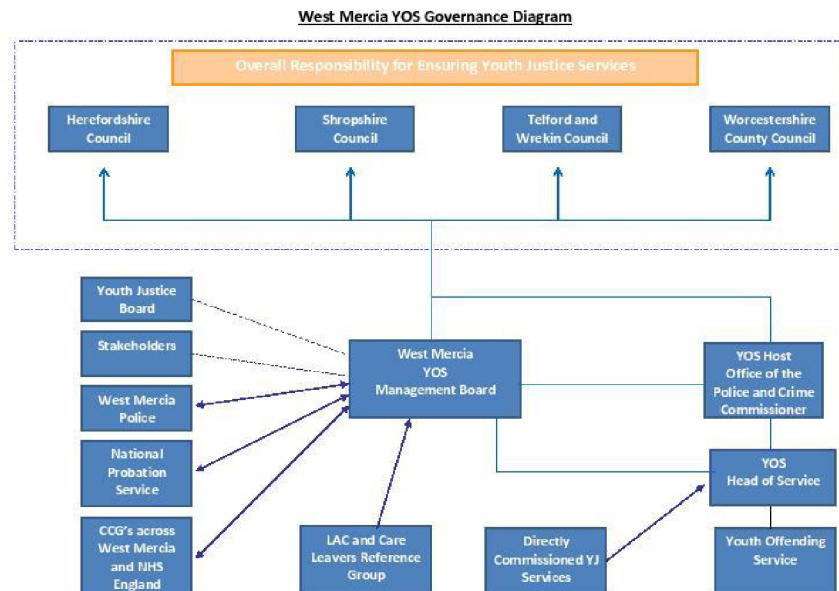


## 4. GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

### 4.1 Governance

WMYJS is managed on behalf of the Local Authorities and the WMYJS partnership by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner West Mercia (OPCC). Day to day management of the Head of Service is provided by jointly the Chief Executive of the OPCC and the Chair of the Management Board (DCS Shropshire). The Youth Offending Service is accountable to the WMYJS Management Board and the Management Board is accountable to each of the Local Authorities for the commissioning and delivery of youth justice services.

The partnership Youth Justice Plan is approved by the Management Board and approved by each of the four top tier Councils. The diagram below outlines the governance arrangements of West Mercia Youth Justice Service.



The Youth Justice Service Management Board is currently chaired by the Director of Children Services for Shropshire Council. The Membership of the Board at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 is outlined in the table below:

I can now express my feelings better, make better decisions. I'm going to college. (service user)

Agency	Representative	Role
Worcestershire County Council	Simon White	Director of Children Services
Shropshire Council	Karen Bradshaw	Director of Children Services
Telford and Wrekin Council	Clive Jones	Director of Children, Family and Adult Services
Herefordshire Council	Jo Davidson	Director of Childrens Wellbeing
National Probation Service	Tom Currie	Head of West Mercia
West Mercia Police	Amanda Blakeman	Assistant Chief Constable
West Mercia Clinical Commissioning Groups	Vacant at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016	
Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner	Andy Champness	Chief Executive

The Board has adopted the following purpose and underlying principles:

### Purpose

- To focus collaborative multi-agency effort on work to improve outcomes for Young Offenders by offering an exemplary service, with timely interventions and strong links and partnership across all local services including Children's Services, criminal justice and community safety sectors.
- To set strategic direction for the Youth Offending Service across West Mercia and agree and review local youth justice planning
- To provide support and challenge to the West Mercia YJS on operational performance.

### Underpinning Principles

- To demonstrate effective leadership, support and challenge to the West Mercia YJS.
- To ensure that WMYJS is compliant with relevant national standards, including Youth Justice Board and local arrangements, and deals with exceptions/risks appropriately
- To ensure available resources are used efficiently to run an effective service.
- To ensure that Local Authorities jointly and singly manage the arrangements with the host agency.
- To provide the necessary governance to effectively steer the delivery of the service

The Management Board meets every two months and monitors the performance and quality of the service through regular reporting. Where necessary the Management Board will monitor compliance with the YJB Grant conditions through exception reports. There is an agreed process of reporting community safeguarding and public protection incident reviews into the Management Board and the Board monitors the progress of critical learning review action plans as a standard agenda item

I have learnt new skills, such as painting, cutting trees etc whilst out with my reparation worker (service user)

The Management Board ensures that, where relevant, commissioning across partner agencies take account of the needs of young people in or at risk of entering the youth justice system, and where appropriate explore joint commissioning arrangements.

#### 4.2 Priorities for 2016/17

The Management Board agreed four main priorities for 2015/16 and has decided to continue these for 2016/17

1. Improving Performance and Developing Practice
2. Understanding our Young People
3. Improved Joint Working and Integration
4. Governance and Communication

##### 1. Improving Performance and Developing Practice

As a response to various service audits and the SQS inspection of the service published in May 2015 the service implemented a new quality assurance and performance framework during 2015/16, resulting in an increase in compliance against locally defined standards that were applied to the assessment and planning process. In 2016/17 WMYJS will be implementing both a new information system, ChildView and the new national assessment framework, AssetPlus. These developments will require the implementation of a revised quality assurance and performance framework during 16/17. The Worcestershire and Herefordshire Junior Attendance Centre was re-opened in 2015/16, further work is required in 2016/17 to identify a permanent officer in charge and develop the curriculum of both centres in West Mercia. At the end of 2015/16 WMYJS implemented a pilot bureau approach to out of court disposal decision making. This pilot is due to end in Q2 2016/17, when it will be evaluated and potentially rolled out across West Mercia. Following the implementation of the new assessment process the service will need to review the current risk management processes.

## 2. Understanding our Young People

As noted in the performance section of this plan there was a rise in the first time entrant rate in West Mercia in 2015 and this is contrary to the national trend. Work will be undertaken to try and understand the reasons behind this. Previous work to identify drivers behind the differing rates across West Mercia identified detection rates and out of court disposal decision making to be significant factors, so this will inform the start point for further analysis. A service participation group was established in 2015/16, leading on service user engagement. The group revised the service user feedback process, and implemented a comments, compliments and complaints scheme. The work needs to be built on during 2016/17, to ensure that positive use is made of the feedback and ensure the voice of service users is heard by WMYJS management board. A needs assessment developed in 15/16 will be built on to inform service planning for 2017/18.

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## 3. Improved Joint Working and Integration

Promoting greater integrated and joint working between WMYJS and other services remains a key priority. The LAC group will be revitalised in order to continue to look at joint issues between Children's Social Care and WMYJS in relation to children in care. WMYJS will take a lead in agreeing a multi-agency protocol to reduce the need to criminalise looked after children. A revised case transfer protocol between the YOS and the providers of probation services will be developed taking account the thematic inspection on transitions published by HMI Probation during 15/16 and to ensure that the approach to transition is informed by the T2A principles, and work the young person following transition builds on the work undertaken by WMYJS. During 15/16 a decision making forum for looked after children was piloted by West Mercia Police in Shropshire, supported by and involving the WMYJS. WMYJS will continue to support this initiative as it is rolled out across the Police strategic alliance area.

### Case Study – Restorative Justice Conference

Restorative justice involves the bringing together of the victim and the offender in order to repair the harm that has been caused. WMYOS has trained its entire front line staff in the use of restorative justice techniques, in order that this can be used wherever possible.



The most benefit can often be gained from a restorative justice conference. These are only held if the victim wants this form of intervention to happen. It is a right under the victim charter for these to be available in all areas of the country from youth justice services.

Following preparation of both the victim and offender, then a meeting is held that enables the victim to explain how they have been affected by the offenders actions. Many victims find this to be helpful in many ways.

17 year old Robert was involved in the robbery of a mobile phone, in Cambridge, where Robert was living at the time of the offence. The victim was a Japanese national who was working with one of the university colleges to assist them with biology studies.

Robert went to court and received a court order for 12 months. From the beginning of the WMYJS involvement Robert was willing to engage with the victim for restorative justice purposes.

During the time period between court and the restorative justice conference taking place, Robert had his own mobile phone stolen. This increased his understanding of how his victim could be feeling.

The restorative justice conference took place in a mutually agreed venue in Cambridge. The conference was far reaching for both the victim and Robert. The victim explained the effect of the robbery, losing his contacts, impacting on his relationship and hindering his work. He was frightened by the robbery, not going out on his own.

The conference was a success with the victim able to understand that he was not deliberately targeted, that is was not a racial attack and was not going to be repeated. He has been able to go out on his own since.

For Robert the lasting outcome has been that this appears to have made Robert stop and think about the impact of his behaviour on others when he is able to identify an obvious victim.

## 4. Governance and Communication

During 2015/16 the Management Board completed the service review and agreed to transfer the service to the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Due to the financial pressures faced by the service a review of the service structure has commenced with the aim of the Management Board agreeing a new service structure in the first quarter of 2016/17 with implementation to take place during the first half of 16/17.

### 4.3 Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a key area of focus for the service. WMYJS has a key role in safeguarding young people, in terms of assessing and reducing the risk of harm to the young people either from their own behaviour or the actions of others and reducing the risk of harm they may pose to others.

There are specific actions under each of the four main priorities which address safeguarding within service delivery, these include the AssetPlus implementation, review of the risk management processes and the work to reduce the need to criminalise looked after children. WMYJS will continue to undertake critical learning reviews when safeguarding or public protection incidents occur, and apply any learning to future service delivery. The YJS is reviewing safeguarding policy and developing more of a focus on domestic abuse, and peer domestic abuse.

### 4.4 Partnerships

The Youth Justice Service only has one outsourced service, the provision of Appropriate Adults for young people in Police custody. The service is provided by a local voluntary sector organisation YSS.

WMYJS is a member of the four Safeguarding Children Boards and several of the board's sub groups and the Children's Trusts or equivalent partnerships. The YOS is represented on the Crime and Disorder reduction partnerships at the unitary or top tier authority level. The YOS is an active member of the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board and the MAPPA Senior Management Board.

WMYJS is represented on the strategic planning groups of Troubled Families programmes across three areas and has been contributing to all four programmes mostly the exchange of data and information, and directly contributing to delivery where relevant.

WMYJS is represented on the Channel Panels across West Mercia established as part of the Prevent strategy. YOS staff have undertaken WRAP training in most areas. Further work is required to ensure that the YOS is able to respond in delivering appropriate programmes of intervention to young people who are at risk of extremism.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has a children and young peoples strategy which has four priority areas; Children in Care, Detention, Custody and Criminalisation, Stop and Search and Engagement. Locally Warwickshire and West Mercia Police have established a Children and Young Peoples Board to take forward a local plan based on the national priorities above, and WMYJS are participants within this. A joint protocol regarding the PACE transfer of young people charged and denied police bail between the Police, WMYJS and Local Authorities has been agreed. WMYJS is currently leading the work on developing a multi-agency protocol to reduce the criminalisation of children in care.



## 5. RISKS TO FUTURE DELIVERY – THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

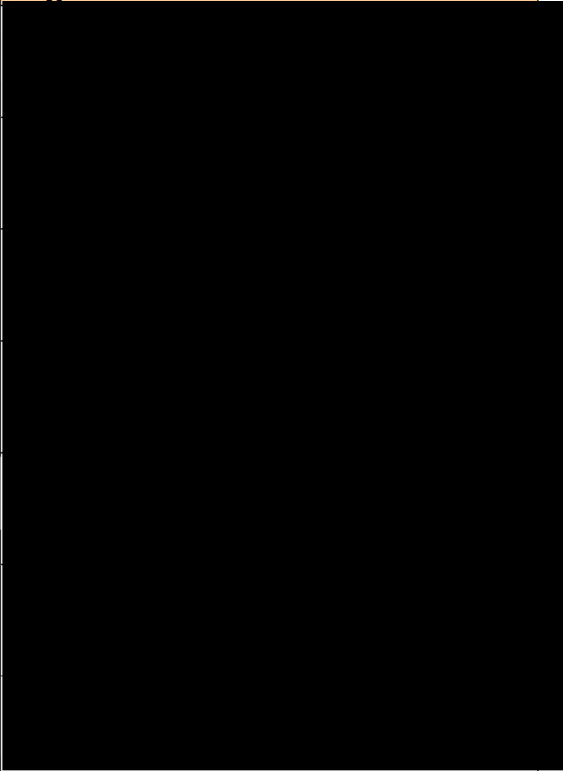
Risk to Future Delivery	Action	Key Priority	Owner	Timescale (by end of quarter)
<b>Priority 1 – Improving Performance and Developing Practice</b>				
Intervention plans not sufficiently addressing assessed risks leading to increased risk of re-offending, increased risks of harm to others or increased risks of harm to self.	Staff Training – AssetPlus and ChildView	1	AP Lead and ICT Lead	Q1
	Implementation of AssetPlus assessment framework	1	AP Lead	Q1
YOIS does not support the new assessment framework	Upgrade Client/Management Information system to ChildView	1	ICT Lead	Q1
JACs not meeting the national specifications	Further development of the JAC programme	1	AC Lead	Q3
QA and Performance Framework not designed to support new APIS framework	Revised QA process and tools to be developed	1	QA Lead	Q3
Inconsistent risk planning processes/ current processes may not support new APIS framework.	Review of the service's management of risk processes	1	QA Lead	Q3
Out of court decision making inconsistent across West Mercia leading to differential FTE rates	Evaluate the Shropshire Bureau pilot – service wide implementation plan if successful	1	HoS	Q3
	Put in place revised OoCD joint decision protocol with West Mercia Police	1	HoS	Q4
<b>Priority 2 – Understanding Our Young People</b>				
Insufficient understanding of reasons for the increasing rate of FTEs	Analysis of the drivers behind rising rate of FTEs	2	Performance Lead	Q3
	Devise and implement a FTE tracking tool	2	Performance Lead	Q3
Service development not informed by user feedback	Bulid on service user feedback framework implemented in 2015/16	2	Participation Lead	Q3
	Service user views to be built into Management Board performance reporting framework	2	Participation Lead	Q2

Risk to Future Delivery	Action	Key Priority	Owner	Timescale (by end of quarter)
Future planning not informed by relevant data and information	Further development of the annual assessment	2	Performance Lead	Q4
<b>Priority 3 – Improved Joint Working and Integration</b>				
Disproportionate criminalisation of LAC affecting FTE and re-offending rates	Agreement of multi-agency protocol to reduce criminalisation of LAC	3	HOS	Q3
	YOS to support roll out of the LAC decision making forums	3	AMs	Q3
	Re-establish YOS LAC reference group	3	HOS	Q2
Unplanned transition between youth and adult services leading to increased risks of re-offending	Revise the YOS/Probation transfer protocol to ensure it complies with recommendations of the HMI Probation thematic inspections	3	HOS	Q2
	Implement the use of the Y2A portal for case transfer	3	ICT Lead	Q3
Lack of joint working with other agencies and services leading fragmented planning and case management	YOS to develop better and more co-ordinated planning with Children's Social Care at a local level	3	AMs	Q2 – Q4 (on going)
	Review and where necessary revise working protocols with Children's Social Care and CAMHS	3	HOS	Q4
<b>Priority 4 – Governance and Communication</b>				
Cost of current structure exceeds service income, does not make best use of resources and provide flexibility of use of resources across the service	Agree a revised service structure	4	MB	Q1
	Implementation of new structure	4	HOS/OPCC	Q2 – Q3
Leadership team unable to change culture of service and implement successfully new ways of working	Leadership team development and management of change training programme	4	HOS	Q3
Leases coming to an end	Development of an accommodation strategy for the YOS	4	OPCC	Q3
A disconnect between the management board and management team	Joint management board and management team workshop when new structure in place	4	CMB/ HOS	Q3
New structure not recognised as a new approach to service delivery.	Service to be rebranded and a Youth Justice Service.	4	HOS	Q3



## 6 MANAGEMENT BOARD APPROVAL

The plan was agreed at the Management Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

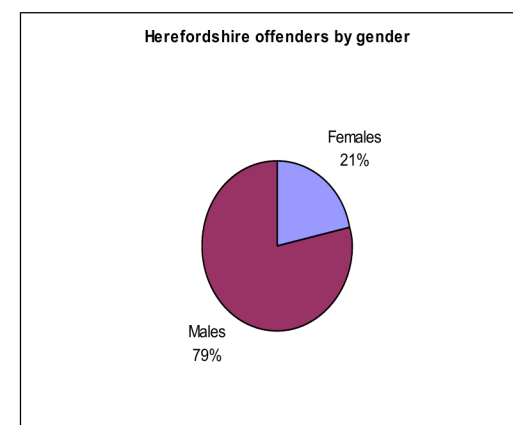
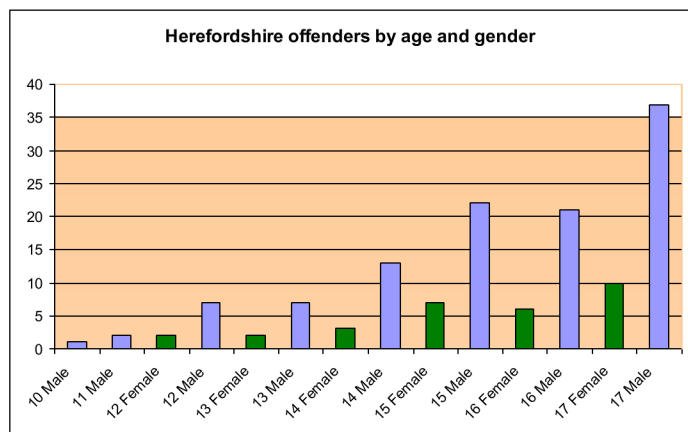
Agency	Agency	Signature
Catherine Driscoll	Worcestershire County Council	
Karen Bradshaw	Shropshire Council	
Clive Jones	Telford and Wrekin Council	
Jo Davidson	Herefordshire Council	
Tom Currie	National Probation Service	
Amanda Blakeman	West Mercia Police	
Andy Champness	Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner	

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## APPENDIX 1 - AREA PROFILE – HEREFORDSHIRE

### Youth Offending Population – all Young People

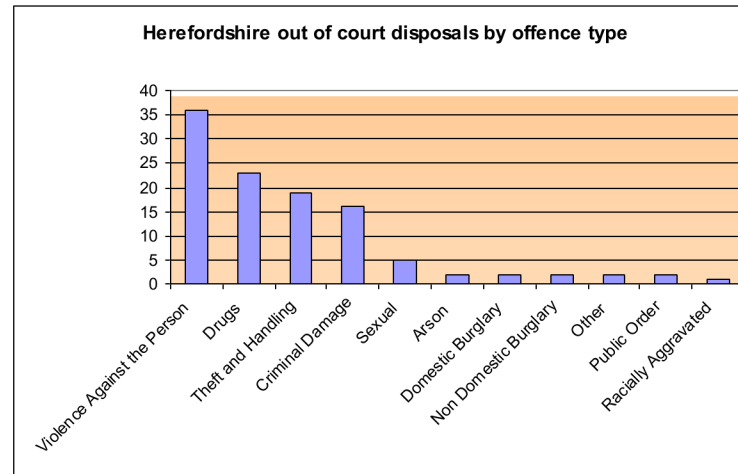
There are 16,261 young people aged 10 to 17 in Herefordshire. In 2015/16 there were 176 youth justice sanctions (youth cautions, youth conditional cautions or convictions) made on Herefordshire young people. A total of 140 individual young people accounted for these 176 outcomes, 0.86% of the youth population.



Of the 140 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2015/16, 79% were male. The majority, 73%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for both young males and young females was 17 years.

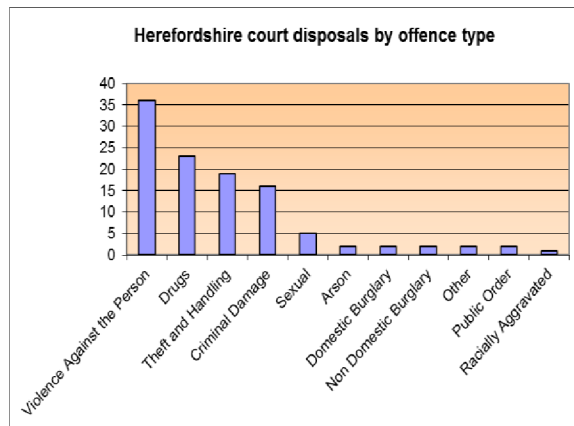
### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2016/17 there were a total of 110 pre-court disposals made on 102 Herefordshire young people, 107 of these were Youth Cautions and 2 Youth Conditional Cautions. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to second or subsequent Youth Cautions and all Youth Conditional Cautions and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2014/15 intervention programmes were provided for 9 pre-court disposals.



The most frequently occurring primary offences for out of court disposals were violence against the person, 28% drug offences, 24% followed by theft and handling, 16% and criminal damage, 10%.

### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2015/16 a total of 50 Herefordshire young people accounted for 66 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 35 of the 66 court outcomes.

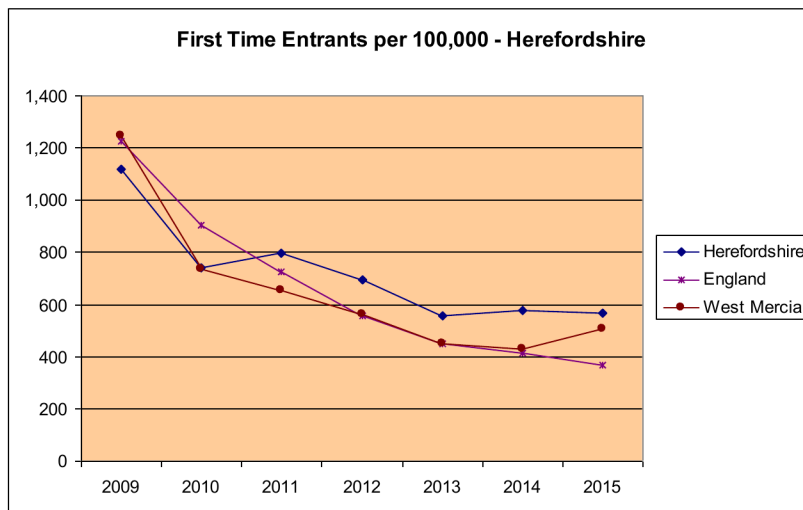
The majority, 93% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for 50% of young people receiving a court sentence.

The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 33% of all offences. Drug offences were the next frequently occurring offence, 21%, followed by theft and handling, 17% and criminal damage 15%. These four categories of offences accounted for 86% of all offences charged to court.

## Performance Against the National Indicators

### (i) First Time Entrants

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (Youth Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). Good performance is indicated by a lower rate.



In 2015 there were 566 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Herefordshire, representing a reduction of -49% since 2009. This compares with a reduction for England of -69% and for West Mercia of -67% over the same period. The actual number of first time entrants in the 2015 is 92, compared to 217 in 2009 and 95 in 2014. The rate of 566 in 2015 is an improvement in performance on 2014 when the rate was 578. All other areas in West Mercia experienced an increase in the rate in 2015 compared with 2014. The West Mercia rate increased from 431 to 506 between 2014 and 2015.

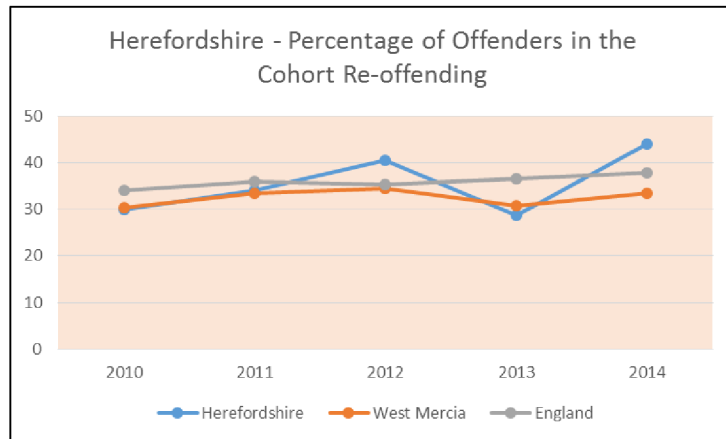
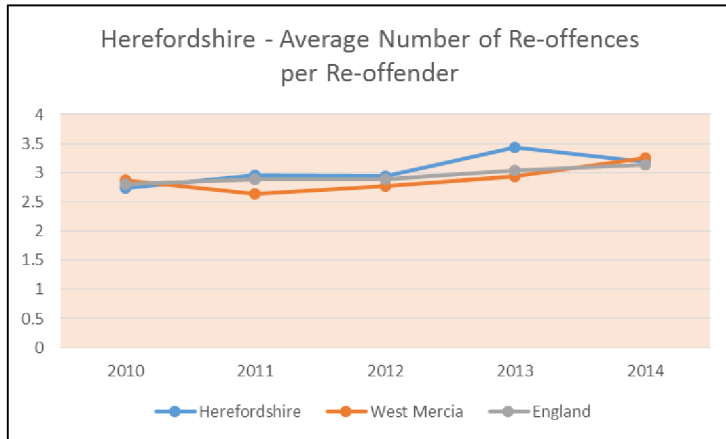
At 566 Herefordshire has the second highest rate of FTEs across West Mercia, the range in rates across the West Mercia authorities is 386 to 641. Some analysis into reasons for the high rate in Herefordshire was undertaken in 14/15, and it found that in part it is due to a higher detection rate and a lower proportional use of informal disposals.

### (ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population, a lower rate indicates better performance. Herefordshire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

There were 2 custodial sentences during 2015/16, equating to a rate of 0.12 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population this represents a reduction in custodial sentences from 2014/15 where there were 4 custodial sentences equating to a rate of 0.25. The 2015/16 rate of 0.12% compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.14 and a national rate of 0.37.

### (iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. In both cases a lower rate denotes better performance. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending June 2014 (July 2013 to June 2014).

The frequency measure performance for Herefordshire for the year ending June 2014 is 3.19, compared to the West Mercia performance of 3.25 and national performance of 3.14. Herefordshire is, therefore, performing slightly less well than for England but better than for West Mercia as a whole. The performance is an improvement from the year ending June 2013 when the frequency rate was 3.43.

