



Title of report: To re-commission the council's home care service in Herefordshire

Decision maker: Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Decision date: Wednesday 21 October 2026

Report by: Corporate Director Community Wellbeing

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

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

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the proposed locality-based approach to re-commissioning the Care in Your Home (CIYH) Partnership, which includes both home care and Discharge to Assess (D2A) services in Herefordshire, for up to a maximum contract term of ten years.

The purpose of this transformational new approach to how we commission care for those who need additional support is to improve consistency and quality of care, while delivering value for the

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taxpayer. It is a core strategic driver in realising Herefordshire Council's aim of supporting residents to live as well and as independently as possible, with choice and control over their care. We aim to help individuals manage their health, stay safe and live well at home and close to their communities, wherever possible.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The re-commissioning of the Care in Your Home Partnership be approved, to commence through a maximum of eight locality contracts from 1 May 2027 for a period of up to ten years, at a maximum service value of £219.7million; and**
- b) **Delegated authority be granted to the Corporate Director Community Wellbeing to approve all operational and contractual decisions, including a maximum of eight locality contract awards, extensions and variations, for the full duration of the contract term, within the approved service budget and in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules.**

Alternative options

1. **Extend the existing home care frameworks:** This option is not recommended. The current frameworks have already been extended, pursuant to 72(1)(e) Public Contracts Regulations 2015, in order to align with the commencement of the new Care in Your Home (CIYH) Partnership, therefore a further extension is not required.
2. **Bring the service in-house:** This option is not recommended. The scale of service delivery required across Herefordshire is simply not achievable by one provider, hence a locality provision model, as referenced in item 15 below. Even with TUPE arrangements in place, it would be immensely challenging for the council to successfully deliver all home care and D2A services internally.
3. **Do nothing:** This option is not recommended. The current home care frameworks end on 30 April 2027, although this can be extended up for to an additional four months. Once the current frameworks end, although current call-offs (packages of care) would continue, any new packages of care would have to be individually negotiated with providers. This would not be compliant with our statutory duties and responsibilities under the Care Act or the Procurement Act. Therefore, the council must ensure a new service is available from 1 May 2027 (1 September at the latest) to ensure it can continue to support residents to remain safe and independent in their own homes and communities for longer, delaying the need for more formal health and social care interventions.

Key considerations

4. Herefordshire Council's current home care frameworks end on 30 April 2027, with the option to potentially extend for up to an additional four months to 31 August 2027, to ensure a robust and comprehensive mobilisation period.
5. It is proposed to introduce the new Care in Your Home (CIYH) Partnership from 1 May 2027, which will run for up to a maximum period of ten years, with an initial 5 year term and options to extend for further incremental periods up to the maximum ten year term, subject to service budget and provider performance. The CIYH Partnership will be delivered by a maximum of eight locality providers, with a maximum overall service value of £219.7million, over the full contract term (up to ten years). This approach will enable the council to strongly manage provider performance and service outcomes for residents, whilst being able to adapt to

changing service demands and Government legislation, including the proposed National Care Service.

6. This long-term partnership is a significant change from how the council currently commissions home care and D2A services in the county. However, a longer-term contract will ensure greater market / provider confidence, investment, stability, sustainability and workforce development to support the delivery of high quality care, which will improve outcomes for Herefordshire's residents, enabling them to live safely, independently and well in their own homes and communities, for as long as possible.
7. For residents currently receiving home care, they may get support from a different provider, starting from spring 2027. However, they will be able to stay with their current provider if they prefer, by being given choice and control of their own budget (the funding used to pay for their home care) to purchase their care directly. The council will fully support those who do not wish to move to a provider commissioned via the new Care in Your Home Partnership, to be able to use Direct Payment or Individual Service Fund arrangements to purchase their own home care.
8. This approach is in line with the council's statutory duty to provide care and support in people's own homes to meet their assessed eligible needs, as set out in the Care Act 2014. It also aligns with the wider Community Wellbeing Directorate's transformation programme to support residents' independence at home, reduce reliance and demand on higher cost care services, improve market capacity and support sustainable service delivery.
9. The council currently spends around £16.5million a year on home care support, which funds care and support for approximately 814 residents across the county, which equates to in the region of 12,418 hours of support per week. The D2A figures vary on a daily basis, depending upon how many people require reablement or enablement support to safely return home from hospital and regain lost skills and / or activity levels, in order to reduce and delay the need for ongoing care. As an example, as of week commencing 28 September 2026, there were 107 residents receiving D2A support in their own homes, which equated to 1,599 hours of support.
10. The number of people who have received care and support to remain safe and independent in their own homes, through both home care and D2A services, has continued to increase over recent years, as demonstrated in the following table.

