

# Agenda

## Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 14 September 2017**

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Time: **2.45 pm**

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Place: **The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

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Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Sarah Smith on (01432) 260176 or e-mail [sarah.smith1@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.smith1@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet**

## **Membership**

**Chairman**                      **Councillor AW Johnson**  
**Vice-Chairman**              **Councillor JG Lester**

**Councillor H Bramer**  
**Councillor BA Durkin**  
**Councillor DG Harlow**  
**Councillor PD Price**  
**Councillor P Rone**  
**Councillor NE Shaw**

## Agenda

	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
<b>3. MINUTES</b> To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2017.	11 - 20
<b>4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b> To receive questions from members of the public. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Monday 11 September 2017. Please submit questions to: <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i>	
<b>5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</b> To receive questions from councillors. <i>Deadline for receipt of questions is 5:00pm on Monday 11 September 2017. Please submit questions to: <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>.</i>	
<b>6. FUTURE USE OF CHILDREN CENTRE BUILDINGS</b> To agree the future management, use and operation of children centre buildings.	21 - 46



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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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The Chairman or an attendee at the meeting must take the signing in sheet so it can be checked when everyone is at the assembly point.

## Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and six other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Councillor AW Johnson (Leader) (Conservative)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Councillor JG Lester (Deputy Leader) (Conservative)	Young People and Children's Wellbeing
Councillor H Bramer (Conservative)	Contracts and Assets
Councillor BA Durkin (Conservative)	Transport and Roads
Councillor DG Harlow (Conservative)	Economy and Corporate Services
Councillor NE Shaw (Conservative)	Finance, Housing and ICT
Councillor P Rone (Conservative)	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor PD Price (Conservative)	Infrastructure

The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

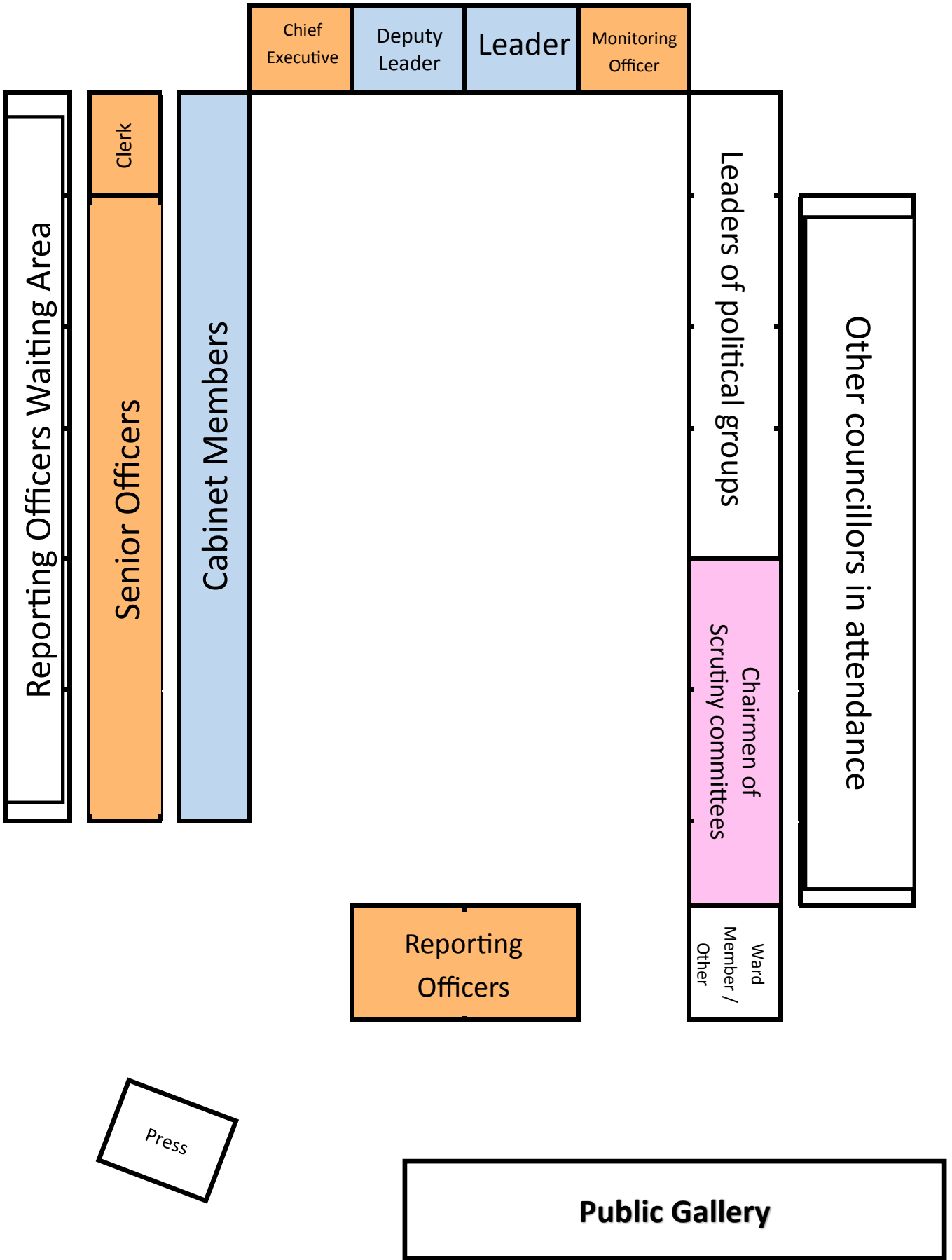
### Who attends cabinet meetings?

On the next page you will find a layout plan of the room showing who is sitting where. Coloured nameplates are used which correspond to the colours on the plan as follows:

Pale blue	Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
Orange	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
Pink	Chairmen of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
White	Political group leaders – attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion
	Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.









Herefordshire Council

**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Council Chamber -  
The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on  
Thursday 27 July 2017 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)  
Councillors H Bramer, JG Lester, P Rone and NE Shaw

Group leaders in attendance Councillors RI Matthews and AJW Powers

Scrutiny chairmen in attendance Councillors WLS Bowen and J Stone

Other councillors in attendance: Councillors PE Crockett, J Hardwick and EPJ Harvey

Officers in attendance: Geoff Hughes, Martin Samuels, Chris Baird, Claire Ward and Josie Rushgrove

**19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Harlow, Morgan and Price.

Councillor Price arrived during discussion of agenda item 9.

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bowen declared an interest in relation to agenda item 11 as the council appointee to an outside body.

On announcement of the preferred bidder for the council's development and regeneration programme contract under agenda item 8, Councillor Rone declared an interest as the council appointee to Herefordshire Housing Limited. He withdrew from the meeting during discussion of this item and did not take part in the vote.

**21. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No questions were received.

## **23. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

No questions were received.

## **24. YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

The cabinet member for young people and children's wellbeing introduced the report. He stated that it was right for the council to have a specific strategy for vulnerable young people transitioning to adulthood which included young people with disabilities and Looked After Children (LAC). The cabinet member highlighted the long term vision, phased approach and clear principles which were at the heart of the strategy.