For the year ending June 2014 the binary measure for Herefordshire is 44.1 compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.4% and a national performance of 37.7%. For the year ending June 2014, therefore, there were a greater proportion of the cohort re-offending than for West Mercia, but they were, on average, re-offending with less frequency. It should also be noted, that the overall cohort sizes are decreasing year on year. In the year June 2010 there were 323 offenders in the cohort and 266 re-offences compared to a cohort size of 143 with 201 re-offences in 2014. The number of actual re-offences has therefore decreased by -25% between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015/16 the YOS implemented a re-offending tracker tool, which provides re-offending information in real time allowing for review of the interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs.

## **Links to Other Plans**

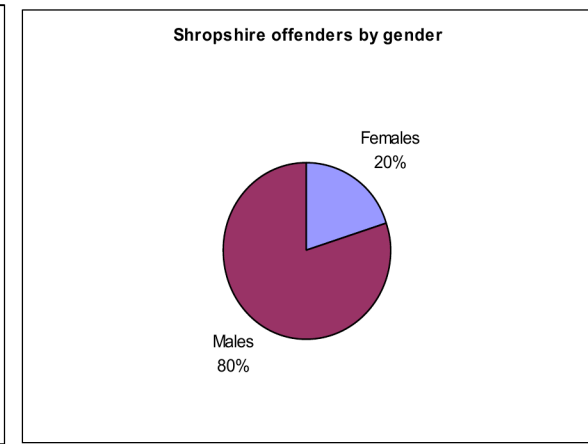
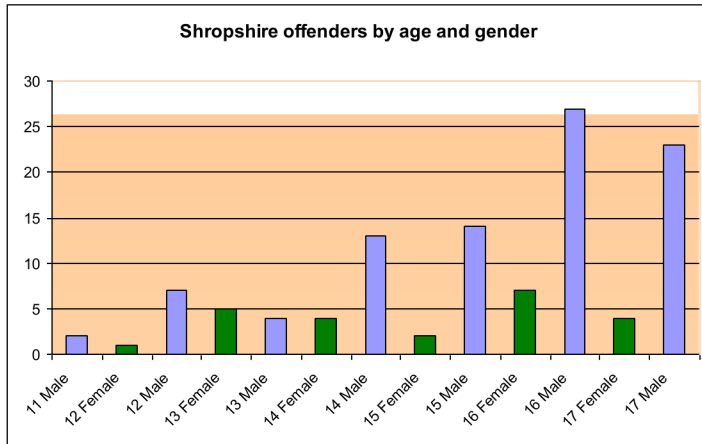
The Children, Young People's Plan 2015 - 2018 has a section on "Managing Challenges to Young Peoples Social Inclusion". Within this section the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system, reducing the rates of re-offending and repeat anti-social behaviour and ensuring the education, employment and training and accommodation needs of young offenders are addressed and met are priorities. Key planning priorities include developing the evidence base for effective intervention programmes to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, ensuring capacity for accommodation for remands and PACE beds and developing pathways to meet the additional needs of young people who are in the youth justice system.

The Community Safety Strategic Plan for 2014 -2017, contains the priority to reduce offending and re-offending and bring offenders to account, under which success measures are reducing first time entrants to the youth justice system and re-offending by young people. Another priority in the plan is reducing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs, this has a particular link across as 40% of young people receiving YOS interventions have assessed substance misuse needs.

## APPENDIX 2 - AREA PROFILE – SHROPSHIRE

### Youth Offending Population – all Young People

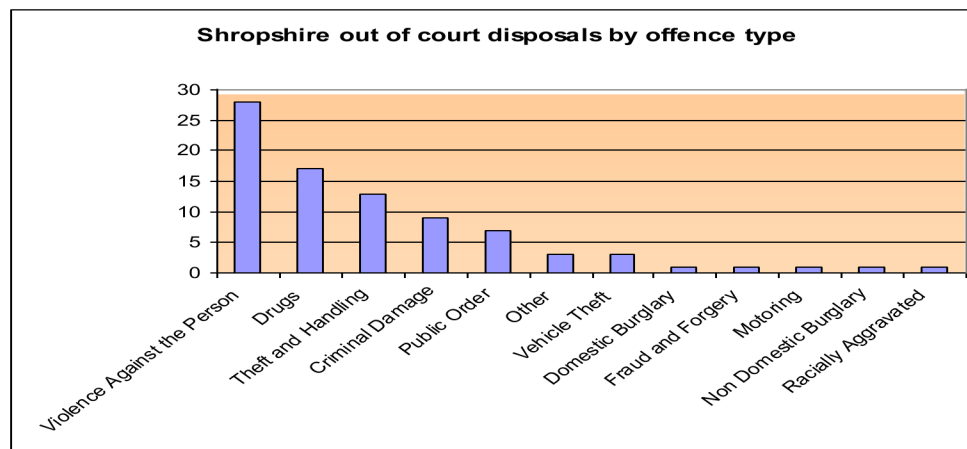
There are 28,008 young people aged 10 to 17 in Shropshire. In 2015/16 there were 140 youth justice sanctions (youth cautions, youth conditional cautions or convictions) made on Shropshire young people. A total of 113 individual young people accounted for these 140 outcomes, 0.40% of the youth population.



Of the 113 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2015/16, 90% were male. The majority, 69%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for both young males and young females was 16 years.

### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

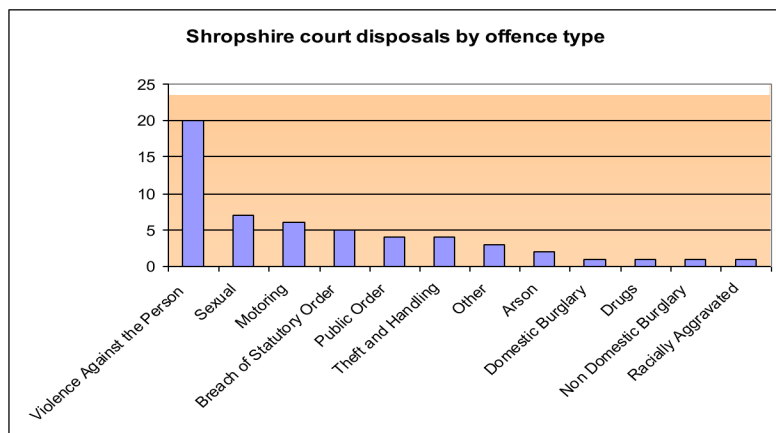
During 2015/16 there were a total of 85 pre-court disposals made on Shropshire young people, 79 of these were Youth Cautions and 6 Youth Conditional Cautions. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to second or subsequent Youth Cautions and all Youth Conditional Cautions and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2015/16 intervention programmes were provided for 29 pre-court disposals.



The most frequently occurring primary offences for out of court disposals were violence against the person, 33%, followed by drug offences, 20%, theft and handling, 15%, and criminal damage 11%.

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### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2015/16 a total of 43 Shropshire young people accounted for 55 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 40 of the 55 court outcomes.

The majority, 78% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 16 year olds accounting for 38% of young people receiving a court sentence.

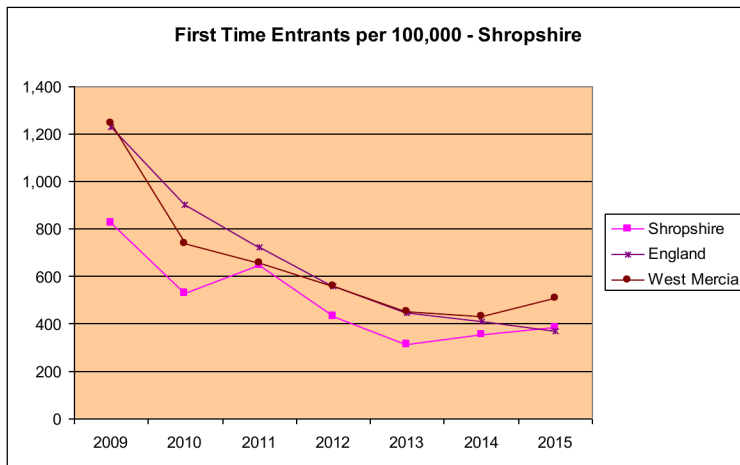
The most frequently occurring offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 36% of all outcomes. Sexual offences were the next frequently occurring offence, 13%, motoring offences 11%, and breach of a statutory order, 9%.



## Performance Against National Indicators

### (i) First Time Entrants

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (a Youth Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). Good performance is indicated by a lower rate



In the 2015 there were 386 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Shropshire, representing a reduction of -53% since 2009. This compares with a reduction for England of -69% and for West Mercia of -67% over the same period. The actual number of first time entrants in 2015 is 108, compared to 255 in 2009.

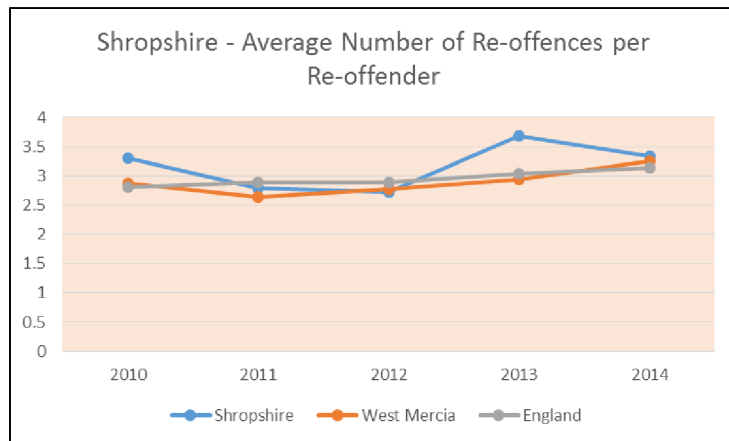
At 386 Shropshire has the lowest rate of FTEs across West Mercia, the next lowest rate being 510 and the highest 641. The Shropshire rate is slightly higher than the national rate, 369 but significantly lower than West Mercia, 506. Along with two other West Mercia authority areas Shropshire experienced a rise in the rate from 2014, from 352 to 386, a rise from 100 to 108 actual first time entrants. The YOS in partnership with the Police are piloting a bureau approach to out of court disposal decision making in Shropshire until September 2016.

### (ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population, a lower rate indicates better performance. Shropshire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

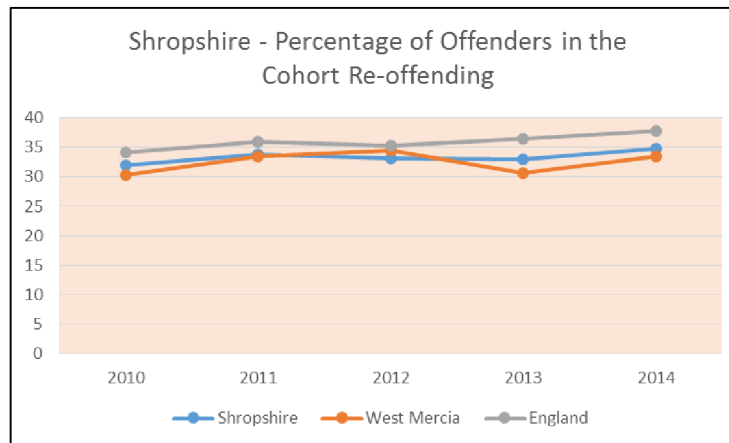
There were 3 custodial sentences during 2015/16, equating to a rate of 0.11 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population this represents an decrease in custodial sentences from 2014/15 where there were 6 custodial sentences equating to a rate of 0.21. The 2015/16 rate of 0.11% compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.14 and a national rate of 0.37.

### (iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. In both cases a lower rate denotes better performance. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending June 2014 (July 2013 to June 2014).

The frequency measure performance for Shropshire for the year ending June 2014 is 3.33, compared to the West Mercia performance of 3.25 and national performance of 3.14. Shropshire is, therefore, performing less well than for West Mercia but slightly better than for England.



For the year ending June 2014 the binary measure for Shropshire is 34.7% which is higher than the West Mercia performance of 33.4% but is significantly better than the national performance of 37.7%. It should also be noted, however, that the overall cohort sizes are decreasing year on year. In the year ending June 2010 there were 353 offenders in the cohort and 373 re-offences compared to a cohort size of 173 with 200 re-offences in 2014. The number of actual re-offences has therefore decreased by -46% between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015/16 the YOS implemented a re-offending tracker tool, which provides re-offending information in real time allowing for review of the interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs.

## Links to Other Plans

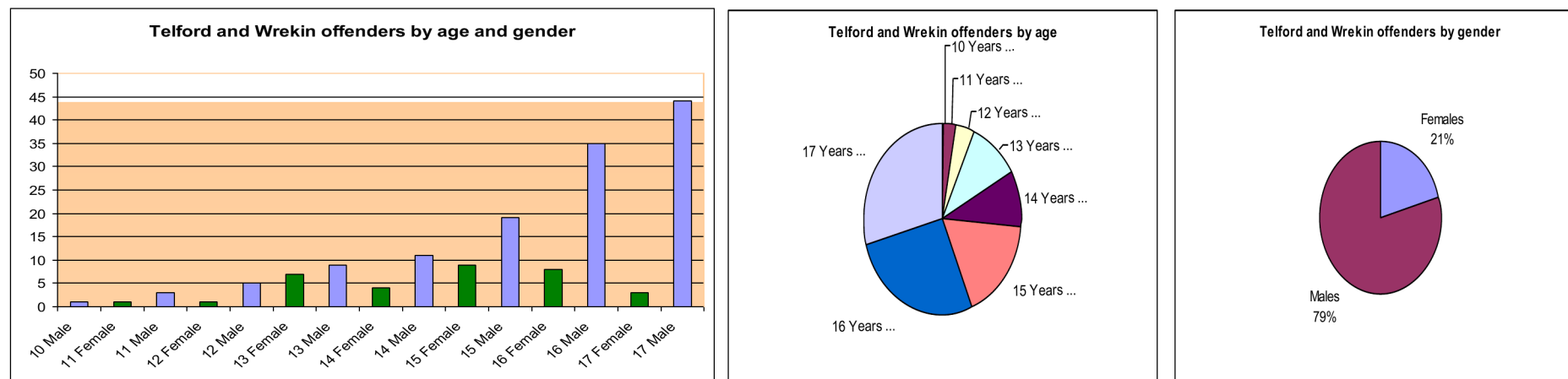
The Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014 has a key outcome area of ensuring the emotional wellbeing of young people by focusing on prevention and early intervention. Within this outcome area reducing the involvement of young people in the criminal justice system and addressing mental health and substance misuse issues are specifically referenced. Within the population of young people receiving YOS interventions in West Mercia 47% have mental health issues and 40% substance misuse issues. A key area of focus for the Children's Trust is transition planning and arrangements, and within this a key outcome is reducing the number of young people who are NEET. This will make a contribution to reducing the risks associated with offending behaviour as 38% of 16 and 17 year olds receiving YOS interventions are receiving less than 16 hours ETE.

There are direct links between the Youth Justice Plan and the priorities in Crime Reduction, Community Safety and Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2014 – 17. In particular priority one, reducing serious harm, and the sub priorities reducing offending and re-offending and alcohol and drug misuse. The YOS directly contributes to these two sub priorities in the direct work undertaken to reduce re-offending and in the delivery of substance misuse interventions to young people who are in the youth justice system, 40% of young people in the youth justice system have substance misuse issues. One of the key strands under reducing re-offending is increasing compliance, and the YOS is established a process of compliance reviewing during 2015/16

## APPENDIX 3 - AREA PROFILE – TELFORD AND WREKIN

### Youth Offending Population – all Young People

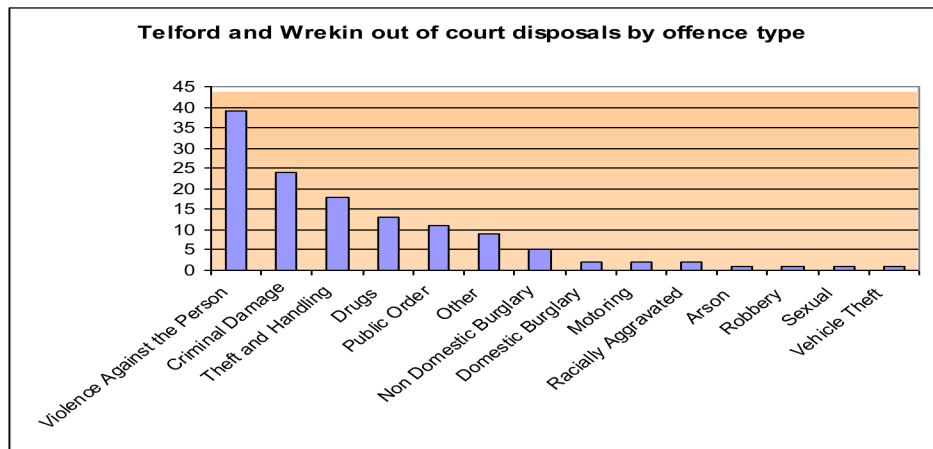
There are 16,532 young people aged 10 to 17 in Telford and Wrekin. In 2015/16 there were 201 youth justice sanctions (youth cautions, youth conditional cautions or convictions) made on Telford and Wrekin young people. A total of 160 individual young people accounted for these 201 outcomes, 0.97% of the youth population.



Of the 160 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2015/16, 79% were male. The majority, 74%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for young males was 17 years and young females 16 years.

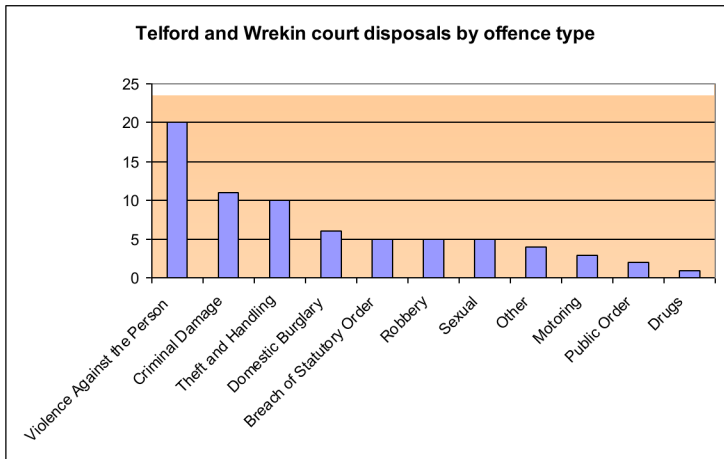
### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2015/16 there were a total of 129 pre-court disposals made on Telford and Wrekin young people, 127 of these were Youth Cautions and 2 Youth Conditional Cautions. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to second or subsequent Youth Cautions and all Youth Conditional Cautions and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2015/16 intervention programmes were provided for 46 pre-court disposals.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for out of court disposals was violence against the person, 30%, followed by criminal damage, 19%, theft and handling, 14%, and drug related offences 10%.

### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2015/16 a total of 60 Telford and Wrekin young people accounted for 66 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 56 of the 66 court outcomes.

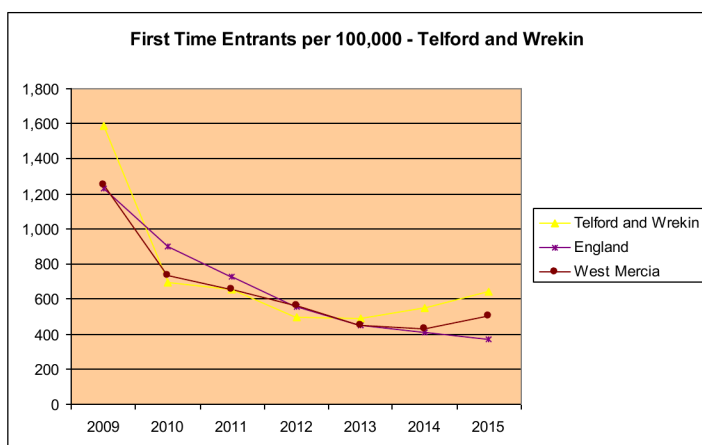
The majority, 83% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 16 and 17 year olds accounting for 64% of court outcomes.

The most frequently occurring offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 28% of all outcomes. Criminal damage was the next most frequently occurring offence, 15%, followed by theft and handling, 14% and burglary 8%. These four categories of offences accounted for 65% of all sentencing outcomes.

## Performance Against National Indicators

### (i) First Time Entrants

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (a Youth Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). Good performance is indicated by a lower rate.



In 2015 there were 641 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Telford and Wrekin, representing a reduction of -60% since 2009. This compares with a reduction for England of -69% and for West Mercia of -67% over the same period. The actual number of first time entrants in 2015 is 106, compared to 288 in 2009.

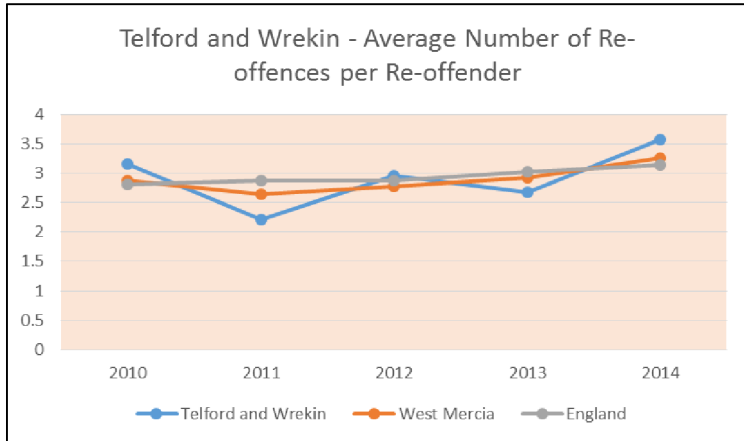
At 641 Telford and Wrekin has the second highest rate of FTEs across West Mercia, the range of rates across West Mercia being 389 to 610. Along with two other West Mercia authority areas, the rate in Telford and Wrekin increased between 2014 and 2015 from 550 to 641. Further analysis is required to establish the reason for the increased rates

### (ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population, a lower rate indicates better performance. Telford and Wrekin has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

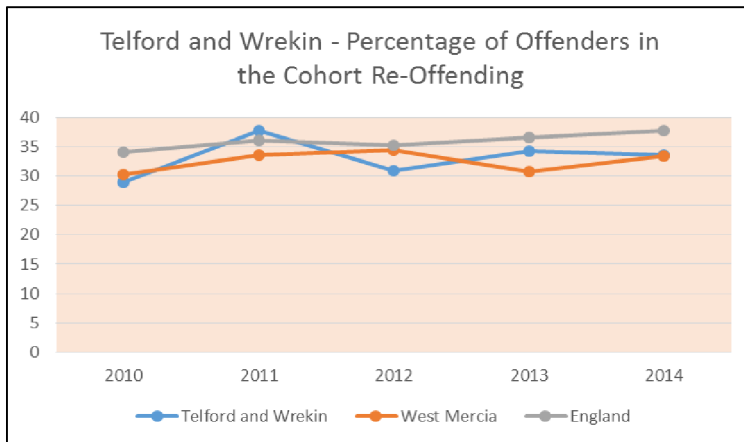
There was 1 custodial sentence during 2015/16, equating to a rate of 0.06 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population this represents an increase in custodial sentences from 2014/15 where there were 0 custodial sentences equating to a rate of 0.00. The 2015/16 rate of 0.06 compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.14 and a national rate of 0.37.

(iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. In both cases a lower rate denotes better performance. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending June 2014 (July 2013 to June 2014).

The frequency measure performance for Telford and Wrekin for the year ending June 2014 is 3.57, compared to the West Mercia performance of 3.25 and national performance of 3.14.



For the year ending June 2014 the binary measure for Telford and Wrekin is 33.6% compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.4% and a national performance of 37.7%, Telford and Wrekin is therefore performing in line with West Mercia and better than England. The 2014 performance is slightly improved from 2013 where the performance was 34.2. It should be noted the overall cohort sizes are decreasing year on year. In the year ending June 2010 there were 370 offenders in the cohort and 337 re-offences compared to a cohort size of 140 with 168 re-offences in 2014. The number of actual re-offences have therefore decreased by -50% between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015/16 the YOS implemented a re-offending tracker tool, which provides re-offending information in real time allowing for review of the interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs.

## **Links to Other Plans**

Two of the targeted areas for improved outcomes in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2013 – 2016 that are relevant to this plan are Live Well and Work Well. Within Live Well reduced offending and re-offending is outcome measure. In Work Well the reduction of young people who are NEET is an outcome measure. NEET 16 to 18 year olds are over represented on the youth offending population with 41% of 16 and 17 year olds YOS clients in West Mercia receiving less than 16 hours ETE. There is an outcome measure to reduce the number of children in care entering the youth justice system for the first time and for those in the system reducing re-offending.

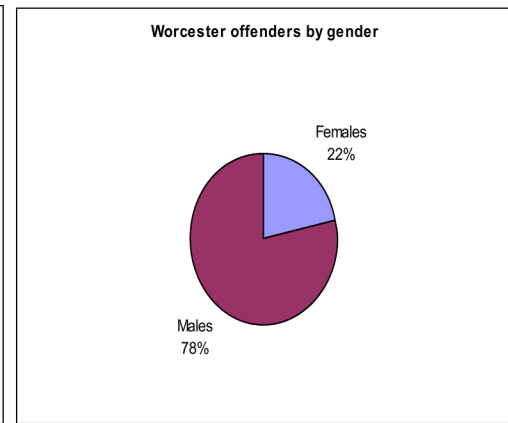
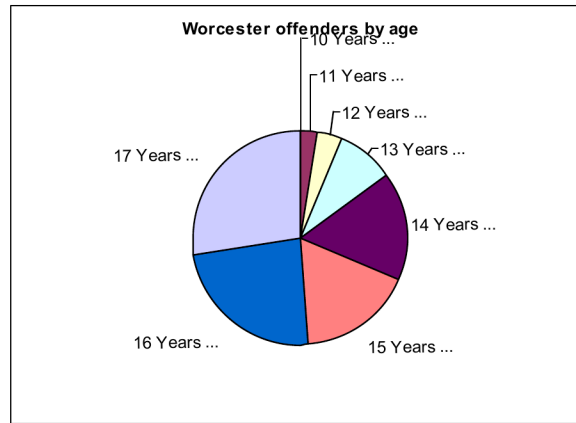
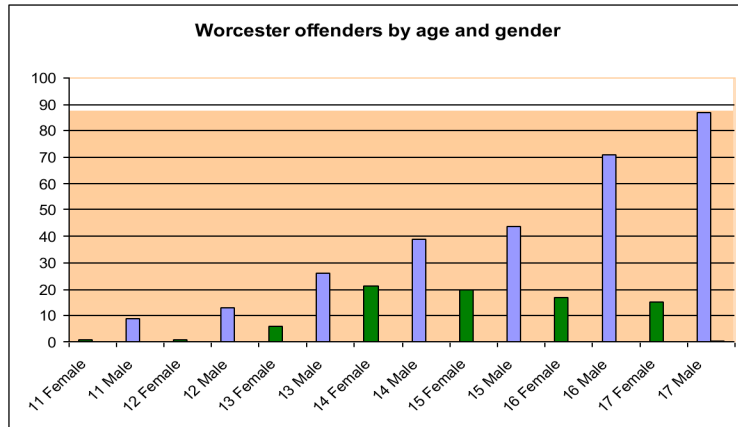
Two of the year three priorities in the Community Safety Plan 2013 -16 are; identify and tackle harm associated with all offending types and reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour has on people, places and communities. Under the first of these priorities is the reduction of offending and re-offending and tackling child sexual exploitation.



