

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet

Title	Peterchurch Primary School Rebuild
Decision maker	Cabinet 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	27 October 2022
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.
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 rebuilding of Peterchurch Primary School on its existing site.
Decision	That: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Planning permission be sought for the rebuild of Peterchurch Primary School on its current site; (b) Subject to securing planning consent, the rebuild of Peterchurch Primary School, at a capacity of 140 pupils plus 26 nursery places, and to include provision of a nurture hub be approved within a budget of £10.853m including fees and contingency; (c) A period of 12 months is allowed for the school and Parish Council to seek a viable arrangement to fund and maintain a new replacement swimming pool, with delegated authority given to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with Corporate Director, Children and Young People and Cabinet Members for Commissioning, Procurement and Assets and Children's and Family Services, and Young People's

	<p>Attainment, to consider and decide any business case put forward;</p> <p>(d) In the absence of a viable business case in recommendation (c), the demolition and making good of the swimming pool site be approved within the budget;</p> <p>(e) Delegated responsibility for award of procured contracts for the lifecycle of the project, is given to the Corporate Director, Children and Young People; and</p> <p>(f) The Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning, be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the above.</p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mglssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50042954</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing – not recommended, A programme of maintenance work will need to be carried out over the next three years at a cost of approx. £600K, which is a significant amount of the modest maintenance grant supplied by government. In addition to planned work the council would expect to incur further costs for reactive work in line with the previous three years. Given the extent of the dilapidation at the school, further health and safety issues could arise for which the council could be held liable. Children will continue to learn in an unsuitable environment. 2. Close the school – not recommended. The council would have to follow the statutory process as defined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which has additional requirements when considering the closure of a rural school. This is a long 5 stage process which will include a published consultation with clear rationale for the closure, alternative options and the impact on the community to name just a few matters that would need to be addressed. There is no capacity in the neighbouring schools to accommodate all the children currently on roll at Peterchurch Primary School, additional capacity would therefore need to be provided – at a cost. The nearest five primary schools are 4.9, 5.3, 6.8, 7.2 and 7.6 miles away from Peterchurch which would involve providing transport to enable the children to attend, this would again come at a cost and would have an impact on the environment. Given the above, it would be hard to justify that Peterchurch Primary School is no longer required and the only option is the closure of the school. 3. Acquire a new site adjacent to Fairfield High School and rebuild Peterchurch Primary School there – this option has been explored in great detail and has been deemed as unviable. A study identified that significant transport and drainage infrastructure would be required. In addition, there

was a lack of support from the local parish and schools.

4. Build the school as a full form of entry (30 per year group, 210 capacity) - This is not recommended at this time. There are capital cost benefits to building the extra capacity now compared to the future. For example, to build it now would cost £741k compared to 5 years' time when it is estimated it will cost £873k. However, this additional capacity is not projected to be required in the Golden Valley in the near future. Should the additional classrooms be built and the school not fill, this would become a financial burden on the school as it would have to pay business rates on the unused space and keep the additional space maintained. In the alternative, if the space was to fill, due to parental preference for example, this could make other schools in the Golden Valley unviable.
5. The Nurture Hub is not included in the initial rebuild - Although this would save £328k in construction costs, this is not recommended. The proposed Nurture Hub would offer a resource to offer intensive early intervention for children in the Golden Valley with social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The aim would be to use the model currently being piloted in other geographical areas of the county. The nearest hub currently is in Ross-on-Wye and the travel costs to get children to Ross-on-Wye would exceed the cost of the Nurture Hub provision.
6. There are a number of options for the swimming pool:
 - I. Do nothing –this is not recommended. The existing pool suffers from a number of functional, maintenance and condition issues. Due to the lack of building and pool insulation, the pool can only be used seasonally (3 months a year). The existing slab is cracked and in poor condition in several areas. Visually, the pool is located on the front aspect of the school and would look very much out of place next to the modern new school.
 - II. Replace the roof and update changing area – this is not recommended, it doesn't demonstrate best value for money in comparison to a new build. This option would not bring the pool up to passivhaus standards and the pool could still only be used seasonally (slightly longer at 4-5 months), as the pool will remain poorly insulated.
 - III. Demolish the pool – this should be considered in the absence of a viable business case. The existing swimming pool was, prior to COVID, used seasonally by Peterchurch Primary School, and four other local schools. However, the other schools have not returned since restrictions were removed, therefore the viability of a pool needs to be fully explored, by the school, so that it doesn't become a financial burden.

Declarations of interest (see ▪ below)	None
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	2 November 2022

Councillor: Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Liz Harvey)	Date 27 October 2022
--	----------------------

- 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.