The strategic wellbeing and housing manager summarised the report. He noted that the focus of the strategy was on increasing the availability of targeted and supported housing for three groups: looked after children and care leavers including unaccompanied asylum seeking children, disabled young people transitioning to adulthood and disabled children living with their families. Each of the groups had different needs. It was noted that there was some difficulty in projecting with confidence how many individuals within each group would need targeted housing and that work was taking place to improve understanding of future need. Some consultation and engagement had already taken place but more was required and would continue during the implementation of the strategy.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT noted that units of supported accommodation were expected to be created as a result of the council's agreement to forego its entitlement to capital income when Herefordshire Housing Limited disposed of properties. He asked if there were a timetable for delivery of these units and whether this matched up with the potential savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The strategic wellbeing and housing manager confirmed that the two were aligned in general but further work was needed to map this out in detail.

Group leaders were asked for their comments.

The leader of the Herefordshire Independents group asked for clarification on the risks identified in relation to national policy changes to enhanced housing benefit.

The strategic wellbeing and housing manager explained that where a housing provider was required to provide enhanced or intensive housing management the costs were generally met through a claim for enhanced housing benefit. The Government had announced that this system would end in March 2019 to be replaced by a grant stream to the council for it to fund supported housing discretely. The grant received would be based on an estimate of need. Details of the new scheme were awaited but there was concern that the council might not have the data required to accurately project the level of need. Work was being undertaken to improve data collection and analysis to mitigate this risk.

The group leader then asked whether having an efficient system in place would have benefits for other services. The manager responded that this was possible as the council would directly control the grant stream and have the opportunity to manage it in a complimentary way to the support and care provided at home for vulnerable people. However there was no reason to believe that the new system would lead to additional funds becoming available.

The leader of the It's Our County group raised the following points:

- whether the additional supported housing provided would be available in the communities of the vulnerable young people being targeted;

- what impact there might be on the mix of young people previously supported through the Supported Housing for Young People Project (SHYPP);
- whether the strategy would address the needs of young people and their families who had previously accessed respite services offered by 1 Ledbury Road;
- whether the merger of Herefordshire Housing and Shropshire Housing would have any impact on the strategy;
- whether the co-location of housing for young people with housing for older residents had been considered.

In response it was noted that:

- there was a tendency for a disproportionate amount of development to take place in the city, partly because this was what was asked for by young people and their families in order to access required facilities, but that there would be developments elsewhere;
- there would be situations where it would not be appropriate for young people to be housed within their original community;
- the three SHYPP foyers in Hereford, Ross and Leominster would continue, the contract with SHYPP had been renegotiated so that about 50% of their accommodation units would focus on care leavers with moderate support needs, the remainder of the units would continue to support young people at risk of homelessness who were not care leavers;
- the report did not include specific reference to the impact on respite care but the strategic wellbeing and housing officer would consult with officers in children's wellbeing and provide further information;
- in some cases disabled young people may have custom built solutions which would impact on respite need;
- the merger of Herefordshire Housing and Shropshire Housing was expected to provide enhanced opportunities to develop supported housing, Shropshire Housing had a strong track record in supported housing and used a wider range of models than had historically been used in Herefordshire;
- the potential to co-locate supported housing for adults and young people was known but services would need to have the breadth of skills to support all of the different needs;
- one model which could be used was the home share model where an older person with a spare bedroom provided accommodation for a young person at a reduced rent in return for a level of support and companionship, this scheme already operated in a small way in Herefordshire and was included in the shared lives scheme.

**Resolved that:**

**(a) the accommodation strategy for vulnerable young people in Herefordshire at appendix 1 be approved.**

## **25. CENTRAL HEREFORD: ONE PUBLIC ESTATE**

The cabinet member for contracts and assets introduced the report. He stated that the potential to work with other public sector organisations was an exciting prospect. The construction of the city link road would provide opportunities for significant regeneration and redevelopment of historically underused land.

The strategic property manager spoke to the report. He highlighted the alternative option to the one public estate (OPE) approach would be to deal with sites on a piecemeal basis as and when they were released. The OPE approach would maximise opportunities through a planned and co-ordinated strategy and leverage national funding

and technical support. The OPE programme would take a medium to long term view of how best to realise the council's overarching objectives and those of its partners. One Herefordshire was a group of public sector organisations comprising Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Wye Valley NHS Trust, West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

Initial funding of £285k had been awarded to support technical and feasibility reports on potential projects within the county. The report sought approval to progress and undertake this work in relation to a number of key potential developments within Hereford city.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT asked if further funding might be made available in future years for either the potential schemes set out in the report or other schemes which might arise. The strategic property manager responded that the £285k was an initial tranche and that the council could bid for future OPE funding. There were usually two windows per year for bids.

Group leaders were invited to comment on behalf of their group.

The group leader of the Herefordshire Independents group commented that:

- it was an interesting proposal and his group supported a number of the sites being explored, in particular the use of land at merton meadow car park for a joint public service hub and the creation of a transport hub at the railway station;
- the land at the bus station should be used for a multi storey car park to support hospital parking;
- the council should seek to get value for money from its sites.

The leader of the It's Our County group commented that the joint service hub at merton meadow was a sensible proposal but that care should be taken that there should be no detriment to other proposals for that wider site. He also commented that while there may be support for the GP hub from the CCG and from GPs, many residents were upset at the potential loss of their local facility.

The cabinet member for contracts and assets commented that the feasibility studies to be undertaken would examine the options for each site in detail and that future reports would set out the preferred development options.

**Resolved that:**

- (a) Detailed consideration is given to the allocation of land under the One Public Estate (OPE) programme for development each of which will require business case assessments. The identified sites are as follows:**
- **Land at Merton Meadow car park (identified at A in appendix 1) for use as a joint public service hub**
  - **Land adjacent to Hereford rail station (identified at B in appendix 1) for use as a GP facility**
  - **Land adjacent to Hereford rail station (identified at C in appendix 1) for use as a transport hub**
  - **Land at either Station Approach or the Bus Station (identified at D in appendix 1) for use as key worker/student accommodation or a multi storey car park**
- (b) the director economy, communities and corporate be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary, utilising the £285k One Public Estate grant funding and other approved budgets, negotiating with partners to progress option appraisal and feasibility work necessary to inform the development of detailed business cases on these sites.**

## **26. AWARDING THE CONTRACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME**

The cabinet member for contracts and assets introduced the report. He noted that the announcement of the development partner was the culmination of many months of work. He stated that this was one of the most important areas that the council could consider at a time when there was a need both to protect the future of the council and to look at ways of best investing significant resources the council may be obtaining.

The programme director housing and growth noted that the procurement process had taken around 12 months. The partnership was being promoted as a huge opportunity for the council to raise capital, deliver revenue receipts and to contribute towards housing growth targets. The partnership would support the One Public Estate programme and economic development.

The interim procurement manager announced that as a result of the final tender evaluation Keepmoat Homes Limited were recommended as the preferred bidder.

The programme director housing and growth explained that a standstill period would follow the announcement during which all the bidders would be able to review the results and place challenges. As a result only limited information could be released at this stage. The council would look to sign an overarching agreement with the development partner in September 2017. A development programme would be put together, taking account of known land opportunities already discussed. The final say on which sites were included in the programme would remain with the cabinet.

It was noted that the contract with the development partner would place the financial risk on the developer. The programme would be managed by the programme director housing and growth and supported by both internal resources and commissioning of tasks through the property services department on a case by case basis. The longer term aim would be to fund any additional capacity needed through appropriate capitalisation of costs. The programme director was confident that the resources would be in place to manage the programme effectively.