	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026
Home care	824	938	1,074	1,144
D2A	131	592	900	919

11. The annual spend on home care and D2A Enablement, commissioned through the home care frameworks, has also continued to increase each year.

	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026
Home care	£8,447,000	£9,886,000	£11,974,000	£13,709,000
D2A Enablement*	£193,251	£380,119	£688,016	£769,755

* Please note the above D2A spend figures relate specifically to this element of D2A expenditure and do not represent total D2A spend.

12. The demand for home care and D2A services will continue to increase. The county's older population (aged 65 and over) has grown by 21% between 2013 and 2023 and currently over a quarter of residents (27%) are aged over 65. This is predicted to continue to rise with a projected 23% increase in over 65s between 2025 and 2035. It is also evidenced that those aged over 65 are more likely to live in rural areas with 28% living alone, meaning they often do not have access to additional support from family or friends¹.
13. The existing commissioning arrangements for home care and D2A services are not viable for the growing demands and complexities of the county and its increasing older population. This has led to residents sometimes having to wait longer than necessary to access services, particularly in rural areas, and the council needing to pay higher costs for sourcing non-commissioned providers, due to current commissioned providers not meeting the demands of the service.
14. The proposed CIYH Partnership, which has been designed through extensive engagement with providers, service users and their families, will increase provider capacity and sustainability and build market resilience, both now and in the future. It will ensure greater stability and better outcomes for residents with high quality and consistent care and support across the county, particularly in rural areas.
15. Under the CIYH Partnership, the county will be divided into eight localities, with a single provider being awarded a contract to deliver all home care and D2A Enablement services within each locality. Therefore, there will be a maximum of eight contracted providers delivering these services within Herefordshire.
16. The eight localities, based on geographical location, are proposed to be:
 - a. Locality 1 (North): Mortimer
 - b. Locality 2 (North): Leominster
 - c. Locality 3 (East): Bromyard
 - d. Locality 4 (East): Ledbury
 - e. Locality 5 (South): Ross-on-Wye
 - f. Locality 6 (West): Kington, Weobley and Golden Valley
 - g. Locality 7 (Central): Hereford North
 - h. Locality 8 (Central): Hereford South
17. The eight locality maps, along with a countywide map, are included in Appendix A.
18. The eight localities, which have evolved following extensive provider feedback, are intended to increase provider capacity and resilience, whilst improving the outcomes for residents, regardless of where they live in the county, by offering reduced waiting times, reliable visits, continuity of carers, person-centred care and support and increased independence to remain at home. We know this is important to residents, as evidenced in the service user survey responses.

19. As part of the open procurement process, providers will be permitted to submit a tender for more than one locality, subject to the area they are able to cover and their capability and capacity to meet the full requirements of that locality. To promote market sustainability and provider diversity, the council will limit contract award to a maximum of two localities (with a maximum of 3,000 care hours per week) per successful provider.
20. The council also propose to contract with the county's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) to deliver all low level support, where no regulated personal care is required, such as shopping, cleaning, gardening, collecting prescriptions, socialising and pet care. This will ensure greater capacity for providers to deliver the higher level of skilled care required for home care and D2A services, along with delivering best value for the taxpayer and maximising the benefits of the VCSE's proven expertise, where this is the most appropriate commissioned support for individuals, depending on their assessed needs.
21. The council also propose to move to adult social care outcomes focussed assessments. This will mean a change from prescriptive support plans, which dictate how providers deliver an individual's care, to describing the goals an individual would like to achieve to live the life they wish to live. The provider will be responsible for working directly with the individual and their family to create a bespoke care and support plan to meet the required outcomes.
22. The new arrangements will enable the council to plan and purchase care more strategically in the future, so residents across the county enjoy consistently high standards and stability and we make best use of available budgets at a time of growing demand. As part of this, it is proposed to move to partnership payment arrangements, as opposed to fragmented spot payments, based on evidenced levels of need and demand in each locality. This will give providers greater stability and confidence to invest and grow both their business and workforce to successfully deliver the required services. This will enable the council to cease 'spot purchases' of care, which are costly and can mean inconsistent care in different areas.
23. The proposed timeline for commissioning the service via an open procurement process, under the Procurement Act 2023, is outlined in the table below.

November – December 2026	The procurement process commences for a period of six weeks
January – February 2027	Evaluation, due diligence and governance
March 2027	Award of contracts
March onwards	Mobilisation and transition period

Community impact

24. The CIYH Partnership supports the ambition for 'good health and wellbeing for everyone', as highlighted within the Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033. It forms a crucial part of the prevention first approach, which states:

"Prevention and early intervention are critical to the long-term sustainability of our health and wellbeing system and are an investment in the future economically, morally and socially. Whilst there is no universal definition of prevention, it can normally be described in terms of three levels – delay, reduce and prevent".