## APPENDIX 4 - AREA PROFILE – WORCESTERSHIRE

### Youth Offending Population – all Young People

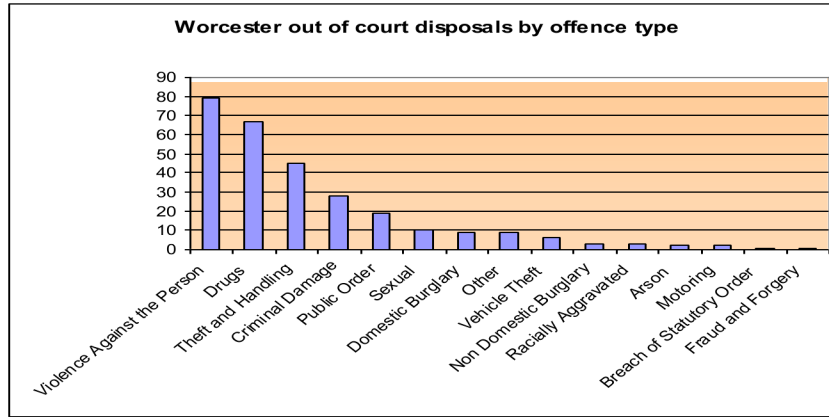
There are 50,980 young people aged 10 to 17 in Worcestershire. In 2015/16 there were 493 youth justice sanctions (youth cautions, youth conditional cautions or convictions) made on Worcestershire young people. A total of 370 individual young people accounted for these 493 outcomes, 0.73% of the youth population.



Of the 370 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2015/16, 78% were male. The majority, 69%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for young males was 17 years and young females 16 years.

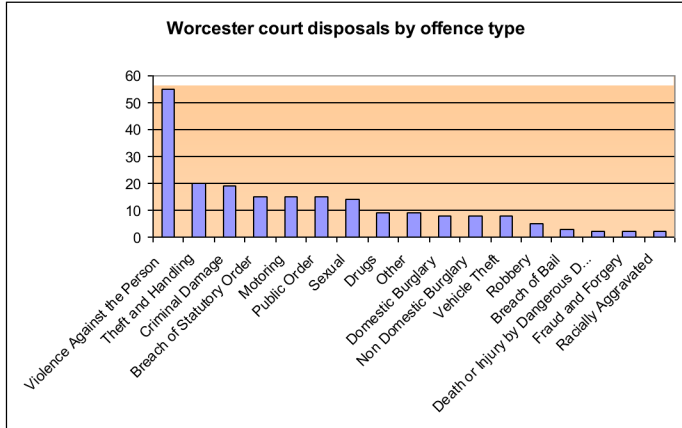
### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2015/16 there were a total of 284 pre-court disposals made on Worcestershire young people, 273 of these were Youth Cautions and 11 Youth Conditional Cautions. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to second or subsequent Youth Cautions and all Youth Conditional Cautions and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2015/16 intervention programmes were provided for 70 pre-court disposals.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for out of court disposals were violence against the person, 28%, followed by drug related offences, 24%, theft and handling, 16% and criminal damage 10%.

### Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2016/17 a total of 150 Worcestershire young people accounted for 209 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 161 of the 209 court outcomes.

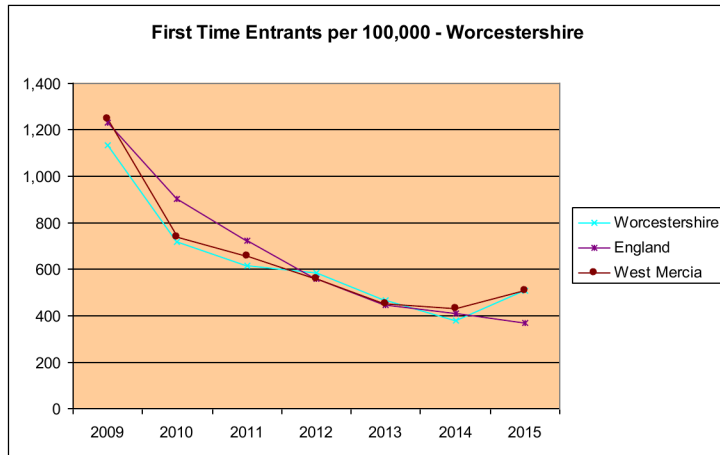
The majority, 84% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for 38% of young people receiving a court sentence.

The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 26% of all outcomes. Theft and handling was the next frequently occurring offence, 10%, followed by criminal damage, 9%.

## Performance Against National Indicators

### (i) First Time Entrants

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (a Youth Caution, Conditional Caution or Conviction). Good performance is indicated by a lower rate.



In 2015 there were 510 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Worcestershire, representing a reduction of -55% since 2009. This compares with a reduction for England of -69% and for West Mercia of -67% over the same period. The actual number of first time entrants in 2015 is 260, compared to 639 in 2009.

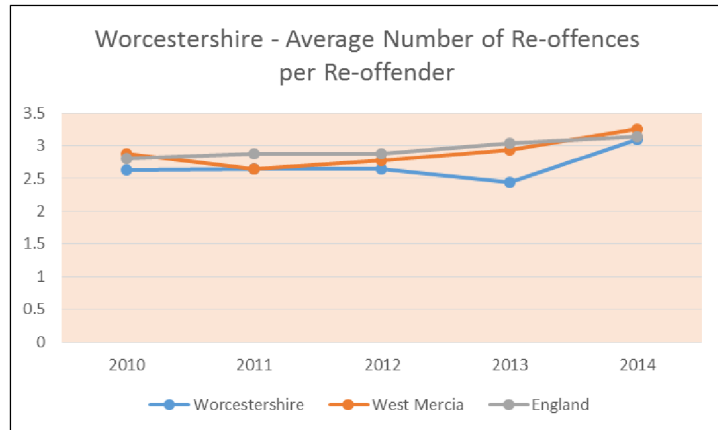
At 510 Worcestershire has the second lowest rate of FTEs across West Mercia, with the highest rate at 641 and lowest at 389. Along with two other West Mercia authority areas, the rate in Worcestershire has increased between 2014 and 2015 from 370 to 510. Further analysis is required to establish the reason for the increased rates

### (ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population, a lower rate indicates better performance. Worcestershire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

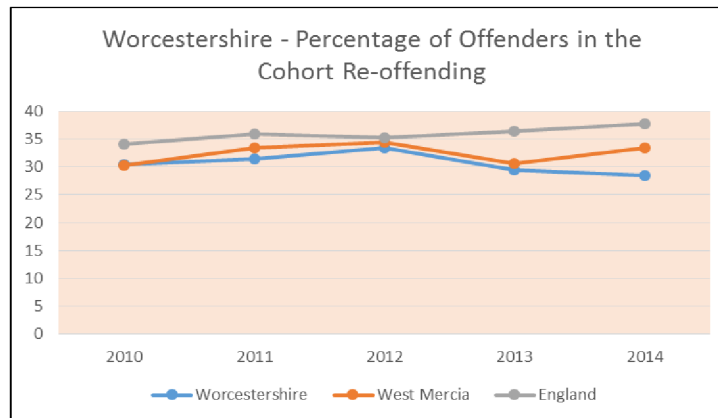
There were 10 custodial sentences during 2015/16, equating to a rate of 0.20 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population this represents a reduction in custodial sentences from 2014/15 where there were 11 custodial sentences equating to a rate of 0.22. The 2015/16 rate of 0.20% compares to the West Mercia rate of 0.14 and a national rate of 0.37.

### (iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender who re-offends in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. In both cases a lower rate denotes better performance. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending June 2014 (July 2013 to June 2014).

The frequency measure performance for Worcestershire for the year ending June 2014 is 3.10, compared to the West Mercia performance of 3.25 and



national performance of 3.14. Worcestershire has, therefore, slightly better performance than for West Mercia and England.

For the year ending June 2014 the binary measure for Worcestershire is 28.5% compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.4 and a national performance of 37.7%. This represents an improved performance from 2013 when it was 29.4%. It should also be noted that the overall cohort sizes are decreasing year on year. In the year ending June 2010 there were 929 offenders in the cohort and 742 re-offences compared to a cohort size of 355 with 313 re-offences in 2014. The number of actual re-offences has therefore decreased by -58% between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015/16 the YOS implemented a re-offending tracker tool, which provides re-offending information in real time allowing for review of the interventions at the earliest point where re-offending occurs.

## Links to Other Plans

Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan 2014 – 17 has two linked priorities to the youth justice plan; children and young people have a healthy lifestyle and children and young people are helped at an early stage. In terms of the healthy lifestyle priority, key areas of focus are reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol and improving the emotional health including access to mental health support. Within the group of young people receiving YOS interventions in West Mercia, 33% have substance misuse issues and 40% mental and emotional health issues. Under the priority that children and young people are helped at an early stage the main focus is the early help strategy. It is through the early help strategy that those young people who are at risk of entering the youth justice system for the first time are targeted for intervention.

The Worcestershire Community Safety Board's Community Safety Agreement 2015 – 16 has three directly relevant strategic priorities; reducing re-offending, harm reduction which includes safeguarding and alcohol and drug misuse. The YOS will directly contribute to these priorities through work to reduce youth re-offending, ensuring that young people are protected from harm and in the direct delivery of substance misuse interventions to young people in the youth justice system.





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>01 December 2016</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Adoption report and adoption service statement of purpose</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key decision**

This is not a key decision.

## **Wards affected**

Countywide

## **Purpose**

To review the effectiveness of the adoption service.

To approve the adoption service statement of purpose.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT:**

- (a) the performance of the adoption service as outlined at appendix A to this report be reviewed, any risks to achievement of objectives noted and relevant mitigating actions approved; and**
- (b) the statement of purpose attached at appendix B to this report be approved.**

## Alternative options

1. Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014 (NMS), Cabinet should receive updates on the management, outcomes and financial state of Herefordshire Council's adoption service; it is open to Cabinet to identify additional or alternative actions to improve performance, but in doing so regard must be had to the resource implications of additional actions.

## Reasons for recommendations-

2. The NMS are issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and are issued for use by Ofsted which takes them into account in its inspections.
3. Standard 25.6 states that:
  - The executive side of the local authority
    - receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every six months;
    - monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
    - satisfies itself that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.
4. Standard 18.3 states that:
  - The executive side of the local authority formally approves the statement of purpose and children's guides and reviews them at least annually.

## Key considerations

5. Seven councils within the West Midlands have been inspected by Ofsted under the single inspection framework and Herefordshire was one of three whose judgement for adoption was 'Good', with two 'Requiring Improvement' and two judged 'Inadequate'. Adoption was noted to be promptly considered when children cannot live with their families and court proceedings are rapidly completed so that children can quickly settle into permanent families. People interested in adopting children were judged to be well prepared.
6. Nationally, published reports evidence that the adoption service is meeting targets in the timely placement of children, with Herefordshire being one of the top ten performers in the country. An unprecedented 29 looked after children were adopted in 2015/16.
7. The Department for Education has outlined plans to radically redesign the whole adoption system. New service models are proposed, delivered through Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) working together to deliver adoption services. By 2017, local councils are expected to have effective plans and proposals in place and by 2020 they will all be part of a RAA or will have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA. Herefordshire, Birmingham and three voluntary adoption agencies are exploring the potential of forming a RAA with an initial focus on the

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Hilary Hale, adoption service manager on Tel (01432) 383341



provision of support to adoptive families in the region and ensuring 'the adopter voice' is central to any model.

8. Recent court decisions nationally and locally suggest that the number of children made subject to orders, which allow them to be placed for adoption, has decreased resulting in fewer children being placed for adoption. Robust and well informed evidence from social workers is required by the courts in respect of the assessment of sibling relationships and the capacity of family members to offer satisfactory permanent care.
9. The statement of purpose (appendix B) should be reviewed annually and clearly sets out the aims and objectives of the adoption agency, showing how the service will meet outcomes for children.
10. Feedback from adopters who have been assessed, approved and supported by Herefordshire Council is actively sought by the independent adoption panel and agency via formal questionnaires. Feedback is shared with the adoption panel which has a role in quality assuring the work of the adoption service and safeguarding and family support service and reporting this to the agency. Comments from adopters on the service provided is overwhelmingly positive and their recommendation to others considering adoption has been our most valuable recruitment tool.

## **Community impact**

11. The government published an 'Action plan for adoption: tackling delay' in March 2012 and several later initiatives have promoted adoption as the optimum permanence option for children unable to be brought up within their original families. Protecting children and giving them a great start in life and promoting their mental health and emotional wellbeing are priorities for the council. It is accepted that the sooner a child is placed for adoption, the better the outcome, hence the imperative to avoid delay in securing placements for children.

## **Equality duty**

12. The adoption service welcomes applications from those wishing to adopt, from all sectors of the community and is ambitious in seeking adoptive placements for children whatever their level of need. This is reflected in the statement of purpose and recruitment strategy. We have successfully recruited and placed children with single adopters, same sex couples, adopters who are registered disabled and adopters from the Black and minority ethnic (BME) community. We prioritise applications from those hoping to adopt children who are considered harder to place such as sibling groups, older children and children with additional needs.
13. Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:
  - "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic

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and persons who do not share it."

## **Financial implications**

14. There are no financial implications for this decision.
15. Income may be generated by fees paid for children from other agencies to be placed with adopters approved by Herefordshire Council, which is a projected income of £54k (the fee for two single placements). The increased oversupply of adopters nationally has meant that more agencies are able to place their children with their own adopters. In Herefordshire, the numbers of prospective adopters approved has remained constant from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and it has become harder to find children for them, particularly if they live within Hereford. This creates a potential pressure, which is being monitored.

## **Legal implications**

16. Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014, Standard 25.6, Cabinet must receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every six months. Cabinet is to monitor the management and outcomes of the service to satisfy itself that the agency is effective and achieving good outcomes and complying with conditions of registration. They must also consider if any follow up actions from the previous six months report have been complied with. The statement of purpose and children's guides should be formally approved and reviewed at least annually, it is therefore not required at this time but is good practice to review it at the same time.

## **Risk management**

17. Without an effective adoption service, looked after children would spend longer in the care of the local council. This would be detrimental to their wellbeing and life chances and would not support the objective of 'protecting children and giving them a great start in life'. If the support needs of adoptive families are not met, children may return to the care system. An effective adoption and looked after children's service is important to ensure that we are able to offer a robust and timely approach to securing permanence for children unable to be brought up safely within their own families and to ensure access to services that will best support their individual needs.
18. The recent trend of fewer orders being granted by the court to permit children to be placed for adoption is likely to impact upon the numbers of children leaving the care system via adoption.
19. The adoption service has consistently been judged 'Good' by Ofsted. If the service is not effective, this will affect the overall judgement of children's wellbeing and thus the reputation of the council. We need to ensure that the service maintains this judgement and minimise any reputational risk by ensuring children's social workers are equipped to provide well evidenced assessments and permanence plans that are accepted by the courts. We must carefully consider how the prospect of regional adoption agencies would impact on outcomes for Herefordshire children and families.

## **Consultees**

20. Members of Herefordshire's adoption panel, which is independently chaired and comprises independent and professional members with experience of adoption.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Hilary Hale, adoption service manager on Tel (01432) 383341

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Annual adoption report April 2015 to April 2016

Appendix B: Statement of purpose August 2016

## **Background papers**

- None identified.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Hilary Hale, adoption service manager on Tel (01432) 383341



## Adoption Service Annual Report April 2015 –April 2016

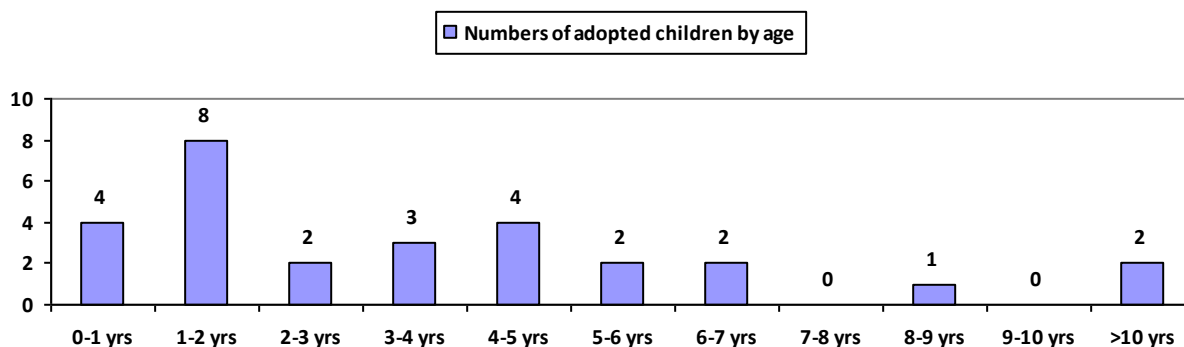
### The children

For the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 **29** children placed for adoption by Herefordshire Council were adopted, and **8** children are living with their adoptive families but adoption orders have not yet been granted. We are awaiting the outcome of legal proceedings in respect of a further **9** children who the local authority have decided should be placed for adoption. We have not yet identified a family for **2** children who we have permission to place for adoption.

Of the **29** children adopted during 2015/16

- **16** were boys and **13** were girls
- **19** children were placed singly
- **5** siblings groups of **2** children were placed together
- **7** of the children had older siblings who had previously been adopted
- **3** children were placed for adoption at the request of their parent/s
- **8** children were adopted by their previous foster carers, **2** of them had been placed under a Fostering for Adoption arrangement.
- **18** were adopted by families recruited and assessed by Herefordshire.

The majority of children (**24**) were aged 5 years or below at the date of their adoption, but we were successful in achieving adoptions for a small number of older children, the eldest being siblings aged 11 and 12 years old.



The agency decision maker decided that adoption should be the plan for **20** children during 2015/16. **6** of these children are now living with their adoptive families and court outcomes are outstanding for **10**. **4** children later had their care plans changed from adoption; 2 of these have

had permanent placements with relatives secured through Special Guardianship Orders and 2 remain in foster care as the Court felt that their relationships with siblings would be better promoted under this arrangement.

The adoption panel recommended matches for **19** children with adoptive families

- **13** were matched with adopters assessed and approved by Herefordshire
- **6** were placed with adopters assessed by other agencies. Adoption orders were granted for some of these children during the year whilst others are still awaiting the granting of the final legal order.

### Changes of care plan

In April 2015 there were **13** looked after children whose care plan had been changed from adoption some years before but who remained subject to Placement Orders granted by the courts to enable them to be placed for adoption. By March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016, **7** of these had been revoked and **4** further applications had been made to revoke orders. Revocation applications are currently in preparation for the remaining **2**.

In this reporting period **4** children had their care plan changed from adoption. In two cases the Court did not want to sever the relationship the child had with their siblings who were in foster care. It is likely that these **2** children will remain in foster care. Kinship carers were assessed as able to meet the needs of **2** other children, and one is now subject to a Special Guardianship Order.

### Timeliness

This is reported annually in the national adoption scorecards, which take a three year average. The 2014/15 scorecard reported Herefordshire's performance as better than both our statistical neighbours and the national average. Nationally the average time it takes between a child coming into care and being placed with their adoptive family is 18 months and the average time between a council having permission to place a child for adoption and matching them with their adoptive family is 8 months. Targets for 2016/17 are 14 months and 4 months respectively.

For the 19 children matched with adopters this year the average time between coming into care and placement was 21 months. Excluding the older siblings who had been in foster care for almost six and a half years, would bring the average time down to 14.5 months. Also excluding the siblings who had previously experienced a breakdown of their first adoptive placement and therefore returned to foster care would bring the average time down to 11.5 months.

Two babies were placed for adoption at the age of three months, though one had been placed with a fostering for adoption family and moved to their care at a day old.

The average time between permission to place and placement for all 19 was 9.2 months. If the same two sibling pairs were excluded, the average reduces to 4.2 months.

## The adopters

### Recruitment

A student social worker is undertaking her final placement within the adoption team and conducted a small survey to help us understand what draws prospective adopters to Herefordshire and to inform future recruitment activity.

The research consisted of collating qualitative data via an email questionnaire sent out in February 2016. Seven questions were asked in respect to recruitment to 138 successful Herefordshire adopters. We received 13 responses; two responses were received from registered foster carers wishing to adopt children already in their care.

The majority of prospective adopters came to Herefordshire because they lived in the county though 25% had also contacted other agencies. Having attended an adoption information event in another authority one applicant described how they felt the workers from Herefordshire 'talked to us, rather than at us' and praised the friendly 'pop in and ask if you have any questions' approach at Herefordshire's event.

Other comments:

"It was the first agency I contacted and I got the right 'vibe' from them and friends who adopted through Herefordshire said they were very good and had a good reputation amongst adopters".

"We chose Herefordshire because they were a cut above the rest"

Much positive feedback has been received about the 'Preparing to Adopt' course which has been designed and delivered jointly with colleagues from Worcestershire's adoption service, enabling us to provide eleven stage 1 three day courses and nine stage 2 one day courses.

Quotes from prospective adopters

"We felt so well prepared in the training and our social workers were fantastic"

"the whole procedure was well thought out and thorough".

The current assessment process is in two stages with the expectation that the first stage is completed within two months and the second part within four months, though prospective adopters can take time between the two stages if they choose.

Only a minority of cases met the target for Stage1, mainly due to waiting for the return of essential information from other agencies or the potential adopters themselves. **5** applicants met the target for completion of Stage 2 within four months, but **8** missed this by only a few days.

**4** prospective adoptive families are currently in Stage 2 of their assessment.

**9** prospective adoptive families are nearing completion of Stage 1.

**16** adoptive families recruited and assessed by the adoption team were recommended for approval by the adoption panel and this was supported by the Agency Decision Maker during the year.

**10** approved adoptive families are waiting to be matched with a child/ren, **1** of these has a child placed under a Fostering for Adoption arrangement.

**3** families have links progressing towards matches in the next few weeks, **2** of these are with children from other local authorities and so will generate income for Herefordshire.

3 year comparison	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
ADM decisions for adoption	28	22	20
Children matched	22	26	19
Adoption orders granted	16	19	29
Adopters approved	19	16	16

#### Comments from Avriel Reader, independent chair of the adoption panel

“The panel continue to consider that the reports to the panel regarding approvals and matches are of a high standard. The Child Permanence Reports are generally very well completed, this document is a vital part of the child's ability to understand their adoption journey and to assist the adopters in telling the child about their 'story'. The administration of the panel is excellent.

There has been an overall improvement in the timeliness of matches coming to panel which benefits the child and the adopters.

The feedback to the panel about the experience of attending panel by prospective adopters and professional staff continues to be positive. It is also important to note that the feedback for the overall process is generally very good with one exception. Prospective adopters comment on the lateness of the 'Lifestory' Books, so vital in helping to answer questions from their children. Up until recently these were completed by other than the child's social worker, the change in this process could significantly affect this important work.”

#### Support to adoptive families

Adoption support assessments leading to applications to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) have secured funding for **14** families to receive therapeutic support which would not otherwise be available, amounting to almost £60,000.

Successful 'Family Fun' days have provided the opportunity for adopted children and their families to get together in an informal setting and regular workshops for adopters have been



held with subjects such as the Secure Base model, therapy surgeries and supporting children through primary and secondary education.

**124** adoptive families comprising **159** children and **6** young adults are supported to maintain contact with birth family members via the Letterbox system.

#### Other statutory responsibilities

- Counselling, seeking and sharing information with adopted adults
- Counselling and supporting birth family members who have lost/are likely to lose a child through adoption
- Counselling and assessing those wishing to adopt through the non agency route- usually step-parents.

#### The national picture

The Department for Education published 'Regionalising adoption' in June 2015 and 'Adoption: A vision for change' in March 2016, outlining plans to radically redesign the whole adoption system- the structures, systems and workforce. Concern is expressed at the reduction of the numbers of children local authorities have put forward for adoption since September 2013.

In order to deliver their vision:

- new service models are proposed, delivered through Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) working together to deliver adoption services. By 2017 local authorities are expected to have effective plans and proposals in place and by 2020 all local authorities are to be part of a RAA or will have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA;
- action will be taken to change the law to ensure that quality of care and stability of placement are properly prioritized;
- there will be a new focus on equipping the workforce with the requisite skills;
- there will be investment in the development of a national matching infrastructure and innovative matching methods and an increase in the use of early placement;
- provision of effective, multi-agency support to adoptive families is expected, supported by an extension of the Adoption Support Fund, access to mental health services for vulnerable children and expansion of the role of virtual schools heads and training for teachers on the impact of trauma and loss on children's learning;
- strong performance management and accountability will be embedded by sharper use of data and a revised inspection framework alongside enhancing the voice of adopters to shape the future design of adoption services.

### Next steps for Herefordshire

Following the decision not to proceed with the West Mercia adoption project in March 2015, we have continued to work collaboratively with Worcestershire adoption service in delivering training for prospective adopters and in securing matches for our children and adopters.