The group leaders were invited to make comments on behalf of their group.

The leader of the Herefordshire Independents asked if Keepmoat Homes Limited had been involved in similar schemes elsewhere in the country. It was confirmed that the model proposed for Herefordshire had been used by other councils such as Flintshire and Liverpool City Council and that a number of councils were in the process of setting up such models. Keepmoat Homes had a reputation for making long term regeneration commitments. Details of areas where they had worked previously would be supplied in writing.

The group leader commented that the programme would need a considerable amount of officer time and resource to ensure that it was properly managed. The leader of the council agreed with this assessment and stated that the programme director would have the necessary support.

The group leader asked who would set the profit level under the proposed contract. The interim procurement manager explained that the developer had bid a fixed level of profit as their reward for taking on the risk but the profit level could be varied depending on the final contractual model used. The current model in the contract set out a guaranteed land value for the council which would only increase if sales increased or costs decreased. If sales decreased or costs increased, this would be borne by the development partner.

It was confirmed that the contract with the development partner would not preclude the council pursuing independent development opportunities outside the programme. The cabinet would have the final say on which sites were included in the programme.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT stated that the issue of sufficient resource to manage the programme had been discussed by cabinet members and would continue to be kept under scrutiny. He asked for clarification that while the development programme would contribute to the target of 800 homes for Hereford city, it was not specifically a Hereford city centre contract and would be used across the county.

The cabinet member for contracts and assets confirmed that the programme would include sites across the county.

The group leader of It's Our County made the following points:

- his group were pleased to see that local labour and supply chains would be targeted, he hoped that these targets would be achieved;
- he asked if it was possible to say what the extent of the development partner's contribution would be towards the housing target for Hereford city centre; and
- whether the development partner would have preferential treatment over other developers when sites across the county came forward for development.

The programme director responded that the volume of work to be undertaken by the development partner was down to the council. A lot of the land in the area designated for the urban village was privately owned and would come to the market as development happened. Other opportunities would therefore exist for the wider development market to access these pieces of land. The development partner could also acquire additional land themselves but they would not wish to overstretch themselves in terms of their development programme and there was no automatic right to every piece of land in the council's ownership. The target of 800 homes was quite widely spread and would not all be delivered on land in the urban village.

The programme director confirmed that performance indicators would be agreed with the development partner in terms of local labour contracts and that there would be ongoing monitoring.

The leader commented that there needed to be a focus on what gave the best return and best value for money. The council would use local contractors where possible but the scale of some pieces of work might require contractors of a certain size.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT queried whether the exempt appendix 5 would be able to be published once the contracts had been signed. The monitoring officer confirmed that the exempt appendices would be made public as far as possible once the information contained in them was no longer confidential.

**Resolved that:**

- a) the highest scoring tender Keepmoat be appointed as the preferred bidder to work in partnership to deliver the council's development and regeneration programme;**
- b) the director for economy, communities and corporate having consulted with the chief financial officer and cabinet member contracts and assets, and having received satisfactory confirmation of tender commitments, be authorised to complete contractual arrangements with Keepmoat for a period of 10 years;**
- c) in the event that satisfactory confirmation of tender commitments is not received from the preferred bidder, the director for economy, communities and**



- corporate, following consultation with the chief financial officer and cabinet member for contracts and assets and having received satisfactory confirmation of tender commitments, be authorised to enter into the contract for the development and regeneration programme with the second highest bidder ('the reserve bidder');
- d) following completion of contractual arrangements options appraisal and business cases for development of the former Bromyard depot and the Hereford station approach sites be brought forward for consideration as the first phase sites; and
- e) thanks are extended to all bidders for the courteous, prompt and productive way in which they have all participated in the procurement.

## 27. END OF MAY CORPORATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT introduced the report. He stated that this was the first report of the current financial year and that the projected overspend of £1.85m was mainly due to:

- an increase in LAC since the budget had been set;
- savings in relation to LAC having not been fully realised at this stage; and
- increases in the numbers of nursing client placements with physical support needs.

The cabinet member noted that 58% of performance measures were showing a positive shift compared to the same period in the previous year. He highlighted points for each directorate:

### Adults Wellbeing

- a programme to implement assistive technology to support clients with learning disabilities was underway which would allow users to maintain independent lives within the community rather than have to live in residential placements;

### Children's Wellbeing

- the majority of new social work assessments were completed within the statutory timescales;

### Economy, Communities and Corporate

- the new economic strategy had been launched;
- the city centre link road was expected to be completed by the end of the year;
- the council's new website had won two awards and had been given a four star better connected score from SOCITM.

The group leaders were invited to make comments on behalf of their group.

The leader of the Herefordshire Independent's group noted the reduction in the use of agency staff and the improvement in the completion of social work assessments within statutory timescales. He asked if there was any particular reason for the increase in the number of LAC and what had caused the percentage of referrals accepted for assessment to be too low.

The cabinet member for young people and children's wellbeing responded that Herefordshire had a historically high number of LAC and that plans were in place to reassess individual circumstances to see if children needed to remain looked after or if other arrangements would be more appropriate. The number of children who would need to become looked after was not an easy thing to predict and the council had to react to events as they unfolded.

The interim director of children's wellbeing explained that having a higher percentage of referrals accepted would indicate that the thresholds for referral were understood and that appropriate evidence was being presented. Work needed to be done with the police and other partners to make sure the criteria were understood.

The leader of the It's Our County group asked:

- where the £18m income into the ECC directorate was included and what it was being spent on;
- what the predicted shortfall was by 2019 between council tax revenue and business rates income, in relation to the loss of the core grant;
- whether the council had a view on the analysis presented at the LGA conference by Grant Thornton, the council's external auditors, which indicated that the ECC directorate spent more in comparison with other authorities on its own running costs and that the adults and children's directorates spent less than comparator authorities; and
- whether the council would enfold the data from the recently published report 'understanding county economies' produced on behalf of the county council network into its assessments, the report showed a great deal of data that showed Herefordshire in a far worse position than the councils own data.

The leader of the council stated that he had not yet read the report produced for the county council network but that once he had this would be shared with cabinet colleagues and the cabinet would take such action as it deemed appropriate.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT undertook to provide a written response to the group leader on the other points raised.

**Resolved that:**

- (a) performance for the first two months of 2017/18 and projected financial outturn are reviewed and cabinet determines any additional actions required to achieve improvement; and**
- (b) £200k be vired from the waste management budget to the community services budget.**

## **28. JOINT CUSTOMER SERVICES HUB - BUDGET UPDATE**

The director for economy, communities and corporate introduced the report. He stated that the project made good use of a building, would bring a positive net return to the council of £1m over the next 10 years and was a good example of co-locating services in a city centre building to enhance a range of customer services for the public. It was disappointing was that the original costing and the process by which the original costs were derived were incorrect.

A number of weaknesses had been identified in cost planning and monitoring of the project. A detailed review of the project was being undertaken by the council's internal auditors. The outcome of the review would be reported to the audit and governance committee in September. It was expected that there would be a number of learning points.

The cabinet member for financial management and ICT asked for confirmation that the SCAPE framework used for the project would not be acceptable under the new constitution of the council, which had been implemented in May 2017. The monitoring officer confirmed that it would not be acceptable.