25. The CIYH Partnership also supports the council's adult social care and wellbeing priorities stated in the 2026 – 2027 Delivery Plan to help people live independently, deliver prevention-focused adult social care, expand community support and re-enablement and improve hospital discharge and carer support.

Environmental impact

26. Herefordshire Council provide and purchase 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 protecting and enhancing Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
27. The environmental impact of the CIYH Partnership has been considered through the service specification and includes appropriate requirements on providers to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity and use sustainable transport options, including electric vehicles, walking and cycling, where possible. This will be managed and reported through the ongoing contract management.

Equality duty

28. 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 its decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
29. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision and it has been found to have low impact for equality.
30. Although the potential impact of this decision is low and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required, as best practice, an EIA will be completed as part of the re-commissioning process.
31. The CIYH Partnership is expected to have a positive impact on older people, including those with a protected characteristic, who require care and support to remain living safely and independently in their own homes for longer, through improved provider stability and high quality consistent care, particularly in rural areas.

Resource implications

32. A strategic priority for Herefordshire Council is to help residents live safely and independently in their own homes and communities, for as long as possible. This prevention approach is intended to maximise independence and improve outcomes for residents, along with delaying and reducing the need for formal health and social care services.
33. The indicative budget for the overall Care in Your Home Partnership is £219.7million, over the full contract term (up to ten years).
34. There is a potential for Under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) or TUPE regulations to apply. Where a service transfers to a new provider(s), which is fundamentally or essentially the same as those carried on before it, employees will automatically transfer to the incoming provider(s), where there is an organised grouping of employees that has as its principal purpose the carrying out of the relevant activities on behalf of the council, on their existing terms and conditions. TUPE regulations offer protection to staff in relation to their employment and benefits, where there is a service provision change.

35. The funding required to support this decision is included in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Any annual inflation assumptions, although none will be applied in the first year of the contract, are incorporated into the below financial calculations.
36. The CIYH Partnership, which supports prevention and independence, is proposed to deliver an invest to save approach, by delaying and reducing the need for residents to enter more formal health and social care services, including residential and nursing homes. For example, as part of the D2A modelling, it has been identified that 44% of residents who have received D2A reablement support in a care setting, instead of within their own home, then go into long-term residential care. If we can enable 20 people to safely return home, where we know they want to be, with the correct enablement care and support in place, that could potentially save over £900,000 a year.

	Years 1 / 2	Years 3 / 4	Years 5 / 6	Future years	
	2027/28 & 2028/29 Estimate £'m	2029/30 & 2030/31 Estimate £'m	2031/32 & 2032/33 Estimate £'m	2033/34 - 2036/37 Estimate £'m	Total £'m
<i>Proposed budget: Home care</i>	£31.4	£33.8	£35.7	£77.2	£178.1
<i>Proposed budget: D2A Enablement</i>	£6.1	£6.3	£6.6	£13.9	£32.9
<i>Proposed budget: D2A Reablement</i>	£1.6	£1.7	£1.7	£3.7	£8.7
Total	£39.1	£41.8	£44.0	£94.8	£219.7

The D2A service and budget is divided into enablement and reablement delivery.

Enablement

The enablement element automatically forms part of the CIYH Partnership and will be delivered by the commissioned home care providers in each locality.

Reablement

The reablement element is proposed to form an 'optional lot' for interested providers to bid for, as part of the CIYH Partnership procurement process. The reablement element will not be automatically included in the CIYH Partnership.



Legal implications

37. In fulfilling its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014, including the duty to promote individual wellbeing, the council must ensure that procurement activities contribute to the development of an effective, efficient and sustainable local market for care and support services. External legal advice has been commissioned to provide specialist support in addressing procurement, contractual and other relevant legal matters.
38. The relevant legal provisions for this decision can be found in the council's constitution at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution.

Risk management

39. The following risks and mitigations have been identified for the CIYH Partnership.

Risks	Mitigation
Provider engagement: There is not enough interest from experienced providers to deliver the service.	Early indication from the market engagement sessions suggest there are a number of providers interested in the CIYH Partnership. We will also ensure all procurement documentation, including the service specification, is detailed and clear to enable providers to fully understand the service requirements and their responsibilities.
Legal challenge: The potential for challenge from providers during the procurement process.	The CIYH Partnership has been developed through significant engagement with the provider market and research with other councils. It has also been informed by expert guidance from legal and procurement colleagues and is in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, in order to minimise the risk of challenge.
Decision making: The recommendation to approve the proposed approach to re-commissioning the CIYH Partnership is not approved.	The existing home care frameworks do not end until 30 April 2027, with the option to extend for up to an additional four months, therefore there is sufficient time to develop alternative arrangements, if necessary.
Provider failure: The potential for a provider failure or withdrawal, which impacts on service delivery within a locality.	The eight localities have been developed around realistic and achievable levels of service demand. Therefore, if localities needed to be combined, due to a provider failure or withdrawal, this would be feasible. As the council has a strong working relationship with the provider market, including contingency provider arrangements, alternative provision could be mobilised in the event of a short or long term provider failure in a locality, to ensure service continuity.
Demand and growth: The level of demand and growth within a locality is lower or higher than predicted assumptions.	There is sufficient statistical evidence from the existing home care contract to demonstrate an increasing level of demand within each of the proposed localities. As we have an ageing population, this demand is predicted to continue increasing, which will give providers confidence to further develop their business and workforce to meet the service demands.