However, it is not thought that the two authorities working in this way in collaboration with a VAA will meet the DfE's criteria as a RAA. Discussions are ongoing with Birmingham to consider whether a partnership with them and a combination of VAAs would benefit Herefordshire children and families and meet the DfE's objectives to radically improve adoption provision through swifter placement of children in permanent homes and a better range of support services for adoptive families.

A new Children and Social Work Bill to be announced in the Queen's speech in May 2016 is designed to further speed up the adoption process and address the decline in numbers of decisions being made by councils to pursue adoption and the number of placement orders being granted by the courts.

Interpretation of recent court judgements (re B, June 2013 and re B-S, September 2013) is believed to be responsible for this decline. The central message from these judgements is that adoption decisions must be based on strong evidence and a later judgement (re R, 2014), stated 'where adoption is in the child's best interests, local authorities must not shy away from seeking, nor courts from making, care orders with a plan for adoption, placement orders and adoption orders'.

In order to achieve this, the care planning process for looked after children has to be robust and transparent, with social workers in all teams equipped and supported by managers and legal advisors to gather and present evidence and realistic care plans which will be accepted by the courts, including timescales for family finding. When placement orders are granted, progress of the child's care plan is monitored via the LAC review process at 3 months and then 6 months later, when consideration must be given as to whether adoption is still the appropriate care plan or the plan should be changed and an application made to revoke the placement order.

Hilary Hale

Adoption service manager

04.05.2016

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL  
ADOPTION AGENCY**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE  
August 2016**

**URN: SC057941**

## CONTENTS

1. Aims and objectives of the local authority in relation to the adoption service.
2. Number, qualification and experience of the staff employed to deliver its specialist adoption service.
3. Systems in place to monitor and evaluate provision of services to ensure adoption services are effective and the quality of service provision is of an appropriate standard.
4. The procedures for recruiting, preparing and assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters.
5. Appendix 1 – Herefordshire Council’s complaints procedure  
**(Full procedures can be accessed through Herefordshire Council’s website)**

## **1. Aims and objectives of the local authority in respect of its adoption service**

The authority aims to provide a service to all its customers that is welcoming, user friendly and non discriminatory.

The adoption service endorses the values underpinning the National Minimum Standards in setting service objectives and strives to promote the following principles within the timescales laid down by regulation:

- All children should be protected from emotional, physical and sexual harm and neglect.
- All looked after and adopted children should be placed as soon as possible with carers who can provide safe and appropriate care.
- In preparing children for an adoptive family we will listen to their views and provide age appropriate information.
- All service provision will be sensitive to the needs and diversity of the individual children, their birth parents and adoptive parents.
- All service provision will be flexible, responsive and supportive of carers and children.
- Adoptive parents require access to specialist preparation and ongoing support to carry out the additional parenting tasks of adoption.
- Adopted children and their parents require additional tools to process their unique histories and to understand their permanent separation from birth families.
- The adoption service will act as a mediator and consultant with universal services to ensure sensitive inclusion.
- We acknowledge that adoption has lifelong implications for those adopted and their families.
- Partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential to deliver the best possible outcomes for children.

Based on these principles Herefordshire Children's Wellbeing directorate aims to provide a comprehensive adoption service to all those who require it. The service is consistent with Adoption Regulations and National Minimum Standards which are reflected in comprehensive policies and procedures.

### **Services provided by Herefordshire adoption service:**

- Recruitment, assessment, preparation and support of a wide range of prospective adoptive parents to meet the placement needs of children locally and nationally.
- Counselling, information and support for birth parents who have lost or are at risk of losing their children to adoption.
- Counselling, information and support for pregnant women and parents who are considering placing their child/ren for adoption.
- Counselling for adopted adults in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Those wanting intermediary services to trace birth relatives are signposted elsewhere.

- Advice and consultancy for social work practitioners and others who are working with children and families affected by adoption.
- Counselling, assessment and court reports in step parent and other non agency adoption proceedings.
- A secure 'Letterbox' system to enable information to be safely exchanged between adoptive and birth families.
- Preparation of reports and attendance at other local authority panels when a match has been recommended for a Herefordshire approved family.
- Assessment of the support needs of adoptive families and provision of services before and after an adoption order has been made. This will include adoptive families unknown to the agency who reside in the county and request adoption support assessments 3 years post adoption order.
- Signposting, provision or commission of therapeutic services for children and their parents to ameliorate the impact of early trauma and abuse.
- Provision of adoptive families for children identified locally and nationally.
- Secure storage of adoption case records with appropriate measures taken to prevent theft, unauthorised disclosure, loss or destruction.

## **2. Adoption service staff**

Hilary Hale has been the registered manager of the adoption service and adoption support services advisor (ASSA) since August 2006. She has extensive experience as a children and families social worker and manager, is an adoptive parent and the professional advisor to the adoption panel.

- In the absence of the registered manager, the adoption team manager Gill Smith will deputise. Responsibility for the service rests with the head of service for looked after children and young people.
- Social workers preparing reports in relation to prospective adopters, adoption placements and other adoption specific reports are required to have three years post qualifying experience in child care social work (including direct experience of adoption work). The 5.84 full time equivalent adoption social workers meet this requirement and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.
- Through supervision, annual performance appraisal and development interviews and specialist training Herefordshire Children's Services ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to work effectively in the complex field of adoption practice whilst keeping up to date with safeguarding and legislative developments.
- The team have a stable core staff group with a wide range of experience in the field of child care and family placement, including a play therapist/child and adolescent psychotherapist who provides

consultations to social workers, carers and parents and works directly with children, young people and adopters.

- Written procedural and practice guidance, including safeguarding procedures are available to staff and this is updated regularly in light of practice and legislative changes.
- All members of the adoption service undertake regular safeguarding and data protection training.
- The adoption panel has a rolling programme of training with bi-annual half-day workshops in conjunction with the adoption service staff group.

**3. The systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of services to ensure that services provided are effective and the quality of all aspects of service is of an appropriate standard.**

Feedback is regularly sought from service users and used to improve services provided. The adoption panel provides independent quality assurance on practice and reports presented. Six monthly reports on adoption performance are presented to senior managers. Adoption services are inspected and rated by Ofsted as part of their inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.

**Service planning information**

- The adoption panel takes a proactive role in meeting its obligations to monitor the service's performance against national minimum standards.
- Bi-annual meetings of the adoption panel monitoring group provide a forum for the independent panel chair to bring to the attention of the agency decision maker issues of quality assurance in terms of delay and practice.
- Bi- annual reports of the adoption service's activities, management and performance are presented to the senior management team and executive of the council and to key stakeholders.
- Protecting children and giving them a great start in life is a council priority. The timeliness of permanence planning for children is demonstrated through the numbers of children placed for adoption and the DfE adoption scorecards.
- The adoption service maintains records of its work and ensures that legislative requirements governing the use and retention of information are adhered to. All members of the service undertake data protection training.
- The assistant accountant for children's wellbeing meets regularly with the nominated manager to ensure the financial viability of the service.

- Records are kept of any serious incidents, allegations or complaints about the adoption service and policy and practice are updated to improve the service.
- Adoption service staff attend regional events and training to keep informed about adoption practice development for the benefit of its diverse customers.

### **Monitoring of recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters**

- All prospective adopters are directed to/given written information about the council's complaints procedure and about their right to apply to the independent review mechanism (IRM).
- All prospective adopters are required to attend 'Preparing to Adopt' training which is provided in partnership with Worcestershire adoption service. Evaluation forms are provided at each session and direct feedback is sought by the adoption panel. Feedback is used to inform course development.
- Timeliness of response to enquirers and throughout the approval process is measured and reported nationally.
- An evaluation questionnaire about panel attendance and experience is provided to all attendees including social workers and feedback from these is presented to panel to review its practices.
- On the granting of an adoption order all adopters are asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire on their experience of the service offered by the agency.

### **Monitoring of child's adoption plan**

- Children with a plan for adoption are monitored through the LAC review system by independent reviewing officers and regular auditing.
- Close liaison between children's teams and the professional advisor ensure sufficient time for consideration of adoption plans by the agency decision maker (ADM).
- Should a placement disrupt prior to an adoption order being granted, a meeting is convened to investigate and learn and reports are shared with the adoption panel and agency decision maker.
- The need for birth parents to receive independent counselling and support is emphasised to independent reviewing officers and children's social workers.

Child permanence reports (CPRs) and adoption support plans are prepared by suitably qualified social workers, endorsed by their supervisors and quality assured by the professional advisor to ensure consistent quality.



- Comments by panel members on the quality of reports and presentation of social workers are collated and fed back to supervisors to improve practice and feed into staff appraisals.
- Training is periodically undertaken with the children's teams to emphasise the multipurpose and explicit requirements of high quality CPRs and adoption support plans that acknowledge the lifelong impact of early trauma and neglect.

#### **Monitoring of adopter activities**

- Timescales for responding to initial enquirers, accepting registrations of interest and completion of the two stages of the assessment process are collated and reported in nationally published data.
- All approved adopters are referred to the national Adoption Register if no potential match has been identified within three months of approval.
- Where an adopter has been approved for over twelve months and has not been matched with a child, a review of their approval takes place with the adoption manager. If there is a significant change of circumstance the review report is considered by the adoption panel and the adopter/s invited to attend.
- Monitoring is in place to ensure that DBS checks and medical assessments remain valid for all approved and waiting prospective adopter/s.
- Quality assurance comments by adoption panel members on each case presented are collated and fed back to supervisors.

#### **4. Procedures for recruiting, preparing, assessing, approving and supporting prospective adopters.**

The agreed policies and procedures governing the functioning of the adoption service are available on the Intranet and Internet.

The key features covered by the policies and procedures are highlighted below.

#### **Recruitment, assessment and training**

- In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and Adoption and Children Act 2002 the needs of the child throughout their life are paramount when seeking adoptive family placements and the child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process. The adoption system exists to serve vulnerable children, rather than adults who wish to adopt.
- The main aim of all aspects of preparation is to provide a lifelong family where a child will grow up in a secure and positive environment and reach their potential in all aspects of their lives.
- The needs of children who require adoptive placements are diverse and complex. In order to meet these needs, the adoption service will be

creative and flexible and will be willing to consider all enquiries that offer the potential to provide a suitable adoptive home for a child.

- The adoption service will respond positively to applications to become adopters from people of all backgrounds, cultures, disability status, sexuality, marital status and religion in order to provide the maximum opportunity for children to be successfully adopted.
- Our responsibility to maintain a child's safety and confidentiality means that it is often not appropriate to place Herefordshire children for adoption within the county. We therefore welcome prospective applicants from neighbouring authorities to enable us to place Herefordshire children with families assessed and supported by Herefordshire adoption service.
- Where it is supported by the social work teams, applications from foster carers who are already caring for a child whose plan is adoption, will be welcomed. They will be offered counselling and training/information particular to their circumstances and their assessments will be 'fast-tracked' to panel as will those who have adopted previously.
- We recognise that there is a national need for adoptive families and welcome applications from those able to meet the more complex needs of children such as large sibling groups, children with disabilities, older children and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. If we feel unable to prioritise a particular application we will signpost prospective applicants to other agencies.
- Enquirers who are still having investigations or treatment in the hope of achieving a pregnancy will be advised that we will not accept an application until the treatment has ceased and they have come to terms with this. Given the prevalence of loss issues for children where adoption is the plan it is essential that applicants are as emotionally robust as possible and have come to recognise and accept their infertility.
- Information about the particular needs of children requiring adoption will be used to recruit prospective adopters to ensure well prepared adoptive placements within a timescale that is suitable to the needs of the children waiting.
- Where a placement cannot be identified from within its own resources the adoption service will look to neighbouring authorities, the national Adoption Register and AdoptionLink, other local authorities and voluntary adoption agencies. The payment of an inter agency fee will not be an impediment to the placement of children within the shortest possible timescale appropriate to their needs.
- Approved adopters are encouraged to be proactive in identifying potential matches and to attend regional and national 'exchange days' and adoption activity days.
- Specialist profiling is undertaken at an early stage for children where experience indicates there may be delays in identifying a placement e.g. older children, children with complex needs or sibling groups of 3 or more children.

- Herefordshire welcomes interagency placements with families assessed, approved and supported by other adoption agencies. Efforts are made to place Herefordshire children within two hours travelling distance to minimise difficulties during transitions and ensure support from known social workers. Adoption support service provision is carefully detailed in an adoption support plan when placing children outside the county and multi agency commitment is required. Its provisions are reviewed at each statutory review or at the request of the adoptive parent/s.
- There is a legal requirement that anyone applying to the court for an adoption order must be at least 21 yrs of age. We welcome applications from those with previous parenting experience and those of any age with the physical and emotional energy to care for a child throughout their childhood and beyond.
- Time will be taken at the outset to inform the enquirer about the particular additional needs of children waiting for adoption to ensure they have an understanding of the children's backgrounds and experiences and the implications for their future.
- A decision on whether to accept a registration of interest from an enquirer in the pre assessment stage is made by the adoption team manager within 5 days.
- Within 5 working days of acceptance of the registration of interest and in partnership with a member of the adoption team, applicants will complete a stage 1 agreement to statutory checks, references, medicals and information/training to be provided. This is a 'sifting stage' led by the applicants, but guided by the adoption service. It is expected that stage 1 will be completed within 2 months, though acknowledged that longer may be needed by some applicants to complete their self evaluation.
- If as a result of information provided, the adoption manager considers applicants are unsuitable to proceed to stage 2, they will be informed of this in writing and advised of the complaints procedure.
- Applicants may take up to 6 months to decide whether they wish to proceed to stage 2, which is social worker led but guided by the prospective adopters. A further agreement will be completed with dates of training, assessment visits, and presentation of the prospective adopters report (PAR) to the adoption panel. It is expected that stage 2 will be completed within 4 months, but longer may be needed in some cases. The focus of the assessment will be the analysis of the strengths and capacities of the prospective adopters to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma and loss and identification of potential vulnerabilities that may need additional support and training.
- Where any significant concerns arise during assessment, the adoption manager may decide that the social worker should present a brief report to the adoption panel. The applicant/s will be encouraged to attend and make their own representation to panel which will recommend whether the assessment should continue.

- The applicant/s will receive a copy of the PAR and be asked to sign it to confirm its accuracy and provide any comments.
- Applicants are invited to attend the adoption panel in order to address any questions themselves. Not all applicants may wish to attend and they are entitled to waive their right to do so without this affecting the panel's ability to make a recommendation as to their suitability. Applicants will immediately be informed of the panel's recommendation to the agency by the panel chair.
- The agency's decision will be made within 7 working days of receipt of the panel's recommendation and final panel minutes and applicants will be informed orally within 2 working days and in writing within 5 working days.

### **Inter Country Adoption**

- Many people believe they would not be able to adopt a young child in the UK and therefore seek to adopt a child from abroad. All enquirers will be asked whether they have considered adopting a looked after child in the UK and be given information about the children needing adoptive homes locally and nationally.
- The adoption duty social worker will provide initial information to enquirers living in Herefordshire and inform them of the difference between domestic adoption and adoption of a child from overseas and the costs involved. Applicants will be asked to identify from which country they wish to adopt.
- Where the service undertakes an assessment of applicants wishing to adopt a child from outside the United Kingdom a set charge is made for the work involved, half to be paid when an application is accepted and the remainder prior to presentation to the adoption panel. Where a subsequent match and supervision is required the agency will make additional charges to cover the costs to the adoption service.
- Where people are seeking to adopt a child who is a relative from overseas the set fee will usually apply.
- Intercountry adoptive applicants are encouraged to access specialist information relating to their situation but will be required to attend the 'Preparing to adopt' training.
- The process of assessment for those wishing to adopt from overseas is as outlined for prospective adopters above, but applicants will be expected to evidence how they will promote the cultural, racial and religious heritage of their child.

### **Support to placements pre and post adoption order**

- During assessment and approval all prospective adoptive parents will have an allocated adoption social worker. Once a placement has been made the child's social worker will be involved in visiting the child in placement as required by regulations. The focus is to promote secure

attachments for the child with guidance being provided from both social workers.

- Children placed for adoption are subject to statutory reviews under the Adoption Agencies Regulations/Care Planning Regulations. Independent reviewing officers ensure that all aspects of the child's welfare and care and support plans for his / her future are progressing satisfactorily.
- The education and achievement of children with a plan for adoption is actively promoted; all children of school age have personal education plans (PEP) which is reviewed as required and at least 6 monthly. Children's views are sought and achievements recorded. Out of school activities and educational trips are promoted.
- Adopted children are identified as a vulnerable group in the schools admission protocol and thus given priority. Adopters are informed of their child's entitlement to an enhanced pupil premium to support their education.
- It is a requirement that the child's allocated social worker prepares or commissions the preparation for each child of a lifestory book, and later life letter that includes advice on how to access their adoption file and care records.
- In order to meet a child's needs throughout their life, adoptive parents must have access to the fullest information about the child's pre adoption history. The child's adoption case record will be made available to the adopters' social worker and arrangements will be made for the adopter/s to meet with those able to provide information about the child. This may be done on an individual basis i.e through a meeting with the agency medical advisor and birth family members and/or through a child appreciation event.
- Where an adoption placement ends in an unplanned way or there is imminent danger of it doing so, the service will convene a meeting to consider the circumstances and to help with planning for the future. Reports of the subsequent disruption meeting are considered by the adoption panel to ensure they inform future service development.
- The agency recognises the need to be flexible in arranging comprehensive support to adoption placements. In order to achieve this, an adoption support plan is compiled for each child placed, with details of the support to be provided, including financial support.
- Adoption support plans are routinely reviewed during the pre adoption order period and can be requested to be reviewed at any point by the adoptive parent/s.
- All adoptive parents eligible for adoption support services from Herefordshire who contact the agency requesting a service will be offered the opportunity to talk to an adoption social worker. Advice, information and signposting to other partners will be provided or a 'one-off' service may be provided by the adoption social worker.

- Where on-going specific adoption support is indicated, an assessment will be undertaken in consultation with the family and partner agencies and a draft plan drawn up. Notice of the proposed provision of services will be given in writing to the person assessed and they will be invited to make representations before a final decision is made. In some cases a multi agency adoption support meeting will be convened in order to facilitate and review the plan. The format and content of the review will depend on the circumstances of the case and need not always necessitate direct contact between the local authority and the adoptive parent, but may be limited to an exchange of correspondence.
- Where unexpected challenges arise and adoptive parents request an adoption support assessment every effort will be made to maximise universal service provision through CAFs, Multi Agency Groups and 'Edge of Care' initiatives. The level of needs pathway enables specialist advice and guidance to be drawn in from the adoption service without the need for an additional assessment.
- If specialist therapeutic support is assessed as required and is not available through statutory services, an application for funding from the nationally funded Adoption Support Fund will be considered.
- Sometimes it will be necessary to sensitively support adoptive families in making separate daily living arrangements for their child or young person. Every effort is made to maintain a link between the adopted child or young person and their family.
- Comprehensive guidance and support is provided to assist all parties to engage in effective contact that meets the changing needs of children throughout their childhood and into adulthood.
- There is particular attention to contact arrangement where siblings are placed for adoption separately. Some direct contact arrangements are actively managed but wherever possible once face to face contact is progressing well the agency will withdraw.
- A newsletter is produced twice a year to keep adoptive families informed of adoption related topics or events.
- Opportunities for contact with other adopters and other adoptive children are provided through a range of events e.g. support groups, and family fun days.
- Adoptive families are provided with information and encouraged to access the resources provided by adoption organisations such as Adoption UK; the adoption service will provide free membership to a limited number of adoptive families each year.

### **Services for adopted adults**

- The adoption service has considered the need to provide advice and guidance to young people approaching 18 years, including the opportunity to extend letterbox arrangements. The service has

information available for adopted young adults about managing an approach from a birth family member and registering a veto.

- The adoption service provides counselling to adult adoptees who wish to seek information about their birth family in accordance with schedule 2 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002.
- Following initial counselling the adoptee/adult affected by adoption is signposted to registered adoption support agencies for tracing and intermediary services.
- The adoption service has established processes to register veto requests from adopted adults.

### **Services for birth relatives**

- Children's social workers and the adoption service provide information and counselling to birth family members about the adoption process and its implications for them and their child. Birth parents are encouraged to be involved in planning for their child's adoption through contributing to the child permanence report (CPR), commenting on what is written about them and recording their wishes for their child's upbringing.
- Birth parents are kept informed of the progress of plans for their children and decisions are conveyed to them in a timely and sensitive way.
- Birth parents are encouraged and supported to meet their child's adoptive parents where it is considered appropriate.
- The adoption service actively promotes the exchange of information through Letterbox agreements. Adopters and birth family members are reminded to forward news in a timely way and efforts are made to initiate new arrangements and review historic arrangements to meet the changing circumstances of all users, whilst maintaining the focus on the needs of the adopted child/young person.
- Prompts are in place at every stage of the adoption process to remind birth relatives of available services.

### **Contacts:**

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(if you want to make a complaint or have a concern about any service regulated by Ofsted (8.00am to 6.00pm).

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<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>1 December 2016</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>Proposed 2017/18 capital budget</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>Economy and corporate services</b>

## Classification

Open

## Key decision

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 to which the decision relates.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

## Wards affected

County-wide

## Purpose

To recommend the proposed capital budget for 2017/18 onwards to Council on 16 December 2016.

## Recommendation

**THAT:**

- (a) the schemes detailed in Appendix 2 are recommended to Council for inclusion in the capital budget.**

## Alternative options

- 1 The proposed capital schemes will enable the delivery of savings targeted in the medium term financial strategy, are self-funded, grant funded or address critical service needs. There are no alternative options that would not radically effect the provision of services.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mark Taylor, interim director of resources on tel (01432) 383519

- 2 Additional capital spend could be proposed however they must be affordable, deliverable, support the corporate plan objectives and consider the use of alternative solutions.

## Reasons for recommendations

- 3 The council's budget and policy framework rules require that Council approves the capital budget.

## Key considerations

- 4 The capital programme builds on the council's medium term financial strategy, core strategy and corporate plan priorities.
- 5 The current capital programme and funding sources, originally approved by Council in December 2015 and updated as reported to cabinet through budget monitoring, is provided in appendix 1. Changes reported include the re-phasing of budgets between financial years and the addition of £0.5m Sports England grant funded spend at Halo leisure centres and the inclusion of the approved £2.5m Marches business improvement grants scheme.

### Proposed additions to the capital programme

- 6 Proposed additions to the capital programme are provided in appendix 2. If proposals are approved by Council in December then each new scheme will commence following a separate approval detailing the scheme, funding and implications in line with the council's constitution requirements. The proposals focus on priority schemes, school investment strategy and schemes subject to confirmation of external funding contributions. The additional investment proposed will support the corporate plan priorities by improving schools, infrastructure, housing and the creation of job opportunities.
- 7 Of the £72.5m proposed additions, £62.8m is to be funded by capital grants, redirected funding allocated in prior years, capital receipts or returns on investment. This leaves £9.7m to be financed by prudential borrowing, to be secured over the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) period, 2017/18 through to 2019/20. The revenue implications are detailed in the financial implications section of this report and are supported in the MTFS.
- 8 Of the £9.7m prudential borrowing requirement, detailed in appendix 2, £0.7m will be held as a contingency to fund unforeseen immediate requirements and the remaining sum is proposed to fund the following:
  - £1.2m is required for priority corporate property estate works to ensure continued compliance with health and safety standards.
  - £2.0m is required for the purchase and repair of existing open market properties to house vulnerable young adults, care leavers and those that require assistance to live independently. This scheme will provide match funding to registered social landlord (RSL) to adapt properties to meet client groups' needs that can be complex. This scheme will reduce revenue budget pressures in adults and wellbeing, including temporary accommodation costs.
  - A further investment of £1.2m is recommended to continue to grow the offering at Herefordshire enterprise zone. The money will be used alongside grant funding (subject to confirmation in the autumn statement) to develop the

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shell store building to provide space for business start-ups. Public sector led investment for space to rent has proved successful, confirming demand, and by providing this space it is anticipated that more businesses will be attracted to Herefordshire.

- £3.8m funding is proposed to support an application for external capital grant funding towards continued improvements to the county's roads. Non principal roads have benefited from investment in prior years however principal road conditions have deteriorated and require additional investment. The bid will also target investment in the county's bridges. The submission for grant funding will be made in the new year.
- £0.6m is proposed to fund site investigation, feasibility and preparatory works as part of the development partnership project. This project will see the council commission a developer to progress the development of suitable sites in its ownership including the capability to progress development funding and provision of services and to be open for use with other collaboration partners as required. Procurement of a preferred supplier is progressing with appointment expected to be approved in the summer. A number of projects are expected to start post appointment, the affordability of the programme will be assessed at all stages during the process.
- The remaining sum will fund capital equipment costs supporting the delivery of savings in library and customer services, investment in Stretton Sugwas closed landfill site remediation works and corporate funding towards externally funded energy saving schemes.

- 9 The £4.8m schools capital investment strategy is linked to preliminary works to inform key investment need and an expansion to Marlbrook school. It is anticipated that a significant number of schemes will come forward over the next five years to deliver sustainable, high quality education facilities in Herefordshire. Funding for the completion of such schemes will be explored with partners such as the education funding agency, schools, the diocese of Hereford, archdiocese of Cardiff, local communities as well as opportunities for releasing sites and reinvesting in education.

### **Borrowing implications**

- 10 The additional borrowing requirement of £9.7m will be included in the treasury management strategy (TMS) to February Council which will be updated following approval of this report. Actual borrowing will be secured as cash funding is required at the optimal interest rate available at that time.
- 11 Total gross outstanding debt was £196.5m as at 31 March 2016, the 2017/18 operational boundary for borrowing as approved in the TMS is £290.0m, the approval of the proposed additions in this report will remain below this operational limit.
- 12 Herefordshire has a long term debt to asset ratio of 28% which means just over a quarter of Herefordshire's assets are financed by long term debt, which is in line with the average for all unitary authorities. Herefordshire currently provides 12% of its net revenue budget to cover the repayment cost of debt. This is slightly higher than the all unitary average of 9% and represents the council investments in a number of schemes that will generate returns, for example investment in an energy from waste plant and the county's leisure centres.