The cabinet member for young people and children's wellbeing asked whether the project would have been recommended for approval if the actual costs had been known. The director confirmed that the project still had significant benefits for customers and provided a net benefit to the council. As such it would still have been recommended for approval in spite of the higher costs.

The group leaders were invited to comment on behalf of their group.

The leader of the It's Our County group stated that the items listed in the report as responsible for the additional cost should have been anticipated. He welcomed the review of the management of the project and stressed that lessons needed to be learned as this relatively small project had exposed weaknesses which could have consequences for larger schemes.

The leader of the Herefordshire Independents group asked whether the investigation into the management of the project had been completed and if not whether it was appropriate to take the proposed decision.

The director of economy, communities and corporate explained that the council's internal auditor, South West Audit Partnership, was undertaking an investigation into the processes used and that it had not been completed. The results of the audit were expected to be reported to the audit and governance committee in September. The report currently before cabinet was about whether the joint customer services hub project should proceed, now that the full costs had been established.

The group leader stated his concerns about how the council had managed this and other property projects. He welcomed the internal audit investigation and hoped that the audit and governance committee would do an in depth investigation.

The leader of the council stated that he understood the comments made and the reasons for them, and that members of all parties shared the concerns expressed.

**Resolved that:**

- (a) £50k be allocated from the ICT revenue reserve to provide sufficient ICT equipment at Blueschool House;**
- (b) £200k be allocated from the earmarked economy, communities and corporate revenue reserve to support the increased costs;**
- (c) having regard to the continued revenue benefits identified in the revised business case, a further £720k be approved to deliver a joint customer services hub at Blueschool House, bringing the total estimated cost to £1.92m;**
- (d) the audit and governance committee be asked to identify and recommend improvement actions to strengthen property capital project management and control.**

**29. REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The leader of the It's Our County group noted that the report referenced the views expressed by group leaders. He had emphasised the difference between local and county wide strategic outside bodies. He felt that there were anomalies in the report and that while some appointments did need to be rationalised, others were of strategic value and should be reconsidered. He understood that bodies would be able to request future councillor participation if they wished that to continue.

The leader of the Herefordshire Independents asked if the policy would be reviewed at a future point. The monitoring officer responded that it was not intended that there be an annual review. The leader of the council noted that recommendations could be made in future if elements of the policy were felt not to be working.

**Resolved that:**

**(a) the draft policy for appointments to outside bodies at appendix 1 be approved; and**

**(b) having regard to that policy and the outcome of the recent consultation the council no longer make appointments to the following outside bodies:**

- The Courtyard Board Ltd
- Jarvis Educational Charity
- Kington Tourist Group
- Leominster Area Regeneration Company (LARC) Development Trust
- Leominster Museum Committee
- Leominster Udenominational Educational Charity
- Ross Charity Trustees
- Shopmobility Hereford
- Shopmobility Leominster
- Three Choirs Festival
- Coppett Hill Trust
- Encore
- Herefordshire vision links
- Welcome to our future, and
- West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association

The meeting ended at 3.37 pm

**Chairman**



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Thursday 14 September 2017</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Future use of children centre buildings</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Cabinet member contracts and assets, cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing</b>

## 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 and summary

To agree the future management, use and operation of children centre buildings.

The recommendations are based on making the most of buildings currently in the council's ownership as a resource for children and families. The proposals are based on the buildings being operated by other parties or operated by the authority where there is no obvious community delivery partner, supported by generating an earned income to contribute to costs.

The recommendations take account of the recent consultation on children centre buildings, cabinet recommendations regarding customer services and libraries and the executive response to the recommendations of the health and social care overview and scrutiny committee on early years services.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) Greencroft, Broadlands and Ledbury children centre buildings be operated by the schools on site under agreements with each school to deliver 0-5 year services including hosting health and midwife clinics;**
- (b) subject to provision being made in the 2018/19 capital programme and to reaching appropriate agreement with Ross Town Council, Ross children centre services be provided from Ross Library and the Old Chapel;**
- (c) Kingstone children centre building operated by Kes Childcare for 0-5 year services based upon reaching appropriate agreement with Kes Childcare for lease of the land and building;**
- (d) Coningsby children centre services in Leominster to be relocated to the under-utilised space at the council's multi agency office (next door) and additional activity at Leominster library;**
- (e) further to d) above, Honeybees nursery be granted a ten year lease at a rent of £16k per annum for use of Coningsby children centre;**
- (f) subject to appropriate procurement and agreement of lease terms enable part of the ground floor of Widemarsh centre for child care services; and**
- (g) the chief finance officer be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary in consultation with director children's wellbeing to implement the above recommendations within approved budgets and in accordance with the council's corporate property strategy.**

## **Alternative options**

1. An alternative option is to retain the status quo. This is not recommended as it does not reflect the changing model of service delivery, does not address the need for additional places in nurseries nor the pressures on schools for spaces, and misses the opportunity for efficiencies through shared use of sites.
2. Another alternative option is to close the children centres – creating a full saving on the running cost of buildings compensated with an outreach model based on current revenue spend by children centre services. This is not recommended as the buildings at the current time still have a role to play as places to support families and children. It would also not support community, schools and nursery need.

## Key considerations

### Background

3. Herefordshire Council cabinet approved a strategy for the development of children centres in September 2003 following a review of national childcare policy published in 2002. In 2006 councils were given the statutory duty to provide children centre services under Section 5A of the Childcare Act 2006. Since 2010, there has been a change in approach with a new “core purpose” focusing on outcomes and impacts and the removal of the requirements on centres to provide access to childcare in the most disadvantaged areas.
4. Further changes to the statutory guidance for children centre services no longer make it an explicit requirement that children centre services are building based. This potentially means all services could be withdrawn from their current buildings and delivered by outreach based on a targeted model of support. Despite this children centre buildings are still part of the Ofsted inspection, though this has not happened in Herefordshire since 2015 and the requirement is likely to be subject to announcement that children centres will not be inspected.
5. As a consequence of the changing use of buildings, revised national policy and reductions in council funding, many councils are reviewing their delivery of children centre services. In 2015 the council’s health and social care overview and scrutiny committee conducted a review – below are areas of specific relevance to this report and the executive response outlined to cabinet on the 13 October 2016:
  - Consideration is given to the use of the building space that the council has direct responsibility for to ascertain how they could be used better.  
Executive response: Accepted. Target: detail about building requirements from an early years / children centre services perspective are fed into the corporate decision making.
  - A review into the use of children centre buildings is completed to ensure that the services provided are offered in a more holistic manner for the whole age range (0-5) and meet the needs of the children and family.  
Executive response: Accepted. Target: Have a clear statement of the most relevant and cost effective approach to the use of children centre buildings.
  - Early years provision not be tied to specific buildings; this could include the unsustainable use of buildings for example being used by community groups during evenings and weekends.  
Executive response: Accepted. Target: Data and information about how services to improve outcomes can be configured differently is established and acted upon, including long term plan for children centre services.
6. Also at the 13 October 2016 cabinet, as part of the review of Customer Services and Libraries it was agreed that: “with a view to development of a longer term enhanced service model providing prevention and early help to children, families and vulnerable adults an option appraisal on the potential use of children centre buildings and libraries be undertaken along with the opportunity of creating a network of well-being hubs”.

### Children centre services

7. Appendix one gives a more detailed overview of activity that takes place in children centres. It is worth noting that children centre services cover more than the operation of buildings and includes outreach activity based on eight geographic “reach” areas of the county.

