

Title of report: The New Public Realm Service – Depot Facilities

Decision maker: Cabinet member local engagement and community

Report by: Major Contracts Programme Director

Date:

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Bircher, Dinedor Hill

Purpose

This report seeks approval to draw down the corporate funded borrowing required to undertake any necessary works to depots and other facilities associated with the New Public Realm Service.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) Cabinet Member approve the spend of up to £450,000 identified corporate funded borrowing required to undertake any necessary works to depots and other facilities associated with the New Public Realm Service; and**
- b) Cabinet Member delegates authority to the Major Contracts Programme Director to determine all necessary works to depots and other facilities associated with the New Public Realm Service and take all necessary operational decisions to implement recommendation (a) including procurement, award and delivery of associated contracts to successful bidders.**

Alternative options

1. That this investment is not made and the Council does not undertake works to depots and other facilities associated with the New Public Realm Service. This is not recommended as Officers consider that this would prevent the delivery of the New Public Realm Service, which is a key part of the Council's Delivery Plan.

Key considerations

2. On 18 December 2025, Cabinet approved the award of a new Public Realm Services contract. The new contract commences on 1 June 2026 and will see the delivery of services such as maintaining and developing highway infrastructure, maintaining green areas, street cleansing, bereavement services, providing effective drainage, lighting the highway and enabling safe and reliable travel by all modes of transport, and access for business and leisure.
3. To enable the mobilisation of the New Public Realm Service, on 7 February 2025 Full Council approved the 2025/26 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy, which included a £450,000 budget for Public Realm Depot Facilities.
4. As part of the mobilisation process, Officers have currently identified the need to undertake various works at the depots used to deliver the contract as set out below:
 - a. The installation of up to twelve new electric vehicle charging stations at Thorn depot
 - b. The installation of up to six new electric vehicle charging stations at Kingsland depot
 - c. Works within the Herefordshire Council designated office accommodation areas at Thorn depot
5. Whilst the above works have been identified at this time, it should be noted that further works may be identified between the date of this report and the 1 June 2026 start date of the New Public Realm Services contract. This report therefore seeks approval to delegate authority, within the stated budget envelope, to the Major Contracts Programme Director to take all necessary operational decisions to deliver any further necessary works to depots and other facilities that may be identified during 2026/27 so as to enable the delivery of the New Public Realm Service.
6. When delivering any works to depots and other facilities, the Council's Legal and Property Services teams will be involved so as to ensure all required consents and licences are in place as deemed appropriate and working with relevant landlords and third parties as necessary to enable the works to be undertaken.

Community impact

7. There is clear evidence that the effective management of the public realm, which includes highways, parks and public rights of way, is an important contributor to the county's health, wellbeing and economy.
8. The public realm contract enables the council to achieve its council plan priority to secure better services, quality of life and value for money for the people of Herefordshire.

Environmental Impact

9. 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.
10. The public realm contract is aligned to meet the council's environmental objectives that will support the council meeting its net zero ambitions including impacts. Where possible, depot improvements will contribute to lower carbon emissions.

Equality duty

11. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
12. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision and it has been found to have a low impact for equality.
13. Due to the potential impact of this decision being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Resource implications

14. As part of the budget setting process, Full Council approved the 2025/26 Capital Investment Budget and Capital Strategy on 7th February 2025, which included a £450,000 investment in the Public Realm Depot Facilities.
15. Provisional costs obtained by Officers for the purchase and installation of the electric vehicle charging stations for the Thorn and Kingsland sites suggest that sufficient budget is available, but final costs are not available at this time as further detail is yet to be received from National Grid. Equally, the cost of works within the Herefordshire Council office accommodation areas at Thorn depot has not been identified at this time.
16. The cost of any further necessary works to depots and other facilities that may be identified during 2026/27 so as to enable the delivery of the New Public Realm Service will be met within the total £450,000 allocation and any unutilised budget that may be available will be returned.
17. Should any on-going revenue budget implications be identified as a result of the necessary works then these will be met from existing Highways and Public Realm revenue budgets.

Capital cost of project	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Depot Facility Improvements	450	0	450
TOTAL	450	0	450

Funding streams	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Funded Borrowing	450	0	450
TOTAL	450	0	450

Legal implications

18. Landlord and other consents may be required prior to works being carried out. All procurement in relation to the engagement of contractors to carry out works will have to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Risk management

19. The £450,000 budget allocated for the Public Realm Depot Facilities was approved at Full Council on 7 February 2025 and will be delivered during 2026/27.
20. Any risks will be managed as part of the New Public Realm Service project and escalated in accordance with the Risk Management Plan.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Insufficient Lead Time	Contingency arrangements have been identified should the electric vehicle charging stations not be installed by 1 June 2026.
Insufficient Budget	Works identified to date are within the available budget. Competitive quotes for work will be sought and the cost of works monitored by Officers, with risks being reported to and managed as part of the New Public Realm Service project.
Works not delivered	The existing arrangements could continue, but would lead to an inconsistent operating environment for staff.

Consultees

21. It was agreed by Group Leaders that a Political Group Consultation (PGC) was not necessary for this decision

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None identified.