Workforce sustainability: The impact of workforce challenges, particularly in rural areas, which could affect service delivery.	The CIYH Partnership has been developed to ensure long-term provider and workforce growth and sustainability, particularly in rural areas. The council will support providers with a workforce training and development programme, which will enhance staff recruitment, retention and capacity.
Provider quality concerns: The potential for quality and safeguarding concerns to be raised against a provider.	The council has robust quality and safeguarding arrangements in place. All providers will be subject to ongoing quality, performance and financial monitoring throughout the contract term, in order to identify emerging risks, support improvement activity and maintain business continuity planning.
Contract term: The potential for local and national changes during a long-term contract.	A long-term contract will provide confidence and sustainability for both providers and residents. The council will ensure robust performance management and review mechanisms are included within the contract, in order to monitor service delivery, challenge underperformance and respond to changing circumstances over time.

40. The Care in Your Home Partnership falls within the Community Wellbeing Directorate, so any associated risks in relation to service delivery, spend or budget would be recorded on the directorate risk register.

Consultees

41. A comprehensive programme of engagement has taken place throughout 2026 with different internal and external stakeholders to help shape the CIYH Partnership and inform the tender process.
42. **Provider engagement sessions**
- We have held in person and online engagement sessions with existing and potential providers in June (x 5), July (x 3), August (x 3) and September (x 1), which were attended by approximately 85 individuals. The feedback from these sessions has continued to help shape the CIYH Partnership proposal.
43. **Service user survey**
- We asked residents in receipt of home care (and their families / carers) what their experience is of our current home care service, what is important to them and what we can do better. We

received 40 responses. The key findings show that:

Positive
78% rated their care as good or very good
88% said their carers always treat people with dignity and respect
75% always feel safe and comfortable with their carers
95% know who to contact if they're worried
Negative
38% said their carers always arrive at the right time
25% said they always see the same carers

"The care my wife gets is very good and always makes [her] laugh and smile".

"All the carers are experienced and knowledgeable and support my wife so I can stay at home".

"The care and assistance [I receive] is beyond what I expected. [My care] is no longer on my wife's shoulders. This in turn has put us back to where we once were – a partnership, not carer and patient".

"The same carers regularly so I can get to know them and they know mum and her funny ways".

44. **Research with other councils**

The Commissioning Team has liaised with a number of different councils which are using / have used a similar approach, including Hampshire County Council, Islington Council, Sheffield City Council, Warwickshire County Council and Wiltshire Council. This research has helped shape the CIYH proposal for Herefordshire.

45. **Internal and external partnership working**

The Commissioning Team has liaised with a range of different teams within the council and external partners, including Wye Valley NHS Trust and One Herefordshire, for expertise, guidance and advice on the CIYH Partnership.

46. **Political Group Consultation (PGC)**

A PGC was held on 15 September 2026 and was attended by 14 councillors representing 5 different political parties (Conservative Party, Independents for Herefordshire, Liberal Democrats, The Green Party and True Independents). An engaging discussion was held, including queries from the Conservative Party and Independents for Herefordshire around the

proposed contract term, the Green Party queried if contract performance measures could be aligned with those of the NHS and if the proposed localities mirror those of the Neighbourhood Health Programme, whilst the True Independents stated that delivering care in people's homes carries safeguarding responsibilities and noted that the council has quality assurance processes in place and that the safeguarding service had been rated as 'Good' in the CQC assessment.

The feedback from the PGC will help further strengthen the proposed approach, including consideration of the eight localities, the rurality of Herefordshire, the use of the Voluntary and Community Sector, continuity and quality of care, provider resilience, the contract term and governance and proposed national Government changes to adult social care. The Independents for Herefordshire submitted a written response to the PGC on 23 September 2026, which is included as Appendix B.

Appendices

Appendix A: CIYH locality maps

Appendix B: Independents for Herefordshire Political Group Consultation response

Background papers

None identified.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

CIYH: Care in Your Home

D2A: Discharge to Assess

BCF: Better Care Fund

EIA: Equality Impact Assessment

References

¹ All data is taken from [Understanding Herefordshire](#) and the [Herefordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) Summary 2024.