8. There are ten children centre buildings (two of which are satellite provision catering for spill-over activity). There is a concentration of centres in the more urban areas due to a combination of population base and need. By their nature the buildings seek to create a welcoming environment where families and children feel comfortable, often on a shared site with a school and/or nursery. The centres currently offer a range of functions, each with different levels of activity depending on their catchment and facilities. Increasingly activity is targeted at children and parents that need support rather than open access and universal services.
9. Only Hope Centre in Bromyard and Peterchurch are run independently of the council through separate agreements.
10. As part of a commissioned statutory service, midwife and health visitor surgeries take place requiring specialist spaces including sink, bed and access to on-line records (provided by Wye Valley NHS Trust). Also, facilities will continue to be used for supervised contact, and can be shared with specific teams within the council along with MAOs (multi agency offices).
11. There are a number of factors influencing change in the use of children centre buildings. These cover:
  - Department of Education recognising that there can be flexibility in the continued operation of children centres.
  - The county's rural geography means that outreach activity needs to take place in different areas due to parent's inability to get to central locations.
  - Need to target provision for the highest need children and families using the resources available.
  - Increase in community led programmes for universal services.
  - Demand for spaces for council and private nursery places with additional free places being made available as part of The Childcare Bill 2016 for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
  - Site development for schools due to increase in population base relating to housing provision.
  - Technology altering how and where people access advice and support especially for universal services.
  - Decrease in the need for supervised contact as the service changes its model of delivery.
12. Therefore, in understanding the factors of change and previous scrutiny / cabinet reports, the principles for the future operation of sites for early years is as below:
  - a) Families able to access children centre services through retained sites or via community venues
  - b) The buildings see an increased range of uses as a local resource for children, families and wider community use
  - c) That facilities are community led including by schools where there is a firm basis to achieve this
  - d) That other assets in the community, particularly libraries, leisure centres, schools and nurseries provide universal services for children
  - e) That sites are used to proactively support the increased demand for nursery and school places in the county
  - f) Where a service, function or office facility is displaced every effort is made for an alternative to be available for affected families
  - g) A financial consideration is factored into decision making relating to the wider responsibility of the local authority in meeting its financial obligations and priorities.



## Financing the buildings

13. The current property running costs for the premises are as below (based on average spend for 2015/16 and 2016/17):

Centres	Gross Annual Premises Costs £000	Income £000	Net Annual Premises Costs £000
Widemarsh, Hereford	63	-	63
Coningsby, Leominster	40	(2)	38
Greencroft, Hereford	40	(17)	23
Ledbury	31	-	31
Hope Bromyard	30	-	30
Ryefield, Ross	68	(2)	66
Peterchurch	12	-	12
Broadlands, Hereford	8	-	8
Kingstone, Golden Valley	8	-	8
South Meadow, Hereford	40	-	40
<b>Totals</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>319</b>

\*not a council owned building

14. Revenue spend on operational costs for children centre services (separate from the operation of the buildings) is £405,000 - the spending profile of the service will be considered in terms of a new model of delivery linked to early help and early years services.

### Recommended service change

15. The following section reviews each centre for delivery based on:
- Recommendations and findings from cabinet and scrutiny
  - Influencing factors, including changing approach of Dfe and the need for nursery and school places and how options meet the principles
  - Impact and needs assessment including feedback to consultation.
16. **Greencroft, Hereford:** to be managed by Marlbrook Primary School under a new service level agreement as part of a combined family centre that caters for children at the school and their parents, as well as the wider local community. Under the service level agreement midwife and health visitor clinics will continue as part of an integrated service within a reconfigured space that includes a MAO.
17. **Widemarsh, Hereford:** for the council to continue to operate the centre as a combined facility. To let part of the building on the ground floor to a child care provider under a commercial lease. All other services including community garden, café, forest school, community room, play nursery and health rooms to remain as existing.

18. **Kingstone:** for 0-5 year old services to continue to operate from the site run by Kes Childcare under a new lease to enable the expansion of its existing on-site operation.
19. **HOPE Centre, Bromyard:** the building retained through the independent operation of the Hope Centre subject to a future decision on the services commissioned from the council and review of lease arrangements.
20. **Broadlands, Hereford:** to be managed by Aylestone School under a service level agreement as part of a combined family centre, with provision for midwife and health visitor clinics and community activity.
21. **South Meadow, Hereford:** to recognise the current practice with the site largely operating as a supervised contact centre and base for the children's wellbeing team.
22. **Ledbury:** for the primary school to operate the building for 0-5 year old services linked to the network of buildings on site under a service level agreement to meet the future needs of the school to include midwife and health visitor clinics available along with community activity.
23. **Coningsby, Leominster:** a new lease of the children centre to Honeybees nursery to expand their nursery places to meet demand. Clinics and other children centre services to operate from underutilised space in the MAO building next door and additional universal service provision for children at Leominster library alongside health campaigns for the wider family as part of the establishment of a well being offer.
24. **Ryefield, Ross:** a long term proposal to relocate the children centre to a new school site. In the short term children centre services provision to take place at the Old Chapel under a new agreement with the town council, along with use of the library. It is also envisaged that the MAO and additional office space will be available at the Old Chapel thereby freeing the Ryefield Centre for alternative use which will be subject to a separate decision.
25. **Peterchurch:** aside from its religious function the church is currently used as a community library and children's services are provided by a voluntary pre-school group under two separate long term agreements held by the council. These agreements will continue but will be subject to future review.

## Community impact

26. Cabinet on 20 October 2016 also agreed the Early Help Strategy 2016-18 which links strongly to support for early years, based on the following:

The Early Help provided will be:

**Family focused** – and designed to address the issues of the whole household in a holistic way;

**Community focused** – drawing on the strengths and services in each locality;

**Targeted** – to ensure the right level of support at the right time;

**Multi-agency** – to reflect the complex and multi-faceted issues that families can often face;

**Aimed at building resilience in families** - to provide them with the tools and skills to help and support themselves in the future.

27. The recommendation of this report supports delivery of the council's corporate plan priorities to "secure better services, quality of life and value for money" and "keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life". Related actions are as follows:
- Work in partnership to make better use of resources, including sharing premise costs through co-location of services and local solutions for community use facilities such as libraries
  - Improve the provision of good information and signposting to enable people to support themselves and each other, getting the right help at the right time as needs change
  - Reconfigure £3.5m to deliver early years services including children centres, health visiting and school nursing to improve the health, well-being, developmental and educational outcomes of children aged 0-5 years
  - Continue to develop a range of provision that can effectively identify and respond to safeguarding risks and needs; from the initial signs of the call for early help to a range of evidence-based interventions for a variety of complex situations
  - Promote and enable access to universal opportunities and services for children with disabilities and their families and ensure a range of provisions to meet identified need.

## Equality duty

28. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
29. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.
30. Where a decision is likely to result in detrimental impact on any group with a protected characteristic it must be justified objectively. This means that attempts to mitigate the harm need to be explored. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker must balance this detrimental impact against the strength of legitimate public need to pursue the service change.
31. An impact assessment has been completed based on the original proposals used for the public consultation (see later) containing recommendation that have altered the proposition (see appendix two). Relating to specific centres recommended mitigation is summarised below:

Greencroft, Hereford:

- As part of the new arrangement instigate agreement with the school to retain services where possible, redesigning spaces to enable activities to continue and areas for midwife and health clinics

Widemarsh, Hereford:

- Retain reception function as a well used site with multi-functional use.
- Promote nursery education funded places available due to the Children's Act 2016.
- Any future partner organisation appointed through a procurement process with criteria to support the objectives of the services.

