

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	<p>The allocation of the government special provision fund to a capital project that supports improved accommodation for children and young people with SEND and an education health care plan</p> <p>Proposal – that subject to a positive feasibility report the government special provision fund be allocated to partially fund a project to remodel and improve aspects of the Brookfield Special School. In addition it is recommended that a business case be produced to seek cabinet approval to use a further £1.74m of funding currently listed in the capital programme against Brookfield, to add to this special provision fund of £500k, that will enable the achievement of a strategic and aspirational scheme to raise the quality of the school buildings and site and provide sustainable accommodation for the future, removing those buildings currently used by some Brookfield pupils that are temporary and on a separate site.</p>
Date of decision:	10 August 2018
Decision maker:	Director for Children’s Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	The authority for the Director for Children’s Wellbeing to take this decision can be found by following the link below - http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5039
Ward:	County wide
Consultation:	<p>The process used to select the project that would benefit from the special provision fund was as outlined in the report to the Cabinet member for Children (see link above). Information used to prioritise the Brookfield School for improvements from the long listed priority schemes in the aforementioned report related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of current buildings • Compliance of current buildings • Future maintenance liability at each of the settings in the long list • Results of consultation with head teachers and governors • Results of consultation with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND • Capital funds previously allocated and spent on improvement at each of the settings • Potential for this funding to be matched with other identified funding • Potential for the fund to allow the achievement of a significant and strategic improvement that will stand the test of time and ensure high quality accommodation into the future.
Decision made:	The decision was made that the special provision fund (£500k) allocated to Herefordshire Local Authority by the government,

	<p>would be spent on a project to improve the quality of accommodation at the Brookfield Special School, subject to a suitable feasibility study and high level costing exercise. In addition the decision was taken to put forward a business case to Cabinet for allocation of funding already listed in the capital programme for use at Brookfield School (1.76m), to add to the special provision fund to achieve a high quality strategic improvement project.</p> <p>Although the Brookfield School is an academy, the criteria for the allocation of the special provision fund clearly states that spending on any type of setting, including academies, is permitted. In addition, the council has a statutory responsibility to commission educational provision for children and young people with an EHCP for SEND that is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and SEN. The Brookfield School is the only in-county setting that provides for CYP with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) as their primary need. Investment in this school is needed so that the council may fulfill its statutory responsibility to those CYP with SEMH. If the setting fails to be fit for purpose those pupils would need to be placed out of county, leading to a significantly increased cost of placement. This proposed investment will mitigate the risk of an increase in out of county placements in the future. It also ensures that the current need for temporary accommodation for a cohort of pupils with SEMH will be removed.</p>
<p>Reasons for decision:</p>	<p>The decision was taken in order to ensure high quality sustainable educational accommodation for children and young people with social emotional and mental health special needs in Herefordshire. Matters taken into account when taking the decision, were as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of the current buildings at the Brookfield School is adequate, apart from the building inhabited by the Arrow cohort of Brookfield students which is offsite, temporary and of poor quality. • Compliance of the current buildings and of the site is poor for all age phases • Future maintenance liability is highly likely for the off-site building • Consultation with head teachers and governors showed recognition of the need for improvements at the Brookfield School. • Consultation with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND showed recognition of the need for improvements at the Brookfield School • Capital funds previously allocated and spent on improvement at the Brookfield School are not equitable with those spent at other SEND settings in the county. • There is potential for the government funding to be matched with other identified funding in the Herefordshire council capital programme to enable a high quality project that will resolve compliance and quality issues in a strategic and sustainable way. <p>The decision taken impacts positively on the achievement of the principles set out in the published Herefordshire Schools Capital Investment Strategy pages 10 and 11.</p>

<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial risk – any risk of exceeding the allocated budget will be mitigated by the commissioning of a feasibility study prior to implementation, to determine the viability of the project and the high level cost. Further to this, the project management of the improvements would be conducted in accordance with council requirements and guidance. • Reputational risk - will be managed by the council procurement process, to ensure the selection and management of high quality, cost efficient contractors • Timeline risk - will be managed as above. • Equality impact - The improvements sought will benefit all children and young people with social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) in Herefordshire with education health care plans (EHCPs), and will improve the provision for girls with an EHCP for SEMH. • Legal implications: The council has sought external legal advice and is satisfied that the proposed arrangement is a lawful use of its powers and funds.
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>When selecting the project to benefit from the special provision fund, all other settings in Herefordshire offering educational provision for children and young people with EHCPs were considered. The Brookfield School was selected based upon information outlined in the consultation section above.</p>

<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Signed:

Date: 10.08.2018