

**Written statement of a key decision**  
**Cabinet**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Approval for Herefordshire Adoption Service to join Adoption Central England (ACE) regional adoption agency</b>
Decision maker	Cabinet Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: <a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251</a>
Date of decision	28 February 2019
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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 a decision that Herefordshire join Adoption Central England (ACE) regional adoption agency (RAA) jointly with Warwickshire, Solihull, Coventry and Worcestershire local authorities in accordance with central government expectation that all local authorities are part of a RAA by 2020.
<b>Decision</b>	<b>That:</b> <b>(a) Herefordshire adoption service joins Adoption Central England (ACE) regional adoption agency with effect from 1 July 2019; and</b> <b>(b) the Director of Children and Families be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to complete the</b>

	<b>partnership and hosting legal agreements with ACE.</b>
Reason for the decision	As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at <a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50028555">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50028555</a>
Options considered	<p>1. Do nothing. The Department for Education published 'Regionalising adoption' in June 2015 and 'Adoption: A vision for change' in March 2016, outlining plans to radically redesign the whole adoption system - the structures, systems and workforce. In order to deliver their vision new service models were proposed, delivered through Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) working together to deliver adoption services. All councils are required to be part of a RAA, or to have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA by 2020. If we do not join an RAA the available pool of adopters available to match children from Herefordshire with is likely to reduce resulting in potential delay for children and financial and reputational risk for the council.</p> <p>2. Join a different RAA. Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire are both part of Adoption West RAA. It is not proposed that we join this RAA as these counties are not part of the West Midlands region and increasingly children's social care are working collaboratively with other authorities in the region on a range of issues. Powys and Monmouthshire are both in Wales which operates a different legal framework to England. Shropshire are part of a joint service with Telford and Wrekin, Stoke and Staffordshire councils. It could be an option to apply to join this RAA however Herefordshire has worked closely with Worcestershire for many years and demographics are more similar to the ACE councils.</p>
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	6 March 2019

Councillor: .....	Date 28 February 2019
Leader of the Council (Councillor JG Lester)	

- 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 by the relevant local authority's head of paid service.