Broadlands, Hereford:

- Reconsider option that supports the sustainability of children centre services.

South Meadow, Hereford:

- Retain the sensory room and promote where relevant.

Kingstone, Golden Valley:

- Agreement with the nursery to maintain open activities where relevant.

Hope Centre, Bromyard:

- Services provided by Hope to be part of the wider review of children centre services.

Ledbury:

- Service agreement with the school to retain element of children centre services and community activity.
- Recognise that the Masters House is not a replacement for a children centre, but could support children's activities and promote them e.g. summer reading challenge etc.

Coningsby, Leominster:

- That the design of the library, including utilisation of specific space on site currently used for activities has the ability to cater for group sessions for children centre activities.

Ryefield, Ross:

- Consider expanding to the outdoor space at the library.
- Consider an opportunity to use the library exclusively for children centre services when the library is not open (each Wednesday) and an area that can be confined on occasions for certain children centre activities.
- Additional space, preferably close the library, that can be used for 0-5 years services that could cater for the MAO and storage.

## Resource implications

32. This paper is concerned with the operation of the buildings element of children centre services. How efficiencies can be achieved are shown below – these will be subject to costings though in the region of a revenue £100k to £150K saving.

Centre	Summary of delivery and results savings costs to Herefordshire Council
Greencroft, Hereford	Operated by the school with savings on site running costs, including caretaking, cleaning and utilities.
Kingstone	Operated by the nursery with savings on running costs including caretaking, cleaning and utilities.
Hope Centre, Bromyard	No saving.
Broadlands, Hereford	Operated by school with savings on running costs including cleaning and utilities.
South Meadow, Hereford	No saving.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Natalia Silver  
Tel: 01432260732, email: nsilver@herefordshire.gov.uk

Coningsby, Leominster	Income from lease and save on building costs.
Widemarsh, Hereford	Income from lease.
Ledbury	Operated by the school with savings on site running costs including caretaking, cleaning and utilities.
Ryefield Centre, Ross	Save on site running costs including caretaking, cleaning, utilities, rates and building maintenance. Offset against any additional cost for new sites (Old Chapel and Library).
Peterchurch	No saving.

33. As part of agreements occupiers will be responsible for costs and compliance.
34. Depending upon the agreements with the proposed operators of the premises, the council may also benefit from reduced capital maintenance liability and in particular may be relieved from some of the maintenance backlog.
35. Capital works are needed to fulfil the recommendations as estimated one off investments form part of a business case for capital investment. These will cover:
- Improvements to Ross Library to cater for the children centre
  - Make good relocation of services to the Old Chapel in Ross
  - Make good sites for lease
  - Change in floorplan for Leominster MAO
  - Wifi at Widemarsh centre.
36. A capital investment business case will be submitted through the council's capital programme bidding process for consideration by full council. If approved, the above capital works will be procured in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules.

## Legal implications

37. The 2000 Spending Review (Prudent for a Purpose: Building Opportunity and Security for All) outlined provision for 'one-stop' Sure Start Children Centre (SSCC), with greater local authority oversight through integration into existing children's services. The first 32 SSCCs were announced in June 2003, and a programme of expansion was set out in the 2004 multi-departmental childcare strategy. The Children Act 2004 created new duties for local authorities to plan for the provision of children's services and co-ordinate services with relevant partners.
38. Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act included amendment to the Childcare Act 2006 to introduce the requirements for local authorities based on "so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children centres to meet local need". In November 2010, the Government announced that it would remove the requirement for children centres in the most disadvantaged areas to provide full day care. It also announced the removal of the requirement for staff in centres in the most disadvantaged areas to have both qualified teacher status and early years professional status.
39. The Childcare Act 2016, introduced from September 2017, extended entitlement to 30 hours free provision - an additional 15 hours a week for working parents of three and four year olds (on top of the universal entitlement of 15 hours a week for all three and four year olds). In addition a 15 hour entitlement for the most disadvantaged two year olds.

Guidance is also expected in summer 2017 to remove the Ofsted required for inspection of children centre buildings - during this period all Ofsted inspections of children centres across the country have been ceased.

40. An additional consideration is the investment made in children centre from Dfe funds. There could be the risk of clawback which has happened in some areas, but if the alternative arrangements are considered reasonable this is unlikely.
41. Terms for the reoccupation of the Old Chapel will need to be agreed with Ross Town Council. The building is in the ownership of the town council after an asset transfer from Herefordshire Council though currently untenanted. Similarly lease agreements will need to be finalised with proposed and potential occupants and a decision made to finalise terms.
42. Suitable agreement in place with the schools to ensure continuation of 0-5 year services.

## Risk management

43. Risks relating to the implementation of the recommendation are as follows.

<b>Risk / opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Reduced service having an impact on the most vulnerable families.	There are statutory requirements to support families, specifically young parents and a referral process if families need intervention. Outreach services will focus on reaching families and services will constitute to operate or operate from alternative local sites.
Residual risk: Likely: 2*	Impact: 4*
That the savings are not realised as only estimates.	The savings are outline costs which will be further tested and developed for a decision if needed.
Residual risk: Likely: 2	Impact: 3
Schools and nurseries will not take on facilities.	Outline discussions have taken place with relevant schools and nurseries who have expressed an interest in the proposals. If the recommendations are agreed by cabinet, terms will be completed.
Residual risk: Likely: 2	Impact: 3
Community ran centres (Hope and Peterchurch) cannot be sustainable without council funding.	The bulk of funding to the Hope Centre is via Children Well Being commission which will be subject to a further decision.
Residual risk Likely: 3	Impact: 3

\* out of five

## Consultees

44. Group leaders were consulted on the proposals between 9 June and 10 July 2017, sent to group leaders and promoted via ward member updates on the 14 June 2017. The key responses were based on:
- The split between using the MAO and Leominster Library looks feasible. Allowing the nursery to expand is a positive move to provide needed spaces.
  - Development of Leominster Library as well being hub is a positive move as it enables the library to become a more sustainable multi use space. In its present location there is more than enough space for development at the library. There is scope for both a dedicated meeting room for one to one consultations with universal and non-universal service providers, as well as a specific information access point for WISH and Herefordshire Council.
  - Going forward, we would like to see the library’s potential developed further to include a wider range of non-universal and community led activities and classes for children, family, adult learning and job skills etc. as part of the reconfiguration of services.
45. The options for children centre buildings formed a consultation aimed at current users of children centres which ran from 12 June and 17 July 2017. There were 513 responses from across the centres with the highest proportion of response from Widemarsh centre at 40%. The feedback has influenced the recommended service changes outlined above based on comments and responses to the proposals in the consultation. Full response available from: [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ccbuildings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ccbuildings).

Centre	Agree	Don't agree	% agree	% don't agree
Greencroft, Hereford	180	51	78%	22%
Widemarsh, Hereford	144	113	56%	44%
Broadlands, Hereford	86	106	45%	55%
South Meadow, Hereford	178	18	91%	9%
Kingstone, Golden Valley	144	25	85%	15%
Hope Centre, Bromyard	208	14	94%	6%
Ledbury	120	61	66%	34%
Coningsby, Leominster	114	67	63%	37%
Ryefield, Ross	75	121	38%	62%
Peterchurch, Golden Valley	142	15	90%	10%

Note: respondees commented on different sites not just designated centre.