## Community impact

- 13 The capital programme proposed supports the overall corporate plan and service delivery strategies in place. The overall aim of capital expenditure is to benefit the community through improved facilities and by promoting economic growth.

## Equality duty

- 14 The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying “due regard” in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
- 15 Following the commencement of a new capital scheme an equality impact assessment is completed to assess any potential impact on the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 16 The duty means that the potential impact of a decision on people with different protected characteristics is always taken into account when these assessments have been completed then we will consider mitigating against any adverse impact identified.

## Financial implications

- 17 The majority of proposals are funded as detailed in appendix 2. Proposals are subject to the confirmation of external funding sources expected over the coming months.
- 18 It is estimated that the phasing and cost of the £9.7m new prudential borrowing requirement, using the current weighted average cost of capital of 3.42%, will be as follows. Actual borrowing is only secured when cash funds require.

	Capital cost	Cost of borrowing per annum
	£m	£m
2017/18	3.2	0.1
2018/19	3.5	0.1
2019/20	3.0	0.1
	<u>9.7</u>	<u>0.3</u>

- 19 The expected additional borrowing costs will continue for approximately 25 years and comprise both interest and debt repayment. These estimations will be included in the revenue budget proposals for future years.

## Legal implications

- 20 The council is under a legal duty to sensibly manage their own capital finance. The council is able to borrow subject to limits set by the council and any nationally imposed limits and it must do so in accordance with the prudential code on borrowing.
- 21 The Local Government Act 2003 allows the council to borrow for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment and for the purposes of the prudent

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management of its financial affairs. Before approval of any individual scheme it will be necessary to ensure that the need for the scheme arises out of a legal obligation on the council for its provision. Any scheme will need to be procured in accordance with the procurement regulations and the council's own contract procedure rules and appropriate contractual documentation put in place to protect the council's interests.

## **Risk management**

- 22 The level of prudential borrowing required as a result of these proposals is within the existing MTFS. Borrowing is only secured when required as detailed in the TMS. When schemes are approved they are included in the monthly budget control meetings which highlights individual scheme risks and possible mitigation action.

## **Consultees**

- 23 General overview and scrutiny committee considered the proposals on 14 November, and made no substantive recommendations.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Approved capital programme

Appendix 2 - Proposed additional schemes

## **Background papers**

- None identified.



## Approved capital programme

Scheme Name	Spend in prior years £000	Sept 2016/17 budget £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	Total £000
<b>Economy, Communities and Corporate</b>						
Energy from Waste Plant	23,412	16,588				40,000
Hereford City Centre Transport Package (includes Hereford city link road)	17,575	12,124	7,448	3,504		40,651
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	annual plan	11,633	11,313	10,341	10,341	
Fastershire Broadband (excludes Gloucester spend in prior years of £9.7m)	9,003	6,605	9,747	2,845		28,200
Hereford Enterprise Zone	5,071	3,150	7,779			16,000
Leisure Centres	7,268	2,784				10,052
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	463	1,671				2,134
Data Centre Consolidation	-	1,170				1,170
Corporate Accommodation	18	1,082	600			1,700
South Wye Transport Package (total budget of £35m includes £8m funded by LTP, scheme extends into 20/21)	1,983	1,000	9,000	13,000	1,427	26,410
Hereford Library Accommodation Works	91	909				1,000
Marches business improvement grants	-	833	833	834		2,500
Highway Depot Improvements	-	800				800
IT Network Upgrade	-	500				500
Software to Enable Remote Access to Desktops and Automate Upgrades	-	500				500
Property Estate Enhancement Works	-	500	500	500	500	2,000
LED street lighting	4,750	905				5,655
<b>Childrens wellbeing</b>						
Colwall Primary School	33	4,800	1,667			6,500
Schools Capital Maintenance Grant	annual plan	1,205				
Peterchurch Primary School	6	1,000	4,494			5,500
SEN & DDA school improvements			710			710
Schools Basic Need	annual plan	666				
<b>Adults and wellbeing</b>						
Disabled facilities grant	annual plan	1,734	tbc			
<i>Other schemes less than £500k</i>		4,877	1,685	530		
<b>Total</b>		<b>77,036</b>	<b>55,776</b>	<b>31,554</b>	<b>12,268</b>	
<b>Financed by</b>						
Prudential borrowing		44,382	20,892	4,534	500	
Grant and funding contributions		27,388	26,799	27,020	11,768	
Capital receipt funding allocated to approved capital schemes		5,266	8,085			
<b>Total</b>		<b>77,036</b>	<b>55,776</b>	<b>31,554</b>	<b>12,268</b>	





## PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET ADDITIONS (subject to Cabinet or Cabinet member approval)

Scheme Name	17/18	18/19	19/20	Total Cost	17/18	18/19	19/20	Total Funding	Total net cost
<b>Priority schemes</b>									
Stretton Sugwas closed landfill site gas extraction system	95			95				-	95
Customer services and libraries - investment in equipment	133			133				-	133
Private sector housing improvements - match funding per housing unit to generate savings	800	800	800	2,400	400			400	2,000
Priority corporate property estate works	1,171			1,171				-	1,171
<b>Sub total</b>	2,199	800	800	3,799	400	-	-	400	3,399
<b>Subject to additional funding confirmation</b>									
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone, shell store incubation centre	2,500	3,200	500	6,200	2,500	2,500		5,000	1,200
Development Partnership project mobilisation and investment	600	10,000	10,000	20,600		10,000	10,000	20,000	600
Highway asset management & major infrastructure investment (including Hereford by-pass)	14,543	7,735	7,000	29,278	14,000	6,000	5,523	25,523	3,755
Energy efficiency invest to save programme	100			100	12			12	88
Model Farm, Ross on Wye, new enterprise park	2,520	4,250	300	7,070	2,520	4,250	300	7,070	-
<b>Sub total</b>	20,263	25,185	17,800	63,248	19,032	22,750	15,823	57,605	5,643
<b>School capital investment strategy</b>									
Preliminary works to inform key investment need throughout the county	300	1,774		2,074	300	1,774		2,074	-
Expansion for Marlbrook school to make it full 3 form entry and create an early year's hub.	2,000	726		2,726	2,000	726		2,726	-
	2,300	2,500	-	4,800	2,300	2,500	-	4,800	-
<b>1% contingency</b>	228	278	186	692				-	692
<b>Total</b>	24,990	28,763	18,786	72,539	21,732	25,250	15,823	62,805	9,734

Prudential borrowing required

3,258 3,513 2,963 9,734





<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>1 December 2016</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Herefordshire economic development strategy</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Cabinet member economy and corporate services</b>

## Classification

Open

## Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

## Wards affected

Countywide

## Purpose

To consider and agree the draft economic development strategy for recommendation to Council.

## Recommendation(s)

**THAT:**

- (a) the Herefordshire Economic Vision attached at appendix 1 be recommended to full Council for adoption as the county's economic development strategy;**
- (b) delegated authority be sought from Council to make technical amendments to the strategy during the period 2017 to 2021 on factual matters such as: updating of statistics, replacing images, and reflection of projects approved by cabinet within each aim of the strategy.**
- (c) the investment pitch book contained at appendix 2 be approved; and**
- (d) authority be delegated to the economic development manager to make technical amendments to the investment pitch book on matters such as:**

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Nick Webster, Economic Development Manager on Tel (01432) 260601

**typographical errors, replacement of images, statistical information, project information and programme timetable.**

## **Alternative options**

- 1 That the strategy is amended to reflect different priorities. This is not recommended because consultation with partners was undertaken early within the process of drafting the strategy. The draft strategy reflects priorities and opportunities identified through this consultation. A mechanism is included within the strategy to review the content on a regular basis and to include new priorities if required.
- 2 That the strategy is not accepted or published. This is not recommended because the draft strategy identifies opportunities and guides investment. Without the strategy there is significant risk that the county would lose out on external investment opportunities and not realise the vision.

## **Reasons for recommendations**

- 3 The draft strategy has been produced to reflect an agreed approach on the actions and priorities to secure the future economic prosperity of the county. As a budget and policy framework document adoption of the strategy is reserved to full council.

## **Key considerations**

- 4 The draft strategy, called Herefordshire's Economic Vision, will provide a key context to regeneration and investment work in the county. In particular it will form a basis for the private sector to plan future investment decisions and identify opportunities.
- 5 The strategy spans fifteen years, split into three blocks each of five years. This allows the strategy to focus on the immediate projects which are already in development whilst also allowing the ambition and vision to be articulated over a longer time period.
- 6 The aim of developing the economic vision is to unlock and drive the full economic potential of the county through a coordinated plan that is at once ambitious and coherent, dynamic and, whilst stretching, is persuasive and achievable.
- 7 The economic vision focuses on a broad investment picture. It recognises that it is neither right nor possible for the council to deliver this vision alone and identifies a series of private sector investment opportunities that would make a significant contribution to the growth of the county.
- 8 The economic vision has four key roles, it;
  - Identifies priority projects that will support economic growth or generate a higher value economy;
  - Attracts investment to Herefordshire and guides it within the county;
  - Raises the profile of Herefordshire and the investment opportunities;
  - Provides Herefordshire with a framework and clear priorities for negotiations with government and crucially the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership;

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- 9 The vision recognises that availability of public sector funding is significantly reducing and for the county to advance it will need to perform better in terms of attracting private sector investment. Consequently the focus of the strategy is on a number of large scale capital investment opportunities each a definable project in its own right.
- 10 The strategy identifies these opportunities and brings them into a document to demonstrate a coordinated approach to regeneration across the county. As identified above, one of the primary roles of the strategy is to attract and guide investment to the county. The strategy and a suite of future publicity material will be used to market the county and investment opportunities to the development and investment community.
- 11 Additionally the document will be utilised by the council, and partners, in a lobbying and bidding capacity, specifically, but not restricted to, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and government.
- 12 The strategy is visionary and aspirational. The investment opportunities are in various stages of development and it is accepted that not all of them may be realised. It is important to demonstrate what could be achieved within the county and to start the conversation about regeneration with partners, local communities, and prospective investors whilst remaining agile and flexible to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise.
- 13 A number of agreed council priorities are included within the strategy to demonstrate the alignment of council projects and the capital programme behind the aspirations contained within the strategy.
- 14 The strategy is not a statutory document but it is strongly linked to the local plan and Herefordshire's adopted local transport plan.

## **Community impact**

- 15 The strategy includes a suite of investment opportunities. Each of these projects will aim to make a contribution towards economic growth and a higher value economy. These projects are in various stages of development. Consequently some projects have a defined and evidenced set of outcomes and benefits, whilst other projects will need to undertake this work as the project develops.
- 16 The strategy sets out some specific targets to demonstrate contributions to economic growth and to measure success. These targets are aspirational and will be subject to review on a regular basis. Examples of the targets included within the strategy are:
  - a. Increasing average wages;
  - b. Providing new higher education places;
  - c. Increasing the number of new business start-ups;
  - d. Reducing carbon dioxide levels;
  - e. Increasing Gross Value Added to demonstrate improved productivity.
- 17 The drafting, and approval, of the strategy will help guide council and private sector investment through the implementation of the investment opportunities and other projects, consequently making a significant contribution to the corporate priority to

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support the growth of our economy.

## **Equality duty**

- 18 There are no equality or human rights issues arising from the content of this report and there are no equality or human rights issue in the drafting of an economic development strategy.
- 19 However, the work contained with the production of the Economic Master Plan may draw attention to issues within the implementation of the various priority projects that would have an impact on equalities or human rights.
- 20 Should council approval be required for support towards, or involvement with, any of these priority projects, a decision report will request the appropriate approval and set out the equality and / or human rights issues.

## **Financial implications**

- 21 The financing of the individual projects will largely be achieved through private sector investment, however all other funding opportunities will be considered where appropriate and realistic including government grants and other public sector finance. Should a project require the council to make a financial contribution, or provide other support, a decision will be required at the appropriate governance level informed by a business case as necessary.
- 22 Cabinet will recall the approval in June 2016 to procure a development partner, contract award is currently anticipated within summer 2017. The development partnership is a potential delivery option for the investment opportunities being promoted by the council.
- 23 A suite of additional material will be produced to accompany the strategy from a marketing and promotional perspective. The specific material required has not been defined however costs will be met from within existing department budgets.

## **Legal implications**

- 24 The Economic Development strategy is not a statutory document and as such there is no requirement to produce one. However the council has deemed it appropriate to have such a plan and it forms part of the policy framework to be approved by council.

## **Risk management**

- 25 There is risk in realising the ambitions of the strategy in uncertain economic times. This will be mitigated by working with partner organisations to deliver effective activities to achieve ambitions.
- 26 There is risk in ensuring funding streams are available to progress key projects, particularly in relation to infrastructure. This will be mitigated by working with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other partners to access funding and to encourage private sector led regeneration.
- 27 There is also risk in ensuring engagement from the private sector which is necessary to deliver the strategy. This will be mitigated by working with the Herefordshire Business Board and other key partners such as the Hereford Business Improvement

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District, Enterprise Zone Board, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, and various project partners involved in the production of the strategy.

## Consultees

- 28 The draft strategy has been informed by a series of 'planning for real' style events that took place in the spring of 2016. The events included:
- Leominster – 29 February
  - Hereford Business Board – 1 March
  - Hereford – 2 March
  - Ross-on-Wye - 9 March
  - Ledbury - 14 March
  - Bromyard - 15 March
  - Rural Areas, Withington – 17 March
- 29 Additionally a number of key local partners have been specifically engaged primarily due to the impact on their operation, asset, or remit. These include:
- a. Herefordshire Nature Trust
  - b. Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership
  - c. Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce
  - d. Herefordshire Federation of Small Business
  - e. NMiTE
  - f. County of Culture bid
  - g. Hereford and Ludlow College
  - h. Hereford College of Arts
  - i. Hereford Football Club
  - j. Hereford Business Improvement District
  - k. Ross Rowing Club
  - l. Ross Independent Traders Association
  - m. Hereford Rugby Club
  - n. The Enterprise Zone board
  - o. Arena Racing Company

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- 30 Comments from the above partners has informed the development and identification of the investment opportunities.
- 31 General Overview and Scrutiny Committee have met to discuss the strategy. A summary of their recommendations and the response to these is included at Appendix 3.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Economic Development Strategy – Herefordshire’s Economic Vision

Appendix 2: Investment Pitchbook

Appendix 3: Response to General Overview and Scrutiny

## **Background papers**

- None identified.



# Invest Herefordshire

Herefordshire's Economic Vision



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# Foreword

Herefordshire is a dynamic, vibrant and growing county. It has areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of specific scientific interest, with wildlife and conservation sites covering 9% of the county. It is popular with tourists seeking to experience the outdoors, natural beauty and is home to town hailed as the birthplace of British tourism- Ross-on-Wye. Every May and December, thousands of visitors arrive to the Hay Festival of Literature in the Welsh border town and the River Wye attracts water-based activities all year round.

It is not only tourists who enjoy Herefordshire. The county's entrepreneurial spirit and room to grow has proved fruitful to business, including Bulmers (Heineken), British Land, Cargill, Weston's Cider, Bloor Homes and Tyrrells Crisps. The defence industry is well-represented across the county, as home to the Special Air Service and a short distance from Gloucester-based Government Communication Headquarters.

The commitment to superfast broadband is connecting creative and diverse businesses across the county, with big business existing alongside successful smaller businesses. There are significant investment opportunities in a county that is already forward-thinking and ambitious. A number of schemes are underway, with the Hereford Bypass in progress and significant city-centre refurbishment and investment creating an exciting and sympathetic historic shopping and leisure destination.

There is commercial potential to capitalise on the county's links to the Midlands, the South West and Wales alongside local specialisms in defence and security, manufacturing, food, drink and tourism. This economic vision identifies key projects and investment opportunities across the county and starts the conversation between local partners and the investment and development community.

As we all expect to be able to connect online, offline, to commercial centres and with natural surroundings, we need a thriving economy that creates high value jobs, whilst maintaining and enhancing the quality of life and natural capital of this fertile county. This economic vision identifies the ambitions and intentions of a range of stakeholders and partners, to help make Herefordshire an even better place to live, work and learn.

This is just the start. We aim to be aspirational and forward thinking, to look beyond what is currently planned, identify new opportunities and build a bigger picture. We look forward to working with you to deliver this economic vision for Herefordshire.





# Why an economic vision?

■ Britain's economy is changing. Regions must compete ever more effectively for investment, whether from the private sector or the public sector. Herefordshire is performing well – and competitively – in attracting inward public investment into our county's infrastructure, but we cannot depend upon public investment to drive our economy in the long-term, or to unlock its real potential.

88 The aim of setting out the economic vision is to realise the full economic potential of the county through a coordinated plan that is at once dynamic but coherent and, whilst ambitious, is persuasive, achievable and sustainable.

The economic vision focuses on a broad investment picture. It identifies a series of private sector investment opportunities that will contribute to the growth of the county. It also sets out what the public sector, in an enablement role, will provide in terms of creating the conditions to encourage economic growth.

The economic vision has four key roles:

1. to support the growth of the Herefordshire economy by identifying priority projects:
2. to attract investment to Herefordshire and guides it within the County:
3. to raise the profile of Herefordshire and the investment opportunities:
4. to provide Herefordshire with clear priorities for negotiations:

Alongside local stakeholders the principle audience is intended to be the development and investment community. Consequently the vision aims to demonstrate the economic momentum and opportunity within Herefordshire.

The timescale of the vision is set over fifteen years, split into three blocks each of five years. This gives focus on the projects which are already in development whilst also allowing an element of ambition and vision to be articulated over a longer time period.









## SECTION 1

# Herefordshire the county

■ Herefordshire is an entrepreneurial county, 15% of the population are self-employed; there are excitingly high levels of patent registrations; and good business survival rates. The county's business base is both diverse and healthy.

Despite its relatively rural location the county benefits from being on the motorway network linking South Wales to the West Midlands in addition to having direct and regular rail links to London, Birmingham, Manchester and Cardiff. Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff airports are all accessible within a 90 minute drive.

manufacturing, defence and security, food and drink production, agriculture and tourism. Within the county a number of global companies – including Cadbury/Mondelez, Heineken, Cargill, Kingspan, and Special Metals, operate alongside well known British brands – including Tyrells, Weston's Cider, and PGL, most of whom have started and grown in Herefordshire.

To support the county's continuing growth, Herefordshire Council has recently adopted a local plan which by 2031 will have delivered 16,500 new homes; new bypasses for Hereford and Leominster to reduce congestion and improve access to markets; and sufficient employment land to meet the needs of a growing business base.

Much has already been achieved in recent years to implement this proactive pursuit of growth. Major investments include:

- The Old Market retail and leisure development. This £90m development, in partnership with British Land, brought a new cinema, retailers that include a department store and high end supermarket and restaurant chains reinforcing the role of Hereford as a retail destination.
- Fastershire. A £32.5m programme of investment in superfast broadband infrastructure, delivering a 21st century digital network, to 55,000 homes and businesses countywide.
- Hereford Enterprise Zone. A 74 hectare new business park development which has already secured over £23m of public and private investment delivering business growth and new job opportunities.



The largest business sectors are currently





- Halo Leisure. Investment of £10million in the redevelopment of a range of sports and leisure centres to bring facilities into the 21st century, enhance the user experience, and improve the company's economic viability.
- Securing over £43m from central government for road infrastructure schemes which will enable the development of several hundred city centre homes, and form the first section of a Hereford bypass.
- Investing £7m in the construction of a new Livestock market to facilitate the retail and leisure development within the city and provide a state of the art market to serve the Marches agricultural sector.

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These and other investments represent well over £250m of recent public and private investment in the county, improving the economic infrastructure and enabling private sector growth.



# Economic Challenges

As with any county or region there are challenges affecting the economic and social character of Herefordshire.

## ■ Challenge 1 – Productivity and a low wage economy

Herefordshire has very low unemployment, 3.5% over the period July 2015 to June 2016, finding jobs is not an issue within the county. However in 2016 Herefordshire finds itself within the bottom 5% of council areas across Great Britain in terms of average weekly wage. This is largely a legacy of an economy built upon agriculture, food and drink processing, and manufacturing. It impacts on the resident population's disposable income, social mobility and living standards. Our solution to these social and economic issues is to aim to become a higher value economy with a focus on knowledge intensive employment and businesses.

When measured per head of population, Herefordshire's gross value added (GVA) in 2013 was £17,900, highlighting lower levels of economic productivity when compared to both regional (£19,400) and national (£24,000) GVA per capita.

The knowledge economy (founded on technological progress and advanced products and supported by highly skilled workers in financial and business services, communications and information) has driven UK economic growth for the last 40 years. Yet within Herefordshire these sectors make a significantly lower contribution than the more traditional sectors of agriculture, public administration, and manufacturing.

Herefordshire is moving towards a more knowledge based economy. This is bringing forward improved communications infrastructure, upskilling of the workforce, attracting highly skilled employees who benefit from the opportunities on offer and the high quality of life within the county.







# Economic Challenges

## ■ Challenge 2 – Skills and Higher Education

Herefordshire has a very high proportion of good and outstanding early year's providers, schools and colleges. The sixth-form college is one of the best performing in the country and was voted Times Educational Supplement Sixth form College of the Year in 2016.

74 The education System in Herefordshire is highly collaborative; this has led to a year on year improvement in education outcomes, moving Herefordshire from below average performance to second and top quartile performance nationally for most children.

Whilst qualification performance is strong, further improvement is needed in developing the right match of skilled employees for current and future business needs. We want to achieve this through strong and enduring relationships with the business sector.

9.4% of the working age population have no qualifications (8.6% nationally) and it is recognised that local engineering and manufacturing companies are struggling to recruit people with the right skills.

The evidence is clear that increasing the level of skills in the workforce is fundamental to economic long term growth. As the national economy moves to a model characterised by high performing and high value added sectors, this in turn requires more people to be employed in higher level jobs with the skills to match.

Key to increasing the skills base of the local workforce is the provision of higher education courses. The current lack of a university within the county leads to a significant proportion of college graduates leaving the county to further their education. Few make an immediate return leading to a localised “brain drain” that is not reversed until people enter their late thirties, start families and begin to have a different set of priorities.

It is therefore vital that we ensure that young people have the skills that they need to find work and that people are supported throughout their lives to upskill and achieve their potential. Provision of a higher education institution will help to replace the students choosing to study out of county and provide a source of graduates to local businesses. Collaboration between businesses and skills providers will need improving to be responsive to changing and emerging business and skills needs.

## ■ Challenge 3 – Infrastructure and capacity

Large areas of the county are a considerable distance from the national motorway network. Other areas may suffer from slow broadband connectivity or unreliable mobile phone coverage. In the “digital age” any under provision of electronic communication can be as big an inhibitor to growth as the lack of road, rail or utility infrastructure: To address this infrastructure challenge the council and BT are investing £32.5m in the Broadband network locally.



The significant growth in housing and employment sites planned for the county can only be accommodated if the required supporting infrastructure is in place. The challenge is to ensure this infrastructure is in place in time to facilitate the growth.

75 The current principle infrastructure constraints relate to the road infrastructure in and around Hereford, with similar but smaller scale issues to be addressed in Leominster. Additional constraints apply to the capacity to treat waste water and mitigate phosphate discharge, and the provision of suitable broadband speeds to meet the needs of businesses and residents.



## SECTION 2

# Vision, aims and outcomes

*The Herefordshire economy will be grown by delivering new jobs which generate increased output per head through exploiting knowledge whether in the manufacturing, leisure, or service sector.*

Our vision will be delivered through implementation of seven Aims

### A Great Place for Business

Creating the conditions in Herefordshire to encourage new business start-ups and an increase in productivity leading to higher value employment and greater innovation.

### A Great Place to Learn

Increasing the range of higher education provision and improving the balance between business demand and the supply of skills and qualifications.

### A Great Place to Live

Offering diverse and well located new homes and a broader range of jobs whilst maintaining and improving the quality of life within the county.

### A Great Place to Visit

Developing a broader range of visitor and leisure attractions and increase the length of visitor stay and amount of spend.

### Great movement and accessibility

Improving the connectivity of people and business to jobs and markets.

### Countywide Ambition

Enabling Market Towns and rural communities to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands.

### A Great Environment

Improving competitiveness and growth through energy and resource efficiency and implementing a range of landscape enhancements.



# Vision

*Herefordshire will offer an unrivalled balance of economic opportunity and quality of life. The much sought after Herefordshire rural and urban living environments will be further enhanced by thriving communities and economies that are better connected and made more sustainable by*

- *conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

*The County will host a range of exciting investment opportunities and be open and welcoming to external investment.*

*Businesses that exploit knowledge will start-up, grow and invest in a supportive environment. A diverse range of high value jobs will be produced in sectors where there is a competitive advantage. The county will become a world class choice for students in specialised disciplines whilst retaining and attracting young people and skilled workers.*



# Aim 1 - A great place for business

Creating the conditions in Herefordshire to encourage new business start-ups and an increase in productivity leading to higher value employment and greater innovation.

## ■ Vision

Assets will exist in the form of a nationally important cyber security centre of excellence and a suite of business incubation centres. Dedicated facilities on the Skylon Park enterprise zone will enable collaborations between local businesses, the New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMiTE) university and other higher education partners. Hereford will be a sub-regional office location serving the county, eastern Wales and beyond, catering for a growing professional services and creative industries sector. All of the above will create jobs in higher value sectors and boost GVA.

The enterprise zone will be fully occupied and a range of relevant, attractive business parks will operate within the city and the market towns in locations that capitalise on the motorway and trunk road network. Electronic communications will benefit from a superfast broadband infrastructure that enables connected work environments throughout the county. Herefordshire companies will have access to a supportive business landscape where company growth is encouraged by a supportive regulatory framework, specialist advice, and a range of finance options.

School and college students will recognise starting a business as a viable and achievable career choice and will have access to a range of support and accommodation to facilitate their business growth.

## ■ Outcomes

Increase GVA per head by 10% in real terms, from £19,500 to £21,500 by 2031 (at 2015 prices).

Directly assist in the creation of 1,000 new businesses by 2031.

Create 10,000 new jobs by 2031.





