

# Title of report: To Spend Changing Places Grant Funding

**Decision maker: Chief finance officer**

**Decision date: Monday 25 September 2023**

**Report by: Senior Project Manager**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

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**

Central; Widemarsh;

## **Purpose**

To seek approval to spend the Changing Places Grant Funding from the Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing to deliver three new changing places provisions within Hereford and to grant delegated authority to the Strategic Assets Delivery Director.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) **The Changing Places Grant from the Department of Levelling Up , Housing and Communities is drawn down from the capital programme to deliver three new Changing Places Provisions; and**
- b) **The Strategic Assets Delivery Director is delegated responsibility to make all operational decisions to deliver these three schemes within the approved budget of £287k.**

## Alternative options

1. To not accept the grant would mean that neither Partners nor Herefordshire Council would have the resources to install the Changing Places Toilets in the locations identified. Other locations were considered and the final 3 (maximum allowed under this round) were agreed by prioritising sites based on eligibility, deliverability, rationale (including evidence from research, consultation with stakeholders and value for money (including confirmation of co-funding)).

## Key considerations

2. The Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities following the allocation of the first round of funding last year, allocated the remaining Changing Places Grant across 64 Local Authorities in England. This second round has been focused on increasing the availability of Changing Places toilets in areas where there is currently little or no provision.
3. The two rounds of funding combined see £30.5m allocated to building over 600 new Changing Places toilets in public places and tourist attractions, meaning toilet accessibility for disabled people will be vastly improved in these areas
4. To make use of the Round 2 of the Changing Places Fund to support the installation of three Changing Places Toilets in Hereford. Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, privacy screens, adult-sized changing benches, peninsula toilets and space for carers. Providing Changing Places toilets opens up public places such as cafes, and theatre to this group and their families, enabling them to enjoy the same experiences as everyone else. This supports our County Plan aim - to create a stronger, safer and fairer society in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
5. Funding has been granted to the following locations where the Council controls the land (by ownership) and/or has leased the whole or part of the land. The venue have been selected on the basis of they having a current service provision shortfall or where there is a high usage of the venues by residents;

Venue 1	<p>Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre HR1 2DT</p> <p>Herefordshire Council bought Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre in June 2020 with a view to developing the site to support the regeneration of the city centre. The centre is set to attract people to spend time and money in Hereford, there will be rentable space for a range of services and organisations, including adult learning services and wellbeing clinics.</p> <p>The changing places toilet will form part of this retail and will be located on the ground floor with new, additional toilet provision. We know from feedback received from colleagues that having a Changing Places toilet in the centre of town will open up opportunities especially for young adults with disabilities to access, employment and leisure opportunities.</p>
Venue 2	The Courtyard Theatre & Centre for the Arts HR4 9JR

	<p>The Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford is the leading arts and cultural venue in Herefordshire. Welcoming over 300,000 visitors a year, it offers drama, music, dance, visual arts and community engagement activities in an accessible venue. Opened in 1998, the building was extended in 2020 with a new studio and increased Café Bar capacity.</p> <p>There has been a desire for a number of years to have better facilities for people with disabilities as the nearest Changing Places is at the Old Market, which is several hundred meters away and cannot be accessed in time during a show interval. A fact echoed by the feedback disability groups gave Herefordshire Council during consultation for this bid .The Courtyard installed a small changing bed for children in the downstairs disabled toilet, but have not been able to create suitable facilities for all ages.</p>
<p>Venue 3</p>	<p>Aspire Community Hub HR1 2EA</p> <p>Aspire Community Hub in Canal Road, Hereford is run by Aspire Living, a charity supporting adults with a learning disability. The hub provides social and leisure activities such as dance, drama, music, crafts and exercise. There is also a café on site, which supports people with a learning disability to develop skills, and is open to the wider community. Outside there is a lovely garden and greenhouse for therapeutic gardening, where the gardening groups grow vegetables that they cook and eat.</p> <p>The purpose built, accessible venue is a bright and modern community hub. Leased from the local authority, it is less than half a mile from the train station, bus station and County Hospital, and under a mile to the Cathedral and tourist attractions of Hereford. The hub is a great place to go out into the wider community, such as the pub for lunch, the cinema or shopping.</p>

## Community impact

6. These Changing Places toilets will enable people with specific needs, with equipment such as hoists, privacy screens, adults sized changing benches, peninsula toilets and space for carers at three community centres in Hereford. It will ensure users that may not have visited these centres or Hereford due to limited facilities, enjoy these public spaces, with dignity and respect.
7. Community engagement involved local disability groups to help inform and identify priority sites, and as a result the three locations were selected.

