

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet member children and families

Title	Strengthening the recruitment of Council Foster Carers
Decision maker	Cabinet member children and families 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	22 January 2021
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 the business case for investment in commissioned marketing and engagement services to strengthen the council's in-house fostering service, increasing the number of general and specialist foster carers and reduce the reliance on the more costly IFA (independent fostering agency) sector in line with Herefordshire's County Plan and Children and Young People's Plan.
Decision	<p>That:</p> <p>(a) the business case described within paragraphs 9-37 is approved;</p> <p>(b) a contract is openly tendered for the provision of a</p>

	professional marketing and engagement service, at a value of up to £261k over up to five-years for award by the Director for Children and Families under the Chief Executive's scheme of delegation, which authorizes that commissioning for children's services may be undertaken by the Director for Children and Families, and following the council's Contract Procedure rules.
Reason for the decision	As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50036006
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing. There is no evidence to suggest that continuing 'as-is' would increase the number of new fostering household approvals. 2. Invest additional resources into the in-house fostering service to form a small dedicated marketing and engagement team. This could involve expanding the existing 1.5fte marketing and recruitment officer roles and introduction of a new fostering marketing and engagement lead. Aside from new investment into staffing, team resources would include other running costs, with total team spend estimated at £120k per year. The service has previously had some difficulty in recruiting to and retaining marketing roles, which could also be an issue for a dedicated team.
Declarations of interest (see below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	28 January 2021

Councillor:	Date 22 January 2021
Cabinet member children and families (Councillor Felicity Norman)	

- 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.