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Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to award a contract for the delivery of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in Herefordshire
Date of decision:	4 th August 2026
Decision maker:	Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	Chief Executive scheme of delegation (updated 16 July 2026): CW-08 - Commissioning, quality assurance and contract management relating to all ages
Ward:	County wide
Consultation:	A Request for Information (RFI) was undertaken to inform the procurement process and service design. Feedback from existing learners, gathered through ongoing contract management arrangements, was also used to help shape the service specification and ensure it reflects local needs and priorities.
Decision made:	To award a contract to Enterkey Training for the delivery of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in Herefordshire for an initial period of two years from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2028, with an option to extend for a further period of up to 12 months at the council's discretion. The maximum contract value will be no more than £495,000, including any extension period.
Reasons for decision:	The commissioned ESOL service will support eligible refugees, people seeking asylum, and other migrant residents to develop the practical English language skills needed for everyday life in the UK. The service aims to promote independence, support integration within local communities, improve access to services, and enable progression into further learning, volunteering, or employment where appropriate. The current ESOL contract arrangements will end in August 2026. A new commissioned service is therefore required to maintain continuity of provision from 1 September 2026. Herefordshire Council has undertaken a competitive procurement process to identify a provider capable of delivering the ESOL service across Herefordshire. Tenders were evaluated in July 2026 in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, resulting in Enterkey Training being identified as the preferred bidder. The new contract will be awarded for an

	initial term of two years, with the option to extend for a further period of up to 12 months. The service specification requires provision to be predominantly face-to-face, community-based, and accessible across Herefordshire. The provider is required to deliver a minimum of four hours of classroom-based ESOL learning each week, tailored to learners' needs and ability levels. In addition, the provider will support learners to access community activities, volunteering opportunities, and other informal learning opportunities that help develop English language skills and promote wider social integration.
Equality Considerations	Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council 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 the Act; • advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and • foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The decision is expected to have a positive equality impact. Access to English language learning supports eligible learners to participate more fully in community life, understand and access local services, reduce isolation, and progress towards greater independence. The service is particularly relevant to people who may experience barriers linked to language, cultural background, migration history, disability, childcare, transport, trauma or low literacy. The service specification requires delivery to be culturally sensitive, accessible and responsive to learner need. The provider will be expected to identify and respond to barriers to learning, make reasonable adjustments where required, and work with partners to support learner engagement and progression.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Finance: The maximum budget for the service is £495,000, including any extension period. Funding is expected to be met from government grant funding linked to refugee resettlement and migration support arrangements Information governance and information security: The service involves processing personal data relating to learners. A DPIA has been completed for the re-procurement and the successful provider will be required to satisfy the council's information governance and information security requirements. Delivery and mobilisation: There is a delivery risk if the new provider is not fully mobilised by 1 September 2026. This will be managed through a clear mobilisation plan, named contract management arrangements, confirmation of staffing and venues, along with early monitoring of referral, attendance and learner engagement data.

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Do nothing: This option is not recommended. Without awarding a new contract, the council would risk a gap in ESOL provision from September 2026, with negative implications for eligible refugees, people seeking asylum and migrant residents who need language support to integrate, access services and progress towards independence. Deliver the service in-house: This option is not recommended. The council requires a suitably experienced provider with the staffing, teaching capability, local delivery arrangements and systems needed to deliver ESOL provision across Herefordshire. It would not be cost effective for the council to undertake the delivery responsibilities for the ESOL service/.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	No declarations of interest have been made

Signed: Date: 10/08/2026