

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet member economy and growth

Title	Connect to Work Programme
Decision maker	Cabinet member economy and growth Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251
Date of decision	23 October 2026
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	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.
A notice was served in accordance with Part 3 (Key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.	
General exception or special urgency (as defined in the constitution)	No
Purpose	To approve the procurement of the Connect to Work Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Programme in Herefordshire using the Open Procedure in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The programme is fully funded through a grant provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To approve the award of a contract to the bidder achieving the highest overall score against the published evaluation criteria for a period of up to three years and six months, commencing in October 2026, with a total contract value of up to £1.22 million.

	To delegate operational responsibility for the delivery of the Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire to the Service Directors for Economy and Growth and Education, Skills and Learning, acting in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth.
Decision	That the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth approves and delegates to the Service Directors for Economy and Growth and Education, Skills and Learning: a) the procurement of the Connect to Work Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programme in Herefordshire; and b) the award of a contract to the successful bidder for a term of up to 3 years and 6 months, commencing in October 2026, with a contract value of up to £1.22 million; and c) Delegates operational responsibility for the delivery of the Connect to Work programme in Herefordshire.
Reason for the decision	As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50055660
Options considered	1. Option 1: Do not procure an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) provider and do not participate in the Connect to Work programme. The advantages of this would be that there would be no requirement for procurement activity or contract management. The disadvantages of this option are: a) Herefordshire residents with health conditions, disabilities and complex barriers to employment would not have access to the additional support and funded provision available through the Connect to Work programme. b) The council would lose the opportunity to secure significant external funding to support employment outcomes and economic inclusion. c) The council would be unable to contribute fully to national and local objectives relating to economic inactivity, employment and skills. 2. This option is rejected as it would result in Herefordshire residents missing out on a nationally funded employment support programme and would not support the council's objectives to improve employment outcomes and inclusive growth. 3. Option 2: Deliver the IPS service directly through the

	council without procuring an external specialist provider. The advantages of this would be that the council would have direct control over service delivery and performance and there would be a potential opportunity to align more closely with existing council services. The disadvantages of this option are: a) The council does not currently have the specialist IPS workforce, infrastructure, systems or experience required to deliver the service at the scale and pace required by the programme. b) Significant recruitment, training and operational setup costs would be incurred. c) Greater financial and delivery risk would rest with the council. d) Delivery timescales may be adversely impacted, risking achievement of programme milestones and outcomes. 4. This option is rejected as procuring a specialist provider offers the most cost-effective and efficient route to mobilise delivery within required timescales while ensuring access to established IPS expertise and proven delivery models. 5. The recommended option is to procure a specialist provider to deliver the IPS service. This option is recommended as it provides the best balance of value for money, delivery capability, compliance with programme requirements and achievement of employment outcomes for eligible residents. It enables the council to access specialist expertise, minimise delivery risks and maximise the benefits of external programme funding for Herefordshire residents.
Declarations of interest (see ▪ below)	None declared.
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	29 October 2026

Councillor: Cabinet member economy and growth (Councillor Graham Biggs)	Date 23 October 2026
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- a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the member which relates to the decision;
- and
- in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted.