## Projects

1. Development of a new Hereford central business district as a sub-regional office centre meeting increased demand for office space from professional services and creative industries.
2. Construction by the University of Wolverhampton of a new Cyber Security centre of excellence which facilitates collaboration between research faculties and businesses.
3. Continued commitment to the build out of the Hereford Enterprise Zone and investment within the existing Rotherwas industrial estate.
4. Development of an entrepreneurial culture among school and college children to create a genuine future career option of starting a business.
5. Build out of the Model Farm enterprise park at Ross on Wye and encouraging delivery of existing major employment allocations at Three Elms in Hereford, Moreton on Lugg, and the market towns;
6. Construction of a range of new or refurbished business incubation centres within Ross on Wye, Leominster, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington.
7. Development of the Marches Growth Hub offer to coordinate and maximise the range of advice, funding and support available to businesses across the county.



# Aim 2 - A great place to learn

Increase the range of Higher Education provision, improve the balance between business demand and the supply of skills and qualifications, and strengthen the relationship between business and schools

## ■ Vision

Higher Education provision at the College of Arts and Hereford and Ludlow College the city and wider county will become home to a vibrant and growing student population. There will be an innovative and successful cluster of spin out businesses from several institutions locating in a series of business incubation centres across the county. Herefordshire business will have access to a range of opportunities to engage in research and development in collaboration with local Universities and other private sector facilities.

Businesses will have a strong relationship with schools, through the provision of business governors, involvement in curriculum opportunities and careers development and developing a better understanding of skills requirements

Herefordshire schools and colleges will have benefited from £100m of public – private sector investment to improve the learning environment and give Herefordshire children the best possible start in life.

## ■ Outcomes

Provide 1,500 HE student places in county by 2025.

Increased take up of apprenticeships.

Reduction in number of people with no skills to x%.





## Projects

1. Implementation of the New Model in Technology and Engineering University, as a regional centre of engineering excellence, with associated teaching and administration space, student accommodation, and linked laboratory and development workshop space.
2. New build student accommodation and associated facilities for students attending the Hereford College of Arts.
3. Investment in the Holme Lacy campus and development of the campus and college farm for an expanded range of courses and outside, but linked, activities.
4. Increased linkages between the county's schools and colleges and the local business base, expansion of entrepreneurship based programmes such as Young Enterprise.
5. Implementation of the £100m schools capital investment programme over the next twenty years.



# Aim 3 - A great place to live

Offering diverse and well located new homes and a broader range of jobs whilst maintaining and improving the quality of life within the county.

## ■ Vision

The county will offer an unrivalled work / life balance. Improved road and electronic communications will facilitate greater access to markets. Supportive planning policies and improved broadband infrastructure will make home working and live / work units a genuine work choice for significant numbers of people. The City of Culture bidding process will have led to increased participation in cultural activities across the county and an expansion of the existing vibrant arts and cultural offer.

Herefordshire will be known across the country for its natural capital and access to an outdoor lifestyle. The county will be host to a number of regional or national level sporting or leisure events that capitalise on significant local participation and a number of purpose built facilities.

Each market town and the city will have built on their distinctiveness and vibrancy. A range of sympathetic and high quality developments will enhance the residential, leisure and commercial offer improving the viability of the town centres. New build housing will have been encouraged towards energy minimisation and Passivhaus developments will be an increasingly common form of new build.

## ■ Outcomes

Construct 16,500 new houses including maximising the number of affordable housing units by 2031.

Increase gross weekly pay from £420 to £460 by 2031 (at 2015 prices).



## Projects

1. Continue the development of the urban village within Hereford city as a mixed use site providing jobs, housing and public services;
2. Promotion of the Berrington Street area as an opportunity for a new 'city living' development with small scale/niche retail accompanied by cafés, bars and food outlets alongside live/work units and residential or student accommodation.
3. Working with Hereford Football Club to refurbish the Edgar Street ground to provide a range of ancillary uses and improve the facilities available to the club and supporters.
4. Development of a calendar of outdoor sporting or leisure events of regional or national standard that build upon the creation of locally available facilities and locations.
5. Submission of the city of culture bid to improve the range and profile of cultural activities and increase the local engagement with various cultural assets and facilities.
6. Encouragement of housing schemes and business premises that minimise energy consumption with particular focus on the provision of Passivhaus standard homes and office locations.





# Aim 4 - A great place to visit

Developing a broader range of visitor and leisure attractions and increase the length of visitor stay and amount of spend.

## ■ Vision

Building on current strengths Herefordshire will become nationally known for its outdoor sporting and leisure competitions and experiences. Organised competitive and recreational events will be held across a range of disciplines supported by facilities that offer a year round opportunity for more casual and leisure use. At the forefront of this outdoor offer will be the River Wye, access to, and use of, the river will be improved at key locations to develop its economic potential.

The local food and drink sector will present a significant tourist attraction. Building on the growth of local food entrepreneurs the county will attract those who want to sample high quality cooking using traditional and local ingredients. There will be the opportunity to experience not only local food and drink but a range of music, arts and other cultural events through a range of festivals, producer tours and open days, street events and specialist retail outlets supporting local producers.

Building on the history and cultural offer of the county a number of new visitor attractions will have opened under private ownership. Combined with the Cathedral, National Trust properties, and other existing attractions significant numbers of visitors are drawn to the county to experience its history and heritage in a variety of forms.

Underpinning the entire visitor offer will be a wide range of quality and unique accommodation experiences including yurts, Hobbit Holes, bivouacs, and high-end glamping. At the other end of the scale, Hereford will feature a new high quality hotel to meet the increased demand from visitors to the new university and increased business and cultural tourism.

## ■ Outcomes

Increase the total visitor spend by 7.5% (from £442 million to £475 million) by 2021.

Increase the total number of annual visits by 10% to over 5.5 million visitors.



## Projects

1. Development of a 'river quarter' within Hereford to open up access to the river and provide a focal point for the county's recreational and outdoor pursuits offer.
2. Utilisation of elements of the Hereford racecourse and surrounding area to develop an enhanced hotel and conferencing facility with wraparound leisure offer.
3. Working with local communities and organisations to expand upon and better promote the distinctive and sustainable music, arts and other festivals and events (h.Art, Three Choirs Festival, Hay Festival, Ledbury Poetry Festival) run throughout the year.
4. Working with specific attractions and landowners to develop a series of facilities that will accommodate sporting and leisure competitions that would ultimately be able to host a regional or national level event.
5. Continued support of the local food and drink sector in the enhancement of their visitor offer and experience and in the development of a series of food and drink orientated events and festivals which showcase the best the county has to offer.
6. Development and implementation of a Herefordshire Destination Management Plan to coordinate tourism activity and encapsulate new visitor economy drivers.
7. Support to new visitor attractions that add to the cultural and economic diversity of the county and have the potential to expand the visitor offer and generate additional visitor spend.



# Aim 5 - Great movement and accessibility

To improve the connectivity of people and business to jobs and markets.

## ■ Vision

Hereford's bypass will enable the growth of the city. Through a network of attractive routes the participation in walking and cycling into and across Hereford will be increased. A range of street enhancements will link between the city core and the residential areas to the west and north by introducing pedestrian friendly crossing points and removing underpasses. New multi storey car parks will be situated in locations where they divert commuters and visitors before they impact on the city centre traffic, while the railway station will feature a public transport hub to combine bus, rail, and taxi provision.

Across the wider county improvements will be made to the A road network reducing journey times and improving safety. Railway stations throughout Herefordshire will feature enhanced car parking provision and, to improve reliability, the line between Hereford and Ledbury will be twin tracked.

The whole county will benefit from superfast broadband, enabling businesses to operate flexibly and allowing residents to benefit from the latest communication media and electronic leisure entertainment.

## ■ Outcomes

100% of premises having superfast broadband, an additional x properties.

A 30% reduction in Hereford through traffic average journey times (A49 to A49) by 2031.

100% increase in the number of people cycling regularly by 2021, and a 200% increase by 2031.





## Projects

1. Implementation of new public realm, bus and active travel measures across the city, including:
  - Continuing the road surface treatment on Newmarket Street along Blueschool Street and into Commercial Street.
  - Future road surface improvements along Edgar Street and Victoria Street towards the current road bridge over the River Wye.
  - Removal of the underpasses at Eign Gate and the Barton Road junction.
2. Development of new multi storey car parking sites to serve commuters and visitors to the city centre.
3. Construction of a new transport hub interchange at Hereford railway station to link rail, bus and taxi users.
4. Continued improvements to the cycle and footpath networks across Hereford city and the market towns to help increase walking and cycling options for commuters, school children and college students.
5. Implementation of the Hereford bypass transport package including an A49 to A49 bypass of Hereford and a range of active mode measures and behavioural change projects to encourage walking and cycling across the city.
6. Implementation of car parking improvements at Leominster and Ledbury railway stations to improve facilities available to passengers and increase usage.
7. Investment in the Hereford to Ledbury railway line to include twin tracks wherever possible to improve reliability, reduce journey times, and increase rail usage.



# Aim 6 - Countywide ambition

Enabling market towns and rural communities to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands.

## ■ Vision

The market towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross on Wye and villages across the county will be vibrant places with a clear sense of community. They will all have built their own distinct identity focussing on identified target audiences to create a sense of distinctiveness and a niche tourism offer. Town centres will be sought after places to live, shop and visit. They will support small scale production, niche retailing and a growing local food, drink and hospitality sector.

Through the neighbourhood planning process new residential developments will be integrated into existing settlements, enabling sustainable growth for communities of all sizes. A series of premises will have been developed or converted to provide accommodation for small scale production and niche retailers alongside localised services such as post offices, business start-up space, and community facilities.

## ■ Outcomes

Reduce shop vacancy rates to 10% or less in each market town by 2025.  
Develop and promote a distinctive visitor offer in each of the five market towns.





## Projects

1. Development of a suite of managed workspace or 'business centres' across the county to encourage small, creative and innovative businesses.
2. Development of a series of rural employment and service centres where a combination of small scale production and niche retailing can flourish for example in craft and arts or food and drink based industries.
3. Redevelopment of specific and appropriate sites within the market towns to enhance the retail, service, employment and residential offer, starting with the redevelopment of Leominster Broad Street car park.
4. Establishment of business improvement districts in the market towns to give each a definitive business plan owned by local businesses and finance to deliver a range of improvements and programme of activity.
5. Growth of the emerging local food and drink and hospitality sector which is typified by the growing number of craft pubs, breweries, pop-up food outlets and speciality offers, to attract a wider and more diverse customer base.
6. Development of specialised retail and visitor propositions within each of the market towns based on local niche markets and linked to relevant local leisure and tourism offers.



# Aim 7 - A great environment

Improving competitiveness and growth through energy and resource efficiency and implementing a range of landscape enhancements.

## ■ Vision

The overall quality of Herefordshire's landscape will have been enhanced through a series of conservation and ecology projects that attract visitors and serve local communities. Sites will be linked by a series of trails and facilities that encourage participation and access to conservation activities. Additionally projects will maintain and enhance the county's natural capital by increasing resilience to flooding, climate change, and loss of pollinators that service agriculture.

Work will continue on the delivery of the Nutrient Management Plan, specifically with the water companies, farmers, landowners and housebuilders to minimise the amount of phosphate reaching the watercourses.

The Urban Village development in the city centre will be served by a new district heating and energy system that offers a low carbon solution and reduces heating and power costs across this new and sustainable community.

Villages and communities elsewhere across the county will have introduced measures that lead to energy self-sustainability such as local energy schemes that allow revenues to be shared among local communities and bring about a reduction of numbers of households in fuel poverty.

## ■ Outcomes

Carbon dioxide reduction of 179,000 tonnes by 2021 a saving of £41m.

Number of visitors to Living Landscape projects – 150,000 by 2031





## Projects

1. Delivery of the Lugg Living Landscape project restoring habitats and ecology across the river valley with accompanying access improvements and associated visitor and tourism facilities.
2. Implementation of the nutrient management plan to reduce phosphate levels, improving water quality and unlocking future development land.
3. Implementation of a range of localised energy schemes that contribute to increased energy self-sufficiency by delivering secure, low carbon and affordable energy.
4. Implementation of a range of other Living Landscape projects across the county in appropriate locations.
5. Development of Herefordshire's strong environmental technologies sector and provision of support to the fitting of energy efficient measures within business, community and public buildings.
6. Constructing a district heat and energy scheme for the Urban Village development utilising the requirements of the Heineken and Cargill factories alongside the demand created by the hospital and emerging NMiTE university proposals.





# Invest Herefordshire

Herefordshire's Economic Vision



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## APPENDIX 2

# Investment Pitchbook

■ The Economic Vision has “kick-started the conversation” with investors, partners and communities. Viable investment propositions that offer opportunities for both investors and for the economic growth of Herefordshire have been identified. To realise these projects, the council and its partners are committed to positively engaging with, and supporting investors.

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The council’s partners include the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP), local public sector agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, and other organisations with a more specific focus such as Hereford Business Improvement District and Enterprise Zone. Between the council and these partners, there are excellent links to the private and public sectors as well as connections to Whitehall departments that includes direct access to ministers. The council and partners have an excellent track record of delivering growth projects and bringing forward investment.

The council and partners will build on this track record and can support investors in a number of ways:

- **Infrastructure:** An extensive programme of road, rail and digital infrastructure, as outlined in section 3 above, is underway in Herefordshire. This will unlock the development of many of the masterplan projects and improve commercial aspects of all projects.
- **Joined-up regulation:** Planners and other regulatory services can offer a joined approach, working proactively with investors to support appropriate initiatives.
- **Expertise/connections:** Collectively, there is a large degree of experience in developing capital projects and a broad range of connections within both the public and private sector that can be employed to support the development of projects.

- **Land:** Between the council and its partners, there is a portfolio of significant land holdings within the county which can be utilised, where appropriate, to bring forward projects. Support to engage with other land owners, assemble land and direct development assistance through the council’s Development Partnership will also be made available.
- **Communications:** The inclusion of the project within the Economic Vision will open-up communication to a wide range of stakeholders.

Officers are keen to discuss any of these opportunities with potential investors and full contact details are at the end of the document.

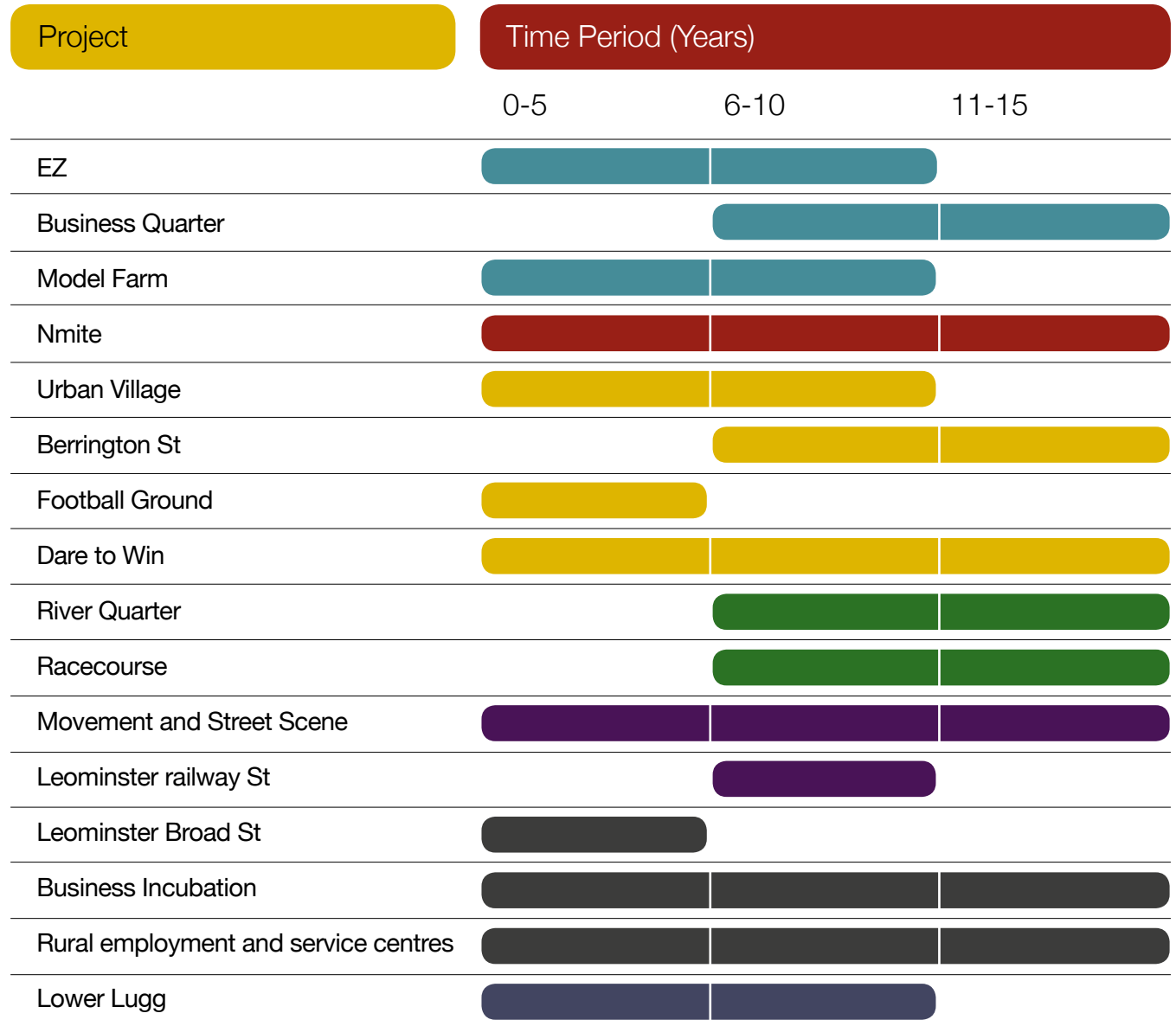


■ Timescales

The Economic Vision maps out activity across Herefordshire over the next 15 years. Activity is broken down into three five year periods to reflect the short, medium and long term proposals and opportunities. This time period also aligns with the Local Development Framework and ensures the enabling infrastructure is in place.

Individual project delivery timescales will depend on a host of factors and therefore cannot be accurately set at this stage but the accompanying diagram sets out the indicative timescales of project delivery. However, most projects can be brought forward earlier, if there is investor demand.

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## ■ Funding

It is envisaged that the above projects are commercially viable and would be instigated by the private sector using private sector finance. Where relevant, investors may be able to access loans or grant funding to enable projects or to close funding gaps.

The partners would be supportive of this approach and will work with central government departments and regional agencies such as the Marches LEP and West Midlands Combined Authority to maximise any opportunities that exist to attract public sector funding.

96 To deliver key infrastructure and other projects underpinning the economic vision the council will explore a range of funding mechanisms including, but not limited to, Community Infrastructure Levy/ Section 106 agreement, Tax Increment Finance, and Business Improvement Districts.

Through its development partnership the council will also look to make investments in projects that both contribute towards economic growth and deliver a financial return that can be reinvested back into further redevelopment projects or used to secure the future delivery of front line services.

## ■ Project Pipeline

The opportunities presented in the 'investor pitchbook' represent the current investment and economic growth proposals. This list is not exhaustive and does not reflect all the opportunities within Herefordshire. The Economic Vision is a "living process" and it allows projects and priorities to change over its 15 year life. This will result in a frequent turnover of projects and consequently a projects pipeline is required.

Partners will hold several annual "Think Tank" sessions with representatives from stakeholders and project promoters to facilitate the process of gaining input and ideas into the project pipeline. Ideas generated through this mechanism will be progressed by the relevant partner or promotor. Outside of these informal events short précis of new project ideas can be submitted to the economic vision lead contact for assessment and further feedback.

To be considered for inclusion with the economic vision new project proposals will need to:

1. Be in conformity with the local plan;
2. Be of an appropriate scale with benefits to the whole of the county;
3. Deliver either economic growth or a higher value economy in the form of new or better paid jobs, new houses or other accommodation. Alternatively, it can be demonstrated that the project makes a significant contribution to the profile or economic asset base of the county;
4. Be consistent with, and complementary to, the other projects contained within the economic vision;
5. Have considered responses from, or have the support of, the local community;
6. Require the benefit of external or investment funding, the support of the council and its partners or a raised profile to ensure delivery.

A panel of partners will review the submissions on an annual basis and decide on their suitability for inclusion within the Economic Vision. Unsuccessful submissions will be signposted to other support to advance their implementation.

## ■ Moving Forwards

The role of the vision is not to set a definitive blueprint or to become a statutory document but to outline a framework of opportunities and projects which showcases the best that Herefordshire has to offer to investors. The vision is designed to be flexible and robust however none of the projects are set in stone. Each can be amended and adapted to fit with market demand, available finance, or other constraints.

Some of the opportunities within the current document may not be brought forward, however the vision addresses this through the “pipeline approach”, which will generate further investment opportunities, and a commitment to a regular reviews. By embedding the Economic Vision within the council and its partner’s frameworks, it will ensure that there is a long-term outlook and a lasting legacy.

## ■ Contacts for Potential Investors

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# Delivering our vision

Herefordshire may be small in terms of population but is big on ideas, ambition, and opportunity. The partners promoting this economic vision believe in the growth of Herefordshire. For the county to be truly successful, businesses and investors need to be able to share that confidence and belief.

Recent developments have already demonstrated significant local and regional demand resulting in the capture of footfall and investment from neighbouring localities; for example the enterprise zone has recently attracted new business investment from Gloucestershire.

A series of assets are being built which will support wider business growth and talent from across the education and business sectors. The council and public sector partners will support the economic vision by:

- 1. Building a Hereford bypass and investing in other road improvements.**

The forecast growth in Hereford requires an appropriate investment to increase the city's transport capacity, the proposed solution comprises a package containing the Hereford bypass and active travel measures.

Once constructed the bypass will create a full north/south circumnavigation of Hereford from the A49, back to the A49. In addition to addressing network reliability it will support the delivery of 6500 houses and 6000 jobs, the new NMiTE University and expansion of the Hereford Enterprise Zone, and assist in managing congestion in the city centre.



2. **Create a new development partnership to bring forward jobs and houses.**

The council are committed to commissioning a development partner to progress the development of suitable sites in its ownership. The commission includes the capability to progress development funding, and to be open for use with other partners as required.

There is significant opportunity for this partnership to work with third party partners and investors to bring forward elements of the economic vision or smaller scale projects that make a contribution to the growth ambition.



3. **Building a cyber security catapult / centre of excellence.**

Herefordshire is ideally located to take advantage of three significant assets in the defence and security sector. Hereford is home of the UK special forces, Government Communications HQ is located in Cheltenham a 30 min drive from the south of the county, and QinetiQ are based just outside the county border in Malvern.

The University of Wolverhampton, in partnership with Herefordshire Council, will invest £8m and deliver a new cyber security centre of excellence to add to these assets and take advantage of the significant number of local businesses specialising in this sector.

4. **Investing in schools, entrepreneurship and skills to develop the next generation of employees and business owners.**

We want every child in Herefordshire to have a great start in life, so we want our schools to be great places for learning and working. If our children have had the best education possible, we know that gives them the best chance to be successful adults. It also gives Herefordshire businesses and employers the skilled people they need.

Schools in Herefordshire are worth investing in, consequently Herefordshire Council are looking to secure in the region of £100m investment in schools over the next 20 years.



## 5. Developing a supportive planning framework.

The Local Plan identifies the need for the broad distribution of 16,500 new houses up to 2031. Strategic sites identify the location of around a third of this target and a significant number of units are already built. In order to achieve the local plan target there remains a requirement for approximately 6,000 units in, as yet, unidentified locations.

The council is working proactively with parish councils / neighbourhood planning groups and developers to identify appropriate sites which can make a contribution towards the Herefordshire housing growth target. Developments are welcomed where there is conformity with the local and neighbourhood plan(s) and the sites are appropriate in scale, design and location.

## 6 A supportive business landscape

Fundamental to the support of business growth is the Herefordshire growth hub. As both a virtual and physical resource the hub acts as the access point for all public sector support available to businesses and social enterprises within the county.

Access is via a website ([www.marchesgrowth hub.co.uk](http://www.marchesgrowth hub.co.uk)) and physical building located centrally in Rotherwas, Hereford. Here Herefordshire Council business facing staff work alongside partners from the University of Wolverhampton, UKTI, the chamber of commerce, and a range of private sector organisations.

The partners are committed to delivering a vision which generates higher value jobs and industry in the Herefordshire economy. This will require an increased focus on emerging sectors and technology and will involve securing new investment from the EU, national and local sources to facilitate growth.

A series of sector specific strategies will be developed to research opportunities to support the key business sectors within the Herefordshire economy. These strategies will identify growth prospects in emerging markets and technologies and support businesses seeking to establish or improve their exporting potential.

## 7 Inspiring an entrepreneurial generation

The county can boast leading colleges and schools, institutions that compare favourably with the best the rest of the UK has to offer.

There is a growing number of young people who are starting their own business and benefiting the independence, flexibility, reward, and huge satisfaction that comes with it.

A programme of support and enablement to encourage more young people to harness their entrepreneurial skills, and to begin life as their own boss, is in development and the following projects could play a part:

- Establishing a school alumni programme with former pupils running businesses acting as champions and ambassadors for the school and for enterprise.
- Subsidised start up space for young people fresh from college or school
- Targeted training events aimed specifically at young people
- A programme of talks and presentations from successful local business people
- A mentoring programme where successful businesses provide advice and guidance to new start-ups.

Building a base of young, vibrant entrepreneurs creates the next generation of Herefordshire businesses but also brings confidence, initiative and resilience as young people find the inspiration and drive to make their business a success.



## 8 Herefordshire. County of Culture

One of Herefordshire's great assets is a distinctive culture, rich in tradition and innovation, from a wealth of outstanding heritage sites to a dynamic contemporary arts scene. Much of the county's cultural activity already has a national or international profile, not to mention major events literally on our doorstep such as the Hay Festival and Ludlow Food Festival.

This is the tip of the iceberg, with villages and towns across the county home to many practising artists and a wide range of professional and volunteer festivals and events. To build on this activity a consortium of major arts, cultural and heritage groups, are working with the local authority and businesses to develop a bid for Hereford to be named UK City of Culture 2021.