46. Separate comments were also received by users of Broadlands children centre.
47. As part of the early years integration project a consultation exercise took place to gather public and professional views on early year’s services. A public survey took place between 21 November 2016 and 13 January 2017 (236 responses); followed by professional discussions (19 meetings); parent and carer discussions (6 parent discussions).
48. As part of the survey the question was asked “as a parent or carer, you may sometimes need help from different professionals. If you want advice and guidance, would you ask / visit the following?” The results found respondees would seek advice and guidance from families and friends 90%; from a GP 82%; health visitor 74%; others who have had a similar experience 72% or from a school 70%.

49. The principles for future delivery of early years facilities was tested with the Early Years Strategy Group (of child care professionals as part of the council and external) on 23 March 2017. The feedback included support for cross generation activity in centres recognising the role grandparents play in supporting children; that opportunities should be open to the community to operate centres; that one model does not fit all sites and should reflect the distinct needs of each community.
50. Initial discussions have taken place with the following:
  - Ross Town Council
  - Marlbrook Primary School
  - Aylestone School
  - Ledbury Primary School
  - Honeybees nursery
  - Kes Childcare
  - Early Years Strategy Group Board
  - The Early Years Review Engagement workshop

## **Appendices**

51. Appendix 1: Profile of children centre services
52. Appendix 2: Children centre buildings impact assessment 2017

## **Background papers**

53. None identified



## Profile of Services

### 1. Introduction

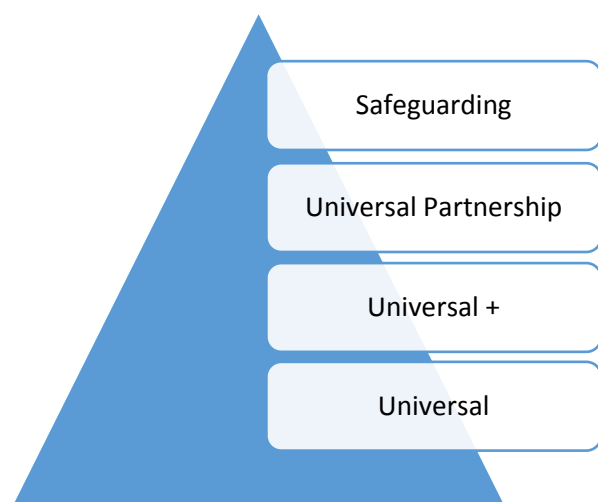
Children Centre Services are primarily based on supporting 0-5 year old children and their families. The services include physical locations of Ofsted registered children centres within a designated reach area and an outreach service to target hard to reach families.

The core purpose of children centre services is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need in areas of:

- child development and school readiness
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- child and family health and life chances (midwife and health visitor clinics)

Other requirements of the service provision include:

- Parent and family support – targeted intervention for families who need support
- Adult learning duty and economic well being – support and advice to parents on learning and employment, links with Jobcentre Plus
- Information, advice and guidance for parents on childcare and free nursery education



The services can be split into four areas of work as illustrated left – the more intense the work the fewer children are involved but higher level of intervention.

There are 8 children centre reach areas in the county (north city, south city, Ledbury, Kington, Ross, Golden Valley, Leominster, and Bromyard). With the exception of Bromyard which is externally commissioned the others are managed by 6 Local Service Co-ordinators (LSC) and are overseen by the Early Years Policy and Strategy Manager. The LSC role is to co-ordinate the core purpose to families with children 0-5 years alongside 8 FTE centre workers which cover the whole Herefordshire service.

Whilst outreach activities as part of the children centre services will take place in community centres, village halls, direct delivery in families homes, childcare provisions, church halls etc.; this report is concerned with the facilities for early years.

### 2. Current Children Centres locations

There are 10 sites registered as children centres buildings (2 of which are satellite centres) providing and hosting a range of services – their scale of activity will depend on their catchment and facilities. As illustrated below, some include MAOs (multi-agency office accommodation) for use by any officer within the local authority; specific office accommodation for adults and children; and provision for adults with learning difficulties (referred to as LD). Targeted provision relates to referred services such as nursery or parenting course where some support is needed.

The Midwife and Health Visitor clinics are an integrated service provided at early years facilities with purpose built health rooms that include a NHS computer, sink and bed. Speech and language sessions are also run from some children centres. The children centres facilities also provide a venue for supervised contact either organised by the local authority for a looked after child or organised independently as part of a court order.

A summary is below with further details following.

Site	MAO	Health visitors & midwives	Supervised contact	LD provision	Private Nursery on site	Community hire room / use	Targeted provision	Children's team	Adult's team
Greencroft, Hereford	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Widemarsh, Hereford		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Kingstone		✓			✓				
HOPE, Bromyard	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Broadlands, Hereford		✓							
South Meadow, Hereford			✓					✓	
Ledbury		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Coningsby, Leominster		✓			✓				
Ryefield, Ross	✓	✓		✓					✓
Peterchurch						✓			

Each profile includes a sample of use for November 2016 and March 2017 based on the following. This is sessions rather than individuals, so could include a child or parent making use of the services more than once depending on need:

**Health and life chances** – antenatal sessions, breastfeeding support, counselling, health visitors, healthy lifestyles training, postnatal, supervised contact, baby yoga / yoga in pregnancy, paediatric care, speech and language group and clinic, etc.

**Parenting aspirations** – English and IT courses, parents with prospects crèche, parents with prospects level 1 and 2, young parents group, etc.

**School readiness** – bookstart, childminders group, cooking, fit kids, forest school, foster carer stay and play, lets play groups, soft play, sensory room, sing and sign, etc.

## 2.1 Greencroft, Hereford

The centre in South Wye of Hereford on the Marlbrook Primary School site services an area of high population, set up with funding from the Council and Sure Start (Dfe). The school uses a large element of the space for reception class, social care supervised contact takes place on the site as does midwife, health visitor and speech and language clinics. There is also an MAO (2 bookable spaces) on site and dedicated spaces for family support staff and social workers (8 non bookable spaces).

