

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Grant Funding Agreement relating to the Department for Education funded Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme – The Harvest Project, Hereford
Date of decision:	7 th November 2025
Decision maker:	Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, Children and Young People's Directorate
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The Children and Families Scheme of Delegation, paragraph 48, states that all children must 'get a suitable education' and delegates decisions to the Director for Education, Skills and Learning.</p> <p>The Service Director is authorised to approve revenue payments between £250,001 and £500,000 as per Herefordshire's Financial Procedure Rules (Section 7).</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	Allocate up to £300,000 of the DfE SEND and AP Change Programme grant funding to pilot the Harvest Project for the 2025/2026 academic year.
Reasons for decision:	<p>The Department for Education's (DfE) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme has allocated grant funding for the 2025/2026 academic year to each of the following four local Authorities: Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. Each authority is required to use this funding to test and refine SEND and AP reforms, in the form of pilot projects in their respective local areas.</p> <p>Data and evidence gained from these projects will be used to assist each local authority to understand and to respond to cohort trends, so they can deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people, their parents and carers in community, early years and mainstream settings.</p> <p>The Harvest Project will provide specialist Tier 2 Alternative Provision (AP) and be run by Herefordshire Pupil Referral Service (a local authority-maintained service, known as HPRS). Up to 24 places will be available for pupils who present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties between Year 7 to Year 11 (Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4), each class size will be for up to 8 pupils, and each pupil will be able to attend for up to two days per week alongside attending a minimum of three days a week at their mainstream school.</p> <p>Progress and risk management reports will be submitted to the Council's SEND Partnership Group on a half-termly basis to monitor the project and evaluate the outcomes achieved from using the Project Grant.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	The financial assistance will be administered by the Council through the grant, however alternative funding sources may need to be sourced if this pilot proves to be a success and DfE funds are withdrawn in the future.

	<p>The grant will only be given to HPRS for this project as they can meet the schemes criteria and outcomes.</p> <p>HPRS have conducted a risk management analysis for this project and will continue to update and share this with the Council.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>None.</p> <p>This is a brand-new service provision that will be piloted for one year using grant funding.</p> <p>HPRS is the only local specialist and Ofsted registered provider of this and similar services in Herefordshire, and the organisation is well placed to provide the very specialist services and associated infrastructure support required to deliver this service locally.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	Not applicable