Hereford's bid is being made on behalf of the county, not just the city, and it will make the case for how the award would turbo-charge existing cultural activity, generate new activity of exceptional scale and quality and transform the fortunes of a whole region not just a city.

Regardless of the outcome of that competition, a series of cultural projects which will raise the profile of the county and offer a diverse range of cultural activity will continue to be implemented.

### ■ Investing in a difference

These and other investments will lay the foundations for wider private sector investment. This document presents 16 potential investment projects from across the county which will generate a total over £1 billion of private sector investment. These investment opportunities address the diversity of Herefordshire's economy and will build the economic, leisure, environmental and infrastructure growth, ensuring that a package approach is applied to the county's expansion.

Delivering these projects, and bringing forward others, will make a significant contribution to the achievement of our aims and wider vision. The economic plan is the start of our project designed to show that Herefordshire is open for business. We want people to be talking about the county, to be excited about our future and to see what we have to offer.

Delivered over three periods each of five years, the implementation of the economic vision will transform a rural economy into a modern, diverse, and well connected business location. Herefordshire will offer a first class environment for undertaking business, in combination with an aspiring entrepreneurial population and an excellent quality of life.



# Investment Opportunities

## A Great Place for Business

- 1 The Enterprise Zone
- 2 Hereford Business Quarter
- 3 Model Farm Enterprise Park

## A Great Place to Learn

- 4 NMiTE – centre of Engineering Excellence

## A Great Place to Live

- 5 The Urban Village
- 6 Berrington Street regeneration area
- 7 Edgar Street regeneration area (Football Ground)
- 8 Dare to Win

## A Great Place to Visit

- 9 River Quarter
- 10 Business hotel & sports/leisure development

## Great movement and accessibility

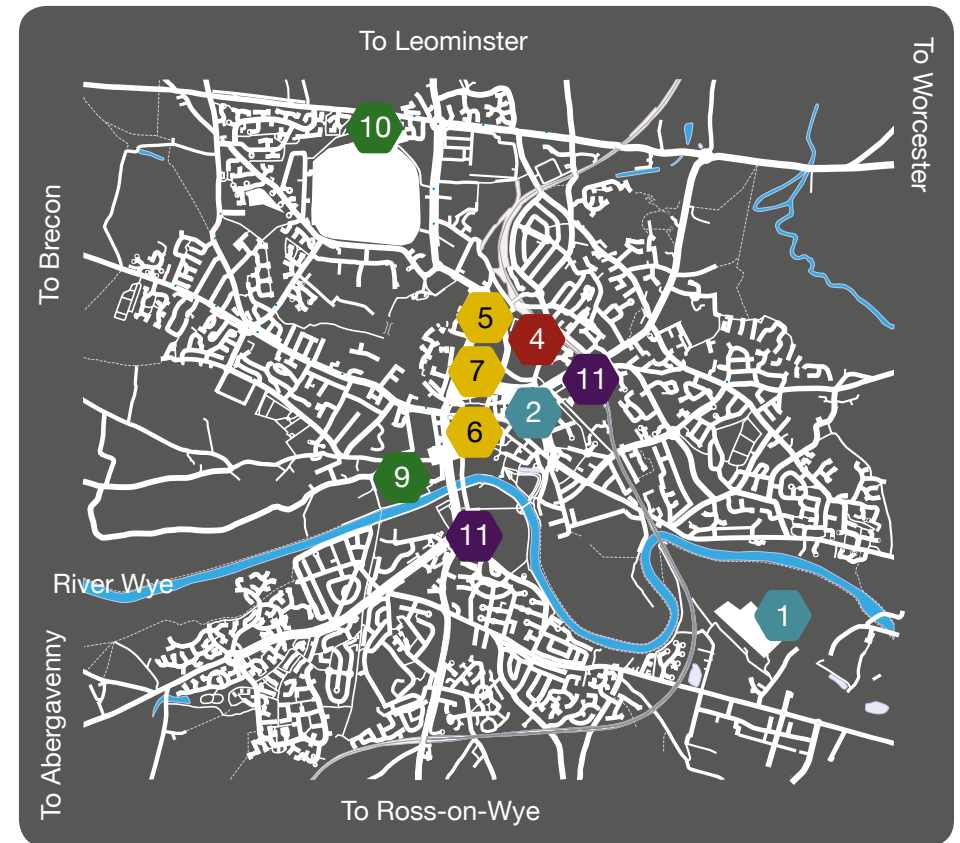
- 11 The Urban Realm and parking
- 12 Leominster Railway Station

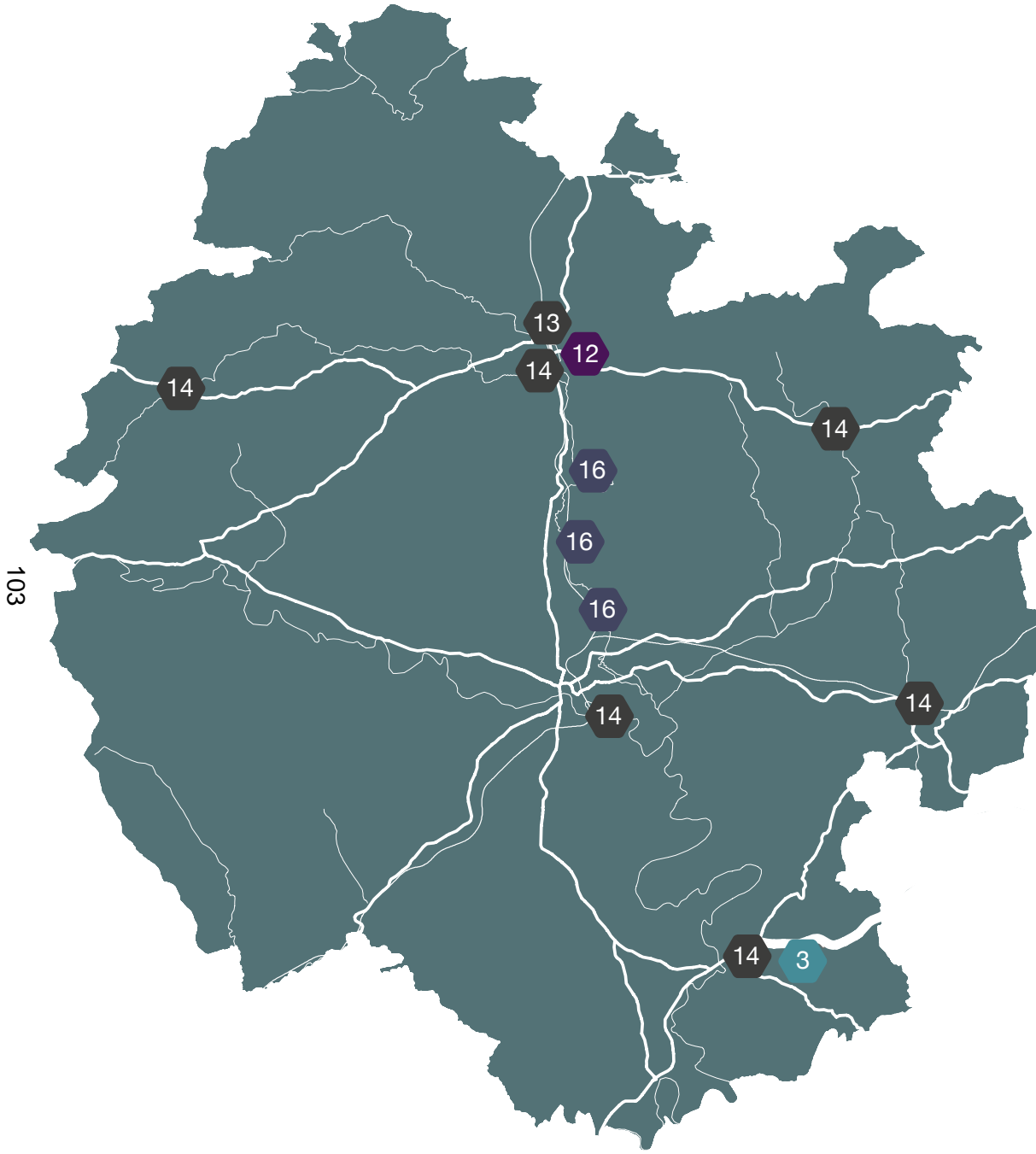
## Countywide Ambition

- 13 Redevelopment of Leominster Broad Street car park
- 14 Business Incubation Centres
- 15 The Herefordshire food and rural business centres

## A Great Environment

- 16 The Lower Lugg leisure landscape





# The Hereford Enterprise Zone

## – North Magazine

### ■ Overview

Our vision for the enterprise zone is to create high quality business space and a vibrant, dynamic business community in an attractive historic setting. Skylon Park is the prime commercial location within Herefordshire and is increasingly seen as the perfect mix between a great place to work and a great quality of life.

With its focus on the defence and security sector, advanced manufacturing, food and drink companies, sustainable technologies and professional services, Skylon Park is well on the way to achieving that vision. The site is proving an attractive and cost effective investment location for growing companies from the local market and across Britain. There has also been interest from foreign inward investment, in particular in the defence sector.

The enterprise zone is also promoting facilities to encourage further business generation and growth, alongside more research and

development and increased engagement with higher education. A 2,400 sqm incubation, design and application centre is planned in association with the project promoters for the New Model in Technology & Engineering. The University of Wolverhampton intends to invest in a 2,500 sqm cyber security centre to provide facilities for business, research and training.

The prime development site within the enterprise zone is the North Magazine. This 10 hectare development plot benefits from dedicated site access, full land remediation and plot levelling. The plot neighbours the enterprise zone incubation centre mentioned above. The required utilities and landscaping will be installed to the end user, or users' specifications, this will include connection to the zone's own ultrafast broadband network.

Investors in the enterprise zone benefit from business rate discounts, a simplified approach to planning with outline approval already in place, and a four week turnaround for full sign off.

### ■ Opportunity

Plots of the North Magazine's quality and size, with such high levels of preparedness, are rare commodities. The Hereford Enterprise Zone is marketing the whole site for sale on a long lease or freehold basis. It would be prepared to consider splitting the plot into two or three smaller plots if the right occupier(s) were interested. Interest would be welcomed both from companies looking to undertake direct development of their own property or developers wishing to build on a speculative basis. The Enterprise Zone benefits from a robust design guide which sets the tone and quality of development across the whole site, befitting a site of such local importance any development will be expected to be of high architectural and operational quality.



## Quick facts

### Hereford Enterprise Zone

Sponsor	Hereford Enterprise Zone, Herefordshire Council as landowner
Scale (£)	£100m
Type	Commercial property development
Location	Hereford Enterprise Zone, Rotherwas, Hereford
Investment Type	Development Finance, Co Investment
Programme	Ongoing up to 2030



# Hereford business quarter

## ■ Overview

Hereford is a service centre for a large hinterland that includes the rural areas and market towns of Herefordshire, southern Shropshire and parts of eastern and mid Wales. Just as the Old Market retail development has enabled Hereford to recapture lost retail spend; the growth of the city's service sector provides an opportunity to limit leakage from the county. The city can cement its position as one of the leading sub-regional service hubs in the West Midlands.

Hereford city centre is the location of choice for many professional service firms, with a large number of accountants, solicitors, architects and property agents combining to make the city a key sub-regional cluster. There are also a number of established as well as young, vibrant businesses whose growth requires a Hereford office presence to serve a wider business. All of these businesses add vibrancy to the city and boost weekday footfall for retail and catering outlets.

Demand for new and high quality office space is now outstripping supply. The enterprise zone has recently developed new speculative office space to accommodate businesses in target sectors. This new supply was rapidly let and rents achieved were well above initial expectations. Much of the available office supply within the city centre is made-up of small scale former residential properties that provide adequate but not purpose built accommodation. There is now an opportunity for new, high quality and purpose built office space within the city centre.

The Bath Street and Gaol Street area will become the focus for this new Business Quarter. This location benefits from nearby assets to the sector including the Magistrates Court, Crown Court, and the planned location for key elements of the new University campus. The location will also capitalise on transport links, including immediate access to railway and bus connections, whilst also linking into the city's wider retail and leisure offer.

## ■ Opportunity

There is a commercial investment proposition for the development of high quality office accommodation in a compact business quarter concentrated around the current West Mercia police station and its car park. The neighbouring public car park fronting the old Bath Street council offices and the council owned car park opposite on Gaol Street are also opportunities to expand this provision. Together this forms a site of approx. 1.1 hectares that could accommodate up to 25k sqm of B1 office floor space in a phased development.

Current buildings along Bath Street rise to five storeys and similar massing could be accommodated on this frontage. Any development off Goal Street would need to sensitively interact with the buildings fronting onto St Owen Street, a number of which are listed, but higher rise development could be achieved fronting onto Goal Street.



## Quick facts

### Hereford business quarter

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	Sqm x £45m
Type	B1 office development
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity co-investment and development finance
Programme	2020 -2031

# Model Farm enterprise park

## ■ Overview

The Model Farm enterprise park project is a proposition to bring forward a strategic enterprise park to satisfy high evidence of local and regional demand. Model Farm is located on the M50 motorway and will unlock a total of £32m of private sector investment across a 10ha site capable of accommodating upwards of 1,000 jobs and 29,000m<sup>2</sup> of industrial buildings.

108 Planning permission for the scheme is in place and the site is wholly owned by the council. The council proposes to develop the infrastructure on the site then sell plots to developers or owner occupiers.

With its excellent motorway links Model Farm is the gateway to markets in the Midlands, Wales, the West and the Republic of Ireland. This is due to direct access to the M50 serving the Midlands/ South West via the M5, the A40 (linking to the M4 corridor) to Wales, and the A49 to Hereford and northwards, forming the spine of the Marches.

Model Farm has the flexibility to provide land and/or premises to meet the requirements of a range of business sizes and uses with plots available from a half acre to the entire twenty acre site. There has been a significant amount of initial interest in the development due to the current under supply within south Herefordshire and neighbouring authorities.

Model Farm is situated within a sustainable urban extension to the market town of Ross on Wye that will deliver over 600 homes. The wider area provides an outstanding business environment with a strong, loyal and proactive private sector and an excellent track record of delivering new housing, jobs and businesses.

## ■ Opportunity

Following the installation of site infrastructure, plots will be offered to business and the development market. Given the close proximity to the motorway network and lack of localised competing commercial floor space, the site will be attractive to investors and owner occupiers alike.

Plots can be configured to accommodate a wide variety of end users and size requirements ranging from a half acre to the full 20 acres. Alternatively, investors interested in un-serviced plots or seeking to purchase of the entire estate as a development opportunity will also be considered.

Particular regard will be given to speculative B1 developments that offer modern, attractive architecture that sets a high quality precedent for the park. As with any large employment site it is recognised that there will be the opportunity to accommodate a certain element of a wraparound offer, whether leisure or food related. This element will be planned from the outset and particular sites will be offered for these purposes.

There is limited opportunity for a partial development of the site buffer zone for a residential purpose. This would need to be sympathetic to both the neighbouring existing residential uses and the proposed commercial space on the site.



## Quick facts

### Model Farm enterprise park

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£1m to £45m
Type	Commercial business part development. Small scale residential and leisure / retail uses.
Location	Ross-on-Wye, south Herefordshire.
Investment Type	Development finance Co-investment
Programme	2018-2028



# New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMiTE) university

## ■ Overview

The New Model in Technology & Engineering (NMiTE) University is crucial to the county's future plans. The UK's first new university for 40 years, will be an independent, not-for-profit, teaching only, world class engineering university based in Hereford. It will have a game-changing impact on the city, county and UK plc. NMiTE is projecting a student population of five thousand by 2031.

NMiTE aims to address the shortage of graduate engineers in the Marches and the UK. The curriculum will be targeted at the needs of engineering and technology employers and will produce employment-ready, productive, innovative and business literate graduates who will be able communicators and project managers. A new approach to learning, based on real world problem solving that also blends engineering study with design, communication and employability skills, will be target the need of the future. NMiTE will be a regional centre of engineering excellence and a national centre for engineering higher education.

NMiTE is committed to the construction of a state of the art, twenty first century teaching and innovation campus in Hereford City Centre, developed on the latest 'agile' principles. It will involve the construction and/or refurbishment of new teaching and administrative facilities. Linked to the new city centre facilities, will be laboratories and workshops, including the NMiTE application & development centre on the enterprise zone. The first phase of the project will see over a thousand students taking courses by 2021, rising to five thousand by 2031. Students will predominately be housed within, new, dedicated accommodation across the city.

The project has made rapid progress over the course of 18 months. Private sector promoters have built a management team, started developing a curriculum and sourced academic institutional partners and business contributions. NMiTE is seeking £25M funding from government to support the project, with Herefordshire council investigating the potential to invest in the student accommodation.

## ■ Opportunity

Student accommodation plans currently identify a number of sites within easy walking distance of the university's academic buildings. Residences will provide a superb environment for living and studying with generous en-suite bedrooms with fast connectivity. NMiTE are seeking private sector partners who can match their expectations for high quality accommodation which provides the facilities needed by the students of tomorrow.

The city centre campus will ensure that the university is integrated with the local community and students will use the services available within the city. Opportunities to provide a range of services, not currently available or aimed directly or partially at the student market will also emerge. Redundant shops have the potential to be redeveloped into seminar spaces and old offices could be converted into small studios/worklabs. This will also present significant investment opportunities for private sector partners.



## Quick facts

### NMITE

Sponsor	Herefordshire Tertiary Education Trust
Scale (£)	£560m
Type	Education and Student Accommodation
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity investor, developer and development funder
Programme	2018-2030



# Hereford urban village

## ■ Overview

Located immediately to the north of the existing city centre, the urban village represents a significant opportunity to create a sustainable urban community linked to transport infrastructure, retail and leisure facilities and employment.

At the core of the city centre, the urban village will benefit from proximity to the football ground, Courtyard Centre for the Arts, cinema, retail, restaurants and nightlife. It will also increase the vitality of the city centre supporting the night time economy and enhancing the current footfall.

To enable the development the council are investing circa £30m in the installation of a city link road as enabling infrastructure and the required land assembly. The urban village site will contribute up to 800 new houses within the city centre and will deliver high quality housing across all tenures. The construction of the city link road will facilitate the creation of a new transport hub centred on the railway station linking together the various forms of public transport in one location, and make Hereford city more accessible to walkers and cyclists.

In addition to the desire for housing units within the site, considerable demand exists from a range of public services and the new NMiTE University for space within this location. This will lead to a genuine mixed use development site creating opportunities for an improved public realm and sustainable travel patterns linking students, residents and commuters with teaching facilities, employment and leisure services.

Herefordshire Council is the predominant land owner within the urban village site but considerable private ownerships are also prevalent. The council are committed to a development partnership approach to bring forward the development of their assets within the site but opportunity exists to create development parcels from third party ownerships. The council and its development partner could play an enablement role to assist landowners and investors to bring forward these sites.

Throughout the area the street scene will be refurbished to a high standard to make the walk or cycle into and through Hereford city centre more

pleasurable whilst helping people lead healthier and more active lives.

## ■ Opportunity

With the infrastructure being completed in 2017 land parcels within the Urban Village are currently being created. Herefordshire council and its development partner will work with developers and landowners to unlock development sites across the urban village where contributions can be made to the housing targets.

Complementary uses will be considered where there is a definitive logic and rationale to their location within a predominantly residential arena. If this involves the movement of services around the city, compensatory housing development will be sought on the original sites as a replacement for any loss of housing land within the urban village.

In addition to the bringing forward of housing parcels and units there is opportunity to support the enablement of the NMiTE university and the required student accommodation and services.





### Quick facts

#### Hereford urban village

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£100m
Type	Regeneration
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity investor, developer and development funder
Programme	2017-2025

# Berrington Street regeneration area

## ■ Overview

The historic core of Hereford city is contained within the old city walls. It encompasses the majority of the city's retail and cultural offer, with attractions such as the cathedral and High Town prominent features. There are however significant sites with tremendous potential which are in close proximity to the retail and historic core.

114 These locations present an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive regeneration programme achieving higher value uses with a wider economic, commercial and cultural value to the city centre. On a sustainable basis these development sites are well located in terms of their proximity to employment, retail and leisure facilities in addition to being well served by public transport.

Whilst there are a number of other small scale sites across the city that could benefit from redevelopment, the large area between the A49, West Street, Broad Street and King Street/St Nicholas Street presents a considerable opportunity to regenerate and realise the full potential of a keystone area of the city centre.

The 2.2ha site is currently in a variety of ownerships; the council is looking to work with landowners and development partners to assemble the site and create a comprehensive master plan for the area.

Indicative concepts that could be incorporated into this master plan include; student accommodation to address the demand created by NMITE university and Hereford College of Arts; small scale/niche retailing alongside catering and hospitality; or live/work units and pure residential elements.

The ambition is to create modern city-centre living with a densely populated development aimed at a young demographic. Dominated by flats and starter units, the development will encourage movement away from car use, with access to units through interconnecting courtyards and pedestrian walkways.

Local facilities will include small scale retail and employment units, catering for those who live within the city but also becoming an attraction in its own right, offering a local food, drink and retailing.

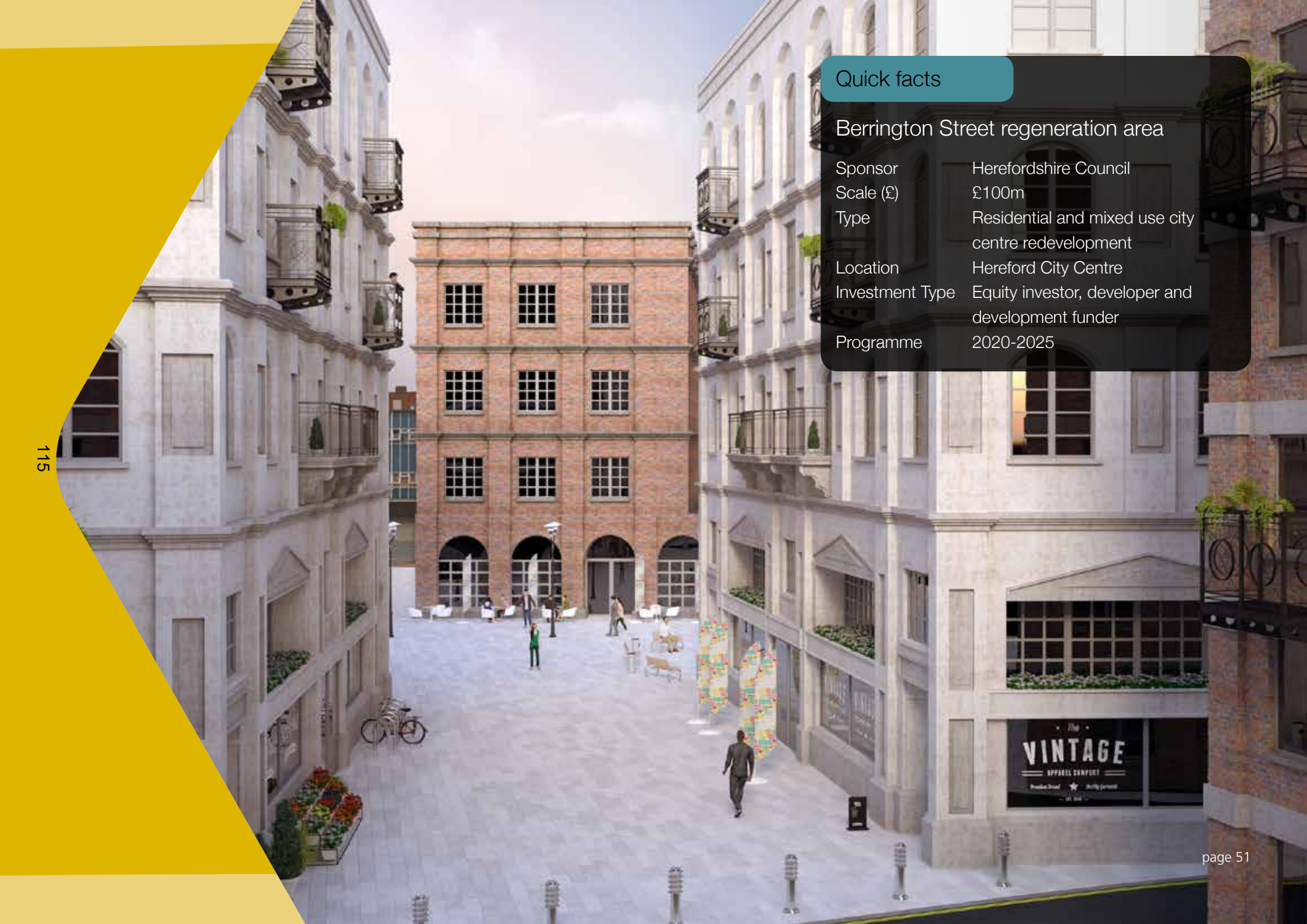
## ■ Opportunity

Proposals are welcomed for mixed use schemes which offer comprehensive redevelopment of the area. A high density of residential units is expected and encouraged, particularly where the predominant use is for smaller and starter units.

A high quality of landscape and street scene is essential for this area to act as a destination in its own right and perform as an additional visitor and retail attraction that complements the rest of the city centre. Particular regard should be given to the proximity to the historic cathedral quarter. Developments that feature high levels of pedestrian permeability with varied and interesting street patterns incorporating courtyards, cut-throughs, and pedestrianised streets will be particularly encouraged.

Small scale retail, food outlets and B1 office accommodation should feature as an integral element of any scheme to ensure that development has a vibrancy, footfall and activity adding an element of self-sufficiency and offering a range of attractions to entice visitors.





### Quick facts

#### Berrington Street regeneration area

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£100m
Type	Residential and mixed use city centre redevelopment
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity investor, developer and development funder
Programme	2020-2025

# Hereford Football Club

## ■ Overview

The Edgar Street Stadium is home to Hereford Football Club and a football ground with a long and illustrious history; it is an embedded part of the fabric of the community. Many glories and sadly some bitter defeats have played out at the ground and none more so than the 2014/15 season when Hereford United Football Club were put into liquidation.