## Environmental Impact

8. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors

we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

9. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.
10. The environmental impact of this proposal has been considered through the service specification and includes appropriate requirements on the contractor/delivery partner to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be managed and reported through the ongoing contract management.
11. The development of this project has sought to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

## **Equality duty**

12. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
13. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
14. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). This project is aimed clearly at reducing discrimination and disadvantage experienced by disabled people who are unable to use standard accessible toilets.

## **Resource implications**

15. Funding Grant Agreements have already been put in place with each external venue at Aspire and the Courtyard and both sites will manage the Changing Place Projects and report back to Herefordshire Council. They will be issued grant funding on proof of defrayal and delivery of the projects. They are each contributing additional funding on top of the grant. All receivers of the grant funding must ensure that procurement achieves value for money.

16. All three sites are to complete quarterly highlight reports which are compiled and reviewed by Herefordshire Council before submitting to DLUCH

17. The below table shows the amount of grant allocated to each location to deliver the projects.

Capital cost of project	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre</i>	130				130
<i>The Courtyard Theatre &amp; Centre for the Arts</i>	80				80
<i>Aspire Community Hub</i>	77				77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>287</b>				<b>287</b>

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Changing Places Capital Grant</i>	287				287
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>287</b>				<b>287</b>

Revenue budget implications	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Changing Places Revenue</i>	7	7	7		21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>21</b>

18. The maintenance and cleaning of the Maylords Orchards Changing Place provision ongoing costs will be managed by the service within existing revenue budgets. The Courtyard Theatre & Centre for Arts and Aspire Community will manage their own Changing Places provision ongoing maintenance and cleaning costs.

### Legal implications

19. The funding agreements with the leased premises will need to reviewed to ensure that delivery, costs and risks are as set out in this report.

20. The provision of public funds to a third party will amount to public subsidiary. The value is less than £100k in relation to Venue 2 and 3. As such the Council will need to ensure that the

subsidy amounts to Minimal Financial Assistance (being less than £100k for each organisation) and ensure that the total MFA over the last 3 years (including this year) has not exceeded £315k.

21. As each award is less than £100k the Council will not have to make a transparency declaration to the subsidy control database. A MFA Notification is still required to be provided by the Council and a written confirmation from the third party that the MFA subsidy threshold of £315k has not been reached by the third party.

## Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
If the decision is not to approve the expenditure of the grant funding then there is a risk the project will not be completed on time resulting in the grant funding being returned to DLUCH.	Recommendations allow for the approval of the grant funding expenditure and to ensure the project delivers at pace a recommendation to delegate all operational decisions to the Strategic Assets Delivery Director.
Risk of overspend	This will be managed through the PMO process and in consultation with key partners.

22. Risks are managed according to the council's risk management framework, aligned with

23. corporate risk strategy and recorded on a service risk register, being escalated to the directorate or corporate risk register according to the significance of the risk.

24. Working on the assumption that the recommendation(s) will be approved, The Project will be managed by the Programme Management Office, and should any issues arise they will be escalated to the SRO, Programme Manager and or the Programme Delivery Board.

## Consultees

25. No consultation has been completed as this is a decision to draw down funds only

## Appendices

26. None.

## Background papers

27. None identified.

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

**Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published**

Governance	John Coleman	Date 04/09/2023
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 08/09/2023
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 24/08/2023
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 21/08/2023
Equality Duty	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Lee Washbrook	Date 31/08/2023

Approved by Click or tap here to enter text. Date Click or tap to enter a date.

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**