116 In the 2015/16 season, a new Hereford Football Club with the backing of local initial investors and supporters rose from the ashes. The first season was a remarkable tale of success and emotion. League and Cup success has led to promotion and a trip to Wembley in the FA Vase Final. The feel good factor returned to Edgar Street and the people of Herefordshire have embraced this phoenix club.

Success has not simply been confined to results. The stadium is adjacent to the £90m Old Market retail and leisure development and the football club's attendances, of up to 4,000, have much improved connectivity to the city centre's retail and leisure

offer. As the club rises up the leagues there is the prospect of larger attendances, including much greater 'Away' support.

The location of the ground brings a special vibrancy to the city, however the stadium itself fails to either visually live up to or commercially capitalise upon this opportunity. There is significant scope for a partial redevelopment of the ground within the confines of the original stadium boundaries. This could improve the ground facilities without impacting negatively on the ongoing use for footballing purposes.

The club and the ground could make an even greater contribution towards the vitality of Hereford City. Even beyond match days, the Edgar Street ground and the club has the potential to become a focal point at the heart of the city, of which the club, its supporters, and the city should feel proud.

## ■ Opportunity

An opportunity exists to remodel Edgar Street Stadium stands and terraces to provide a variety of ancillary facilities and to improve the match day experience for the supporter base. Hereford

Football Club already benefits from an on-site gym but limited training facilities which could be much enlarged. It would be both possible and desirable to build upon and enhance the existing conferencing and hospitality amenities, and increased match day supporter facilities including food, drink and merchandise retail.

These sporting and match day orientated changes could be supplemented by an even more commercially focused offer that could provide and enable significant activities outside of match days to underpin the sustainability of Hereford F.C. Potential opportunities include small scale retail uses, in particular on the Blackfriars Street frontage mirroring the Old Market development, or residential or hotel units above or behind the stands, benefiting from the existing building massing in the area and the neighbouring urban village development. The club and its supporters would be open to engagement and involvement in appropriate development proposals which would improve the offer to their customers and assist them in realising the football club's ambition.



## Quick facts

### Hereford Football Club

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council / Hereford Football Club
Scale (£)	£5m dependant on scale and design
Type	Stadium redevelopment with ancillary leisure and retail uses
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Developer and development funder
Programme	2018-2021



# Dare to Win

## – Herefordshire’s outdoor, action & extreme sports offer

### ■ Overview

With natural assets that include the River Wye, the Malvern Hills, Symonds Yat, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and vast expanses of open countryside; Herefordshire has always been an important destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

The long link with one of the world most elite special forces raises the county’s brand cachet in the outdoor market and provides local expertise and skills to develop the sector.

Established outdoor activities of climbing, canoeing and mountain biking are now joined by emerging activities such as mountain boarding, extreme assault courses, and zorbing, within the county. Confidence in Herefordshire as an active sports destination has been recently confirmed with the investment in “The Send”, a new climbing centre in Hereford, and Hereford Skate Park being voted third best in the UK.

The UK outdoor activity market is large and has huge potential. Consumer leisure expenditure

has grown nearly twice as fast as total consumer expenditure and the entire sector accounts for 7.4% of UK GDP in 2014. The outdoor sector is predicted to be growing faster than the leisure industry alone and the influence of social media is engaging new consumers. By combining Herefordshire’s high quality environment, strong existing outdoor sector assets and with an eye on new technology and evolving business models; there is the potential to develop an outdoor sector within the county that grows above the market and delivers high quality employment opportunities.

Herefordshire could be home to a new large outdoor attraction, such as a mountain biking or canoeing centre. Alternatively, a sizable innovative centre that focuses on a range of emerging outdoor activities could also be an asset. In addition to this, there is the opportunity to entice new smaller scale attractions, develop existing activity provision and supporting infrastructure such as dedicated accommodation and hospitality. Alongside new product development, there is a need to coordinate activity and marketing across the destination in

addition to hosting national scale outdoor events that raise the profile of the county within the sector.

### ■ Opportunity

Investors in larger scale outdoor leisure activities will be supported by Herefordshire Council and other local providers to develop their proposition. A package of support will assist investors to identify viable sites, join-up regulatory matters (such as planning), identify finance and support recruitment/ skills development. The council will develop an investor proposition where available locations and market research are combined to identify specific opportunities for investments in growing outdoor markets.

An industry led sector cluster will be developed and this will advance a key strand within the Herefordshire Destination Management Plan. It will help ensure that the outdoor offer is integrated, creates synergies in marketing and develops a year round programme of events. Outdoor sector related businesses will be offered prioritised access to business support, where there is a clear proposition.





# Hereford river quarter

## ■ Overview

Hereford is built on the banks of one of the UK's great rivers. The River Wye has always had a reputation for great fishing and it is now becoming a premier destination for canoeing and other water related activity. The city does not fully capitalise on this natural asset as access to the river is limited and there are few premises with river frontages. The links between the city centre and river are also poor. For many visitors the location and opportunities provided by the river remain an unknown attraction.

This scheme aims to overcome these issues by redeveloping a key stretch of riverbank, west of the city centre, between Great Western Way and the A49. This 300m section of river is already utilised by the rowing club and it is home to several outdoor events, such as the Hereford city regatta and the Beer on the Wye Festival.

There is significant potential to improve the environment, facilities and capacity for outdoor events and river based leisure activities whilst

developing new accommodation. Alongside this, a small scale complementary food, drink and retail offer could form part of the scheme. Hereford Rowing Club will also have the opportunity to redevelop their boathouse and riverside access facilities.

Capitalising on the recent success of the high quality Greyfriars Avenue residential development, the site will provide enhanced access to the riverside for cyclists and pedestrians via the existing Greenway cycle path. Leisure opportunities will be split across two primary purposes: firstly as a focal point for water based activities, including canoeing and kayaking, open water swimming and rowing; secondly as a city-centre based outdoor events space that is adaptable for a range of cultural events including small scale festivals, theatre performances or music events.

In time, the project will become a natural hub within the city and draw tourists and visitors to sites across the city. It will also complement and link with the

retail leisure and cultural experiences available at the city centre and the Old Market.

## ■ Opportunity

There is scope for a comprehensive redevelopment of this riverside site that is adjacent to Hereford city centre. The enabling residential and commercial development will need to use innovative technology and design to maximise the developable area whilst mitigating the impacts of flooding. Support from government initiatives may be able to assist in the mitigations.

This enabling development will facilitate the creation of high quality public spaces including a prominent river frontage and outdoor event settings. This element is key to extending the city community to this area whilst maximising the opportunities of the river frontage.





### Quick facts

#### Hereford river quarter

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£15m
Type	Mixed use riverside regeneration
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Developer co-investment and development finance
Programme	2019-2022

# Business hotel & sports/leisure development

## ■ Overview

Herefordshire has a long and historic link with National Hunt racing, dating back to 1771 when Hereford Racecourse first held a race meeting. Thousands of visitors are now attracted to meetings each year and the media coverage generates national exposure for the city. The annual programme of around a dozen National Hunt race meetings provides significant scope to expand the Racecourse's range of other events and commercial activity.

With the views across the city and towards the Black Mountains, the course provides a captivating setting for a high quality hotel and conference centre. The area could also be home to an expanded high class sports and leisure facility. Development could complement or enhance the existing infield facilities that include a golf course, driving range, a running track and sports pitches. The course, grandstands, associated buildings and adjoining locations provide space and scope for a high quality leisure orientated development.

A number of locations surrounding the course also provide opportunities to accommodate an enhanced range of commercial activity. The area could become "sporting village" with facilities for a range of outdoor and indoor sporting activities, alongside a commercial presence that offers high quality hotel accommodation, conferencing facilities and a wraparound offer. With excellent connections to the nearby city centre offer, as well as other close by leisure and retail facilities, the area is primed to develop the sports and leisure sector.

## ■ Opportunity

Many local businesses have expressed their need for a high quality business hotel and conference facility. The growth of the city's commercial sector coupled with increased expectation of business travel provides a clear demand for a new, modern, well presented hotel/conference centre. The site provides the opportunity for an investment from a high quality provider, to develop a facility that is comparable to that in the leading towns and cities across the country.

Investors seeking to be part of a diversified commercial, hospitality and leisure offer would be encouraged. Development of facilities that neighbour the racecourse that would both be able to contribute towards or capitalise upon an increased hospitality and leisure offer would also be supported. By working together, this part of the city has considerable potential to form a "sporting village" which provides a strong indoor and outdoor leisure offer accompanied by other complimentary leisure activity. The university and other scheduled development will drive demand for both aspects of this area's development opportunities.





## Quick facts

### NBusiness hotel & sports/leisure development

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council / Arena Racing Company £50m - £80m
Scale (£)	Hotel accommodation, conferencing facilities with associated sporting and leisure facilities
Type	
Location	Hereford
Investment Type	Development Finance Co Investment
Programme	2020-2025

# The Urban Realm and parking

## ■ Overview

The Herefordshire road transport network converges on Hereford, where there is access to local and long distance rail services making it the most accessible location for the majority of county residents. The challenges that exist on the existing road network – congestion, lack of resilience, long distance traffic routed through the city centre – will be addressed by the construction of the Hereford bypass and the accompanying package of sustainable measures.

The current A49 route places a significant severance between the city core, the urban village development sites, the Old Market development, and the residential areas to the west, and in particular the Courtyard Centre for the Arts and proposed riverside development. The completion of the bypass will create the opportunity to better manage the existing road network in Hereford and enable solutions to address the severance.

Significant streetscape improvements have been implemented along Newmarket Street, with a wide, tree lined boulevard now fronting the Old Market

development. This style will be continued along Blueschool Street and around to Commercial Road joining with the new city link road and transport hub at the railway station in a package of work that has already commenced.

Following the creation of the bypass, similar upgrades will be made to both Edgar Street and Victoria Street. This will include at grade crossing points at the Barton Road and Eign Street junctions (including the removal of the underpasses at both junctions) and at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts.

The council's parking strategy plans to move the current parking supply, located mainly in and around the historic core, to an edge of centre location. A number of sites on the principal commuter routes will be identified as new multi storey car park sites to intercept traffic before it reaches the city centre. Chosen for their accessibility from the key road network, sites will be clearly signposted and provide a supply for both commuter and visitor parking.

## ■ Opportunity

Hereford has an appropriate number of car parking spaces, but they are not in the right location and are spread over too many sites. This currently leads to an uncoordinated and non-strategic level of parking supply which is difficult to access and find for visitors.

Edge of centre sites will be identified as the replacement for the current supply much of which will be incorporated within other regeneration projects. Built as multi storey facilities the sites will represent an opportunity to manage the movement of vehicles into the city centre and both visitor and commuter parking demand.

The sites to be considered are the county bus station on Commercial Road, St Martins Street/ Asda Supermarket, Eign Street, and Friar Street.



### Quick facts

#### The Urban Realm and parking

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£25m
Type	Car parking facilities
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Developer and development funder
Programme	2018-2025



# Leominster Railway Station Improvements

## ■ Overview

Located on the Cardiff to Manchester line, Leominster benefits from an hourly train service in both directions. Typical journey times to Hereford are 16 minutes, and 40 minutes to Shrewsbury. This level of service presents significant commuting opportunities from the station both locally to Hereford, Ludlow and Shrewsbury but also more widely to Cardiff and Manchester.

Around a quarter of a million people use the station each year, and the figure is rising, by 25,000 over the past twelve months. It is considered that passenger numbers could further increase if the facilities at the station were improved. Currently the station lacks toilet facilities, refreshments, and an appropriately sized car park.

Leominster Station currently accommodates approximately 25 car parking spaces with some additional spaces for the registered disabled. Given the relative distance from the town centre and other long term car parking options this lack of spaces significantly impacts on the attractiveness of the station from a commuter perspective.

Alternative car parking arrangements will be investigated, with a preference for a location to the east of the railway line and accessed directly from the A49 trunk road. Potential exists to construct new car parking facilities on land currently constrained for other uses due to the proximity to a flood plain an unattractive location for other development (located between the A49 and the railway).

These facilities would provide easily accessible, highly visible, long term car parking that could equally serve the railway station and the wider, long stay, parking requirements for Leominster.

## ■ Opportunity

Potential exists to develop a surface car park on agricultural land at a location between the A49 and Marches railway line to the east of the current railway station. An appropriate charging regime could be introduced commensurate with the car park serving long stay users and commuters.

Additional, but ancillary commercial uses could be introduced where they serve the station users and provide a complementary service to the railway station and car parking. In particular it is noted that a number of basic services are currently not available at Leominster Station and the addition of these, either as part of the car parking provision or within the existing station building, would be supported.





### Quick facts

#### Leominster Railway Station Improvements

Sponsor	TBC
Scale (£)	£2m to £3m
Type	Car parking construction and potential ancillary activities
Location	Leominster
Investment Type	Development partner or purchaser
Programme	2019-2021

# Leominster retail led regeneration scheme

## ■ Overview

Leominster is the principle market town in the north of Herefordshire. With a population of 12,000 and a similar sized catchment area the town provides a service and retail hub for a sizeable element of the county and beyond. Additionally the town is scheduled to accommodate considerable growth with an additional 2,300 houses to be constructed by 2031.

128 The growth of the town requires an enhanced service, employment, and retail offer. Whilst a large employment site is allocated to the south of the town there is a need to identify and bring forward suitable sites within the town centre that can accommodate retail and service provision.

With its connectivity to the existing retail core, the heritage offered by the nearby Leominster Priory, and waterside opportunities on the banks of the Kenwater river, the current Broad Street car park offers an ideal location for a range of potential end uses. Sequentially it is perhaps the best located site

within the town to accommodate an enhanced retail provision, and given its size it could be redeveloped for a single or multiple occupier(s).

## ■ Opportunity

Herefordshire Council as landowners of the Broad Street car park site are committed to the marketing of the land in the anticipation of receiving expressions of interest/bids from prospective purchasers/developers. Agents will shortly be appointed and tasked with undertaking a market valuation of the site.

The council would welcome a comprehensive scheme, potentially retail led, that adds to the vitality and viability of the existing town centre. Regard should be had to the setting of the scheme alongside the existing features of the Kenwater River and the Leominster Priory whilst also looking to enhance the linkages with the town centre.

The site is approximately 3 acres in size and benefits from being flat and within public ownership. Access is directly onto the A44 and from there to the A49, there are good opportunities for additional footpath connectivity and the site could easily be integrated within the existing town centre retail and leisure offer.

Uses that significantly upgrade or improve the current retail and service provision within the town will be of particular interest to the council.



## Quick facts

### Leominster retail led regeneration scheme

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	Dependant on end use
Type	Redevelopment site with potential for a variety of end uses
Location	Leominster
Investment Type	Development partner or purchaser
Programme	2017-2019



# Business incubator programme

## ■ Overview

Herefordshire has always been a county which supports its own home-grown industries and where small, family based businesses have grown to become nationally and internationally recognised brands. Tyrells Crisps, Bulmers, Westons Cider, M&M Sports, and PGL Leisure, have grown and prospered within the county.

130 Vibrant, growing, innovative companies exist throughout the county. Hereford, as the largest settlement, clearly has the largest number of companies but not the monopoly on great businesses. The market towns and the rural areas also have their fair share of innovators and, importantly, are able to serve different markets and take advantage of wider opportunities.

To promote and provide a focus for this support it is proposed to develop a series of business incubation centres which provide flexible, affordable workspace, accompanied with a wraparound offer of meeting rooms, reception facilities, postal and ICT services.

The suite of incubation centres will be anchored by a large incubation centre on the Enterprise Zone. Other centres will be either newly built or created in council buildings across the market towns. The rollout of this programme will be dictated by the provision and availability of suitably located and specified buildings. The key market towns will be prioritised, in particular where there is a shortage of business accommodation or where known demand exists.

An accompanying range of business support services will be coordinated across the suite of centres by the Marches Growth Hub and Herefordshire Council working closely with partners such as Wolverhampton University. This business support will include access to funding and grants, provision of workshops and seminars

## ■ Opportunity

The council are undertaking to construct the first 'incubation hub' by 2018 in a refurbished building on the enterprise zone. A number of potential locations across the market towns are being explored in the search for similar, smaller, buildings.

To bring forward the project the council will investigate a number of delivery options, whether direct development of new build premises, refurbishment or conversion of existing buildings, or in a development agreement with a third party provider.

There are potential partnering opportunities for office developers and operators of incubation space in addition to the construction opportunities involved with the development of a suite of centres.

## Quick facts

### Business incubator programme

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£8m
Type	B1 office and light industrial incubation accommodation
Location	Herefordshire Market Towns
Investment Type	Equity co-investment and development finance, developers and construction partners
Programme	2019-2025

Incubation  
Centre

# The Herefordshire food and rural business centres

## ■ Overview

The Herefordshire food and rural business centres will be a showcase for food, drink and creative and rural industries in Herefordshire. They will provide a high quality retail and leisure offer for both local people and visitors.

It is anticipated that the centres will be located in semi-rural locations and could act as farm diversification projects which will secure the future of farm businesses. In addition to enabling other local businesses to be brought on as partners and tenants as business opportunities grow.

The centres will become catalysts to develop assets to support the local service and business sectors providing much required facilities to the local community. They will also have the potential to enable partnership opportunities that include craft, exhibition space, local services, café, office space and retail units and even allotments.

The centres will provide an opportunity for rural businesses to meet their customers and create an exciting environment for them to grow their businesses in a flexible creative place.

## ■ Opportunity

In a new approach for Herefordshire we picture the centres growing from simple farm diversification project to become a collection of businesses which will become established as a vibrant working community.

The centres will create the opportunities to grow including a wide offer of retail, leisure, crafts and even local services such as a post office. This makes it a popular stop for both passing visitors and the local population.

Supporting Herefordshire and its market towns is key, as is identifying a major site or site(s) in Herefordshire where the creation of centres will add to the local offer without displacing existing local services.

The preferred locations would ideally be near a major transport route, such as the A49, M50, or A44 corridors, and within a catchment area incorporating a market town and surrounding villages. Ideal locations will be suited to a variety of different business enterprises.

The provision on site will complement existing offers in the area, creating jobs and opportunities for a variety of local businesses. Ideally the projects will allow for a variety of small and starter units to give opportunities for new businesses to set up, grow and move on in a location with great facilities.





### Quick facts

#### The Herefordshire food and rural business centre

Sponsor	Private sector landowner or estate
Scale (£)	£3m
Type	Herefordshire Food and Tourism Offer
Location	TBC
Investment Type	Equity investor, pump priming, DEFRA Growth Programme
Programme	2018-2025

# The Lugg Living Landscape

## ■ Overview

Hereford is a rural city surrounded by a fertile, living, working, landscape that offers an opportunity to “get away from it all”. Despite this, access to the network of walks and byways can be constrained for those living in and around the city. Constraints include a lack of car parking facilities, poorly signed or maintained routes and inconsistent access for those with mobility restrictions.

Hereford's situation on the banks of the River Wye is well known, what is less well appreciated is the city's interaction and relationship with the River Lugg, a significant tributary of the Wye that flows to the east of the city. The Lugg valley flows from the northern Welsh border to its confluence with the River Wye, south east of Hereford. The section of river valley between Bodenham and Hereford features lush meadows, working farm landscapes and a series of artificial lakes formed from mineral extraction.

The Lugg Valley is generally flat, of varied use, and offers significant potential for an enhancement to the natural and ecological environment. Mineral extraction quarries at Wellington and Lugg Bridge provide opportunity for future ecological and/or leisure uses.

This is in addition to the existing Bodenham Lakes site which has both leisure and habitat restoration projects. Habitat restoration is the primary long term aim for these extraction sites. This does not preclude other complementary uses alongside the restoration. The Lugg Valley between Hereford and Bodenham could be opened up for public access with new and enhanced footpaths, river access points, wildlife habitats, wildlife viewing points and car parking.

Forming a set of linked habitats and publicly accessible trails and footpaths this seven mile section of the river valley will be anchored by the two mineral extraction points at Lugg Bridge, Wellington, and the existing lake at Bodenham. Activities and access will primarily be focussed at these three core locations.

## ■ Opportunity

At the core sites, facilities to provide visitor attractions that build on the natural environment and the restored ecosystems will be constructed. Activities available will range from the passive – bird and wildlife watch hides, to the active – pond dipping, canoe safaris, nature trails. All will be designed to attract visitors who will learn about and appreciate the natural landscape and wildlife. Opportunities will exist to provide supplementary services at each site, for example interpretation and visitor centres with appropriate café's, souvenir shops, equipment hire and activity booking. It is anticipated that sympathetic development in the form of overnight visitor accommodation or outdoor activity centres could also form an important element of the project.





## Quick facts

### The Lugg Living Landscape

Sponsor	Herefordshire Nature Trust
Scale (£)	£5m
Type	Habitat restoration and linked visitor attractions
Location	Lugg River Valley north east Hereford
Investment Type	Construction and business opportunities
Programme	2018-2028



## Response to General Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.

Summary of the principal points identified for consideration from GOSC – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

<b>General Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendations</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>The plan should strive to address the major constraints that were inhibiting plans for growth and seek to make the county more marketable, mindful of what it was within the council's own powers to influence and effect.</p>	<p>The strategy sets out some of the key challenges to the growth of the Herefordshire economy and identifies a suite of investment opportunities which will deliver growth and make the county more marketable.</p>
<p>It was important to be clear who the audience for the document was.</p>	<p>There are two principle audiences for the strategy, an internal to the county audience consisting of local stakeholders, communities, county and parish councilors, and local businesses. There is also an external audience which is primarily investment and development community based. The strategy addresses both through different sections of the document.</p>
<p>It was suggested the document should include a section on the history and geography of the county, and why the county was a good place to live and work, and set out the opportunities and attractions for people who were thinking of moving to the county, set out the objectives and ambitions so that people could judge whether they wished to be associated with them.</p>	<p>In recognition of the intended audiences there are brief mentions of the history and geography of the county. Reasons why the county is a good place to live and work are included throughout the document.</p>
<p>Clear timelines were needed. It was suggested that the plan should be in chunks recognising that changes would inevitably take place over the life of the plan and ensuring that it remained adaptable.</p>	<p>A programme for the various investment opportunities has been included. The strategy will be delivered over three periods each of five years.</p>
<p>Pitch documents were a good idea, possibly split into geographical or industry sectors and so targeting potential investors.</p>	<p>A subsequent iteration of the strategy will be a 'pitchbook' that will showcase the investment opportunities. This will be based</p>

	around the Investment Pitchbook annex to the strategy.
The case studies provided were helpful.	Noted but due to audience, space and the large amount of text case studies do not feature in the strategy. They are likely to feature in some of the associated media and promotional material and will showcase the best the county has to offer in terms of innovative and growing businesses.
Account should be taken of the links with planning policy and the need to identify where policy could be improved.	The strategy is not a statutory document but does identify linkages with the local plan, emerging area plans, and the various neighbourhood plans. It is not a function of the strategy to identify improvements to policy.
The importance of tourism to the County's growth and sustainability needed to be recognised. Maintaining the county's roads was important to the tourist industry.	Whilst the strategy does not focus on particular sectors of the economy the importance of the tourism sector is recognised in various elements of the strategy.
Promoting the County as a setting for film and tv locations would be advantageous.	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy. The point is recognised and will be investigated. In October 2015 the council signed up to the Film Friendly Partnership Charter which signifies a joint approach with creative England to promote the county as a film friendly location.
The possibility of businesses using underused council property should be explored.	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy but the recommendation will be forwarded to the council's property team.
The Church Commissioners should be approached about scope for public use of their property	This is a level of detail that is not contained within the strategy.

<p>Communication and marketing were key.</p>	<p>Agreed and a full communications plan is to be worked up post adoption of the strategy.</p>
<p>The Plan needed to consider the needs of the whole County. At the moment it was dominated by projects within the city.</p>	<p>Whilst the city is the location of the majority of investment opportunities it should be recognised that projects within the city will serve the wider county. Future iterations of the strategy and investment pitchbook have the ability to include projects from within the various market towns and efforts are being made to engage further with partners from the market towns.</p>
<p>Regard should be had to the horticultural sector within the county.</p>	<p>Noted but the strategy does not currently focus on specific sectors.</p>
<p>The tensions between preserving the county and growth and development needed to be recognised.</p>	<p>The point is recognised and it is considered that a balance has been achieved between the safeguarding of the Herefordshire landscape and the growth ambitions contained within the strategy.</p>
<p>There should be a focus on celebrating what was unique in the county and protecting that. An audit of the county's strengths had been proposed at the Committee's meeting in July but nothing appeared to have happened as a result.</p>	<p>The strategy looks at what opportunity exists to invest in key projects that will provide the wider growth of the local economy. Whilst some of these will build on local strengths it is considered that others address key weaknesses or market opportunities. Consequently an audit of the county's strengths would have limited relevance to the identification of projects to be included as investment opportunities.</p>
<p>The photograph on the front cover should be replaced with a more distinctive image relating to the county.</p>	<p>Agreed and actioned.</p>



An implementation plan was needed.	Any delivery or implementation plan will be drafted post adoption of the strategy.
Having identified needs in the county there could be an opportunity to explore ways of meeting these needs, adopting a market led approach.	The strategy adopts a market led approach.
Consideration should be given to seeking a view from external consultants on the plan.	Given the current council budgetary constraints it was considered greater value for money to utilise relevant council officer's expertise and knowledge rather than engage external consultants.
Clarification should be provided on the consultation process. In addition, including a section on those who had been consulted on the plan's development would lend it credibility.	A series of engagements with the city, market towns and rural areas took place in Spring 2016. The strategy is an evolving document that will be amended over time to reflect new opportunities and changing market conditions. Consequently a process for forward engagement has been included.
There seemed to be no reference to the small and medium enterprises that formed the majority of the county's businesses.	Reference to small and medium sized businesses (SME's) has been included within the strategy.
The wording in relation to Cargills (p120 of the agenda papers) and to phosphate pollution (p59) needed to be revisited.	Agreed and actioned.
It was questioned whether the proposals for the river quarter took account of the National Planning Policy Framework and the core strategy.	Investment opportunities within Investment Pitchbook have been discussed with the Team Leader Strategic Planning. He has confirmed that all investment opportunities are in general conformity with the local plan.