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	249	35	486
March 2017	225	26	378

## 2.2 Widemarsh, Hereford

This is a well used and well resourced centre established in 2009. It is used by the Portage Team (2 FTE), health visitors, midwives, speech and language, adult learning, parenting courses, supervised contact as well as targeted nursery provision. As a shared site, there is a community garden and kitchen operated by people with learning difficulties. It also has a large room for use / hire by partners of children services. Car parking is available but limited for larger events.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	578	91	997
March 2017	629	79	1142

## 2.3 Kingstone

A double portacabin based on land owned by Herefordshire Council with the Kingstone Academy site. One half of the portacabin is used by a thriving day nursery (Kes Childcare), and the other is the children centre. Children centre services deliver very little from this site although services such as midwifery and health visitors use it several times a week for clinics.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	44	0	140
March 2017	46	0	121

## 2.4 HOPE, Bromyard

This is an independently run, well resourced children centre on the edge of the Bromyard Town, purpose built multi-agency centre established in 2005 with funding from Advantage West Midlands, Herefordshire Council, Bromyard Town Council and Surestart - the main building is owned by Herefordshire Council and includes an MAO. The Hope Centre is commissioned separately to run children centre services in the area for the local authority. The Hope Centre also offers rentable outlet spaces for local business, adult learning courses, café and community rooms.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	33	50	809
March 2017	89	11	346

## 2.5 Broadlands, Hereford

This building (the cottage) is on the Aylestone School site next to the new Broadlands School established in 2011. It is used as a satellite centre from Widemarsh children centre mainly for children centre health clinics (midwife and health visitors), some family learning, children centre targeted parent groups however largely underused.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	97	3	152
March 2017	100	0	215

## 2.6 South Meadow, Hereford

Positioned in South Wye close to St Martin's School and Hinton Community Centre. This is now used primarily as office base for children centre staff (16 staff) and a centre for supervised contact. There is still some spill over activity for midwife, health visitors and speech and language.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	407	0	19
March 2017	54	0	14

## 2.7 Ledbury

The children centre facility is another well used, well resourced and well suited for families, with strong community input in activities. Established in 2006 it is part of a collection of buildings on the site of Ledbury Primary School including a thriving private and local authority nurseries that work well alongside each other.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	223	10	565
March 2017	244	8	507

## 2.8 Coningsby, Leominster

As part of a collection of buildings on the outskirts of Leominster town, near the secondary school, Halo Leisure and the MAO. Half the building is occupied by a thriving children's day nursery, the other half by the children centre. Again the centre is used for specific appointments relating to health visitors, midwives, speech and language and has a community use room to be able to work with specific families.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	528	57	306
March 2017	170	55	234

## 2.9 Ryefields, Ross

The children centre is located at the Ryefield Centre established in 2009. This is a large building base which was previously the Grammar School which up until recently was part occupied by the Brandon Trust and currently houses the MAO and Adults Well Being area team.

Usage for Herefordshire Council funded activity:

Date	Health and life chances	Parenting aspirations	School readiness
Nov 2016	412	70	742
March 2017	334	87	538

## 2.10 Peterchurch

The Peterchurch centre was developed in 2008 as a shared facility for children centre services, community library and community facility. It is independently run and there are ambitious plans from the community for a further stage of development and sustainability. Children services pay a

contribution though with limited use (7 hours a week) and a facilities contribution for heating etc. The council pays a wider property contribution for heating, lighting and repair of the lift (the library is on the first floor).

### 3. Library Services and children's provision

Reference is made to Herefordshire Library Service in terms of the universal offer for children and opportunity for joining services. There is a network of 11 libraries – 5 of which are community libraries. Between all the libraries there were 500k visits, 31% of the Herefordshire population are regular library users. The below table gives an outline of percentage stock (mainly books) issued children and young people, for reference 10.7% of the county's population is composed of 0-9 year olds.

Sites	Library issues 2016/17	% of issues by 0-9 year olds	% of issues by 0-12 year olds
Hereford Library*	68,755	8.6	10.5
Hereford Library**	101,493	19.3	25.5
Leominster	103,221	12.0	16.5
Ross-on-Wye	93,319	15.4	20.7
Ledbury	51,216	14.2	18.3
Kington	17,179	12.9	18.2
Bromyard	15,305	11.9	15.0
Belmont	46,843	25.9	30.6
Colwall	12,017	6.8	8.6
Leintwardine	4,924	5.7	6.5
Weobley	5,519	11.4	12.9
Peterchurch	3,511	31.6	33.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>421,809</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>18.0</b>

\*Figures are made up of Town Hall temporary library until 21 January and refurbished Hereford Library from 1 February 2017

\*\*Figures are made up of Hereford Library until 11 September 2015 and Town Hall temporary library from 24 November 2015

Based on public library branches only – so exclude issues from the Schools Library Service, Delivered Services and Stock Unit services.

Only include customers who have borrowed at least one item that year - so exclude customers that use the library for other services (e.g. children's activities, school visits and playgroup/nursery visits, young writers' groups, computer users, online services).

% issues for 0-9 and 0-12 year olds only include borrowers who have a date of birth recorded.

Relevant to children's provision activities include:

- Summer reading challenges as a campaign to keep children reading during the holidays.
- Bounce and Rhyme for young children and babies.
- Early Hurly Burly – externally funded arts / library project for all under-fives from hard to reach families.
- Healthy lifestyle trainers have clients across all the market towns and use the library buildings to see these customers.
- Staff trained in MECC (making every contact count) with champions in Ross, Ledbury and Leominster.

- Books on prescription – GP referral scheme with themed monthly displays using either books on prescription or general stock to promote well-being in its widest sense.
- All the staff undertaking the Health Improvement training level 2.
- Osteoporosis checks, a diabetes clinic and WISH have pop up events every 2 weeks in the libraries.
- Free wifi and public access PCs helpful for parents finding work.

#### 4. Ofsted

Ofsted inspection of children centres has been suspended nationally subject to decision over future arrangement of children centres focusing on outcomes for children rather than site compliance. Therefore the results below are the most up to date judgements.

<b>Ofsted</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Date</b>
Broadlands	Requires improvement	Nov-13
Coningsby and North Herefordshire	Requires Improvement	Nov-13
Golden Valley	Requires Improvement	Jan-15
Hope	Good	Dec-11
Kington	Good	Dec-11
Ledbury	Requires Improvement	Dec-12
Ryefield (Ross on Wye)	Inadequate	Jan-15
South Herefordshire (Greencroft)	Good	Jun-11
Widemarsh	Requires Improvement	Nov-13

## **Children’s Centre Buildings Impact Assessment 2017**

### **1. Reason for Impact Assessment**

An impact assessment is conducted to understand how service changes will impact on users, and specifically people who have protected characteristics (see below for definition). It does not mean that services cannot change, but the impact of those changes need to be considered as part of the decision making process. The assessment will also outline any mitigation that could reduce any negative impacts.

### **2. The Equality Duty**

An impact assessment is one tool that may assist decision makers to comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty relates to different groups who share any of the “protected characteristics” of age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

The Equality Act outlines that due regard involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Children centre services are primarily based on supporting 0-5 year old children and their families. The services include physical locations of Ofsted registered children centres, outreach activities using community centres and home visits, commissions to operate non hospital midwife services and health visitor appointments / clinics.

The core purpose of children’s centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need in areas of:

- child development and school readiness
- parenting aspirations and parenting skills
- child and family health and life chances

Other requirements of the service provision include:

- Parent and family support – targeted intervention for families who need support
- Adult learning duty and economic well being – support and advice to parents on learning and employment, links with Jobcentre Plus
- Information, advice and guidance for parents on childcare and free nursery education

The cabinet report on Future Use of Children Centre Buildings on the delivery of the 10 children centre buildings (2 of which are satellite centres); therefore this impact assessment will focus on any changes linked to buildings specifically on the protected characteristics of “age” because of the services core purpose (above) focuses on the children.

### 3. Relevant Profiles

#### Age

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes mid-year population estimates each summer (the latest figures are for 2015). Based on this data the current estimate of the county's resident population is 188,099. There remains a similar proportion of under-16s (17%) as nationally (19%). Numbers of children had been declining in Herefordshire throughout the whole of the last decade, levelling out over the last five years. However, the number of under-fives and births has been rising for the best part of the last decade. The next 10 years are expected to yield a gradual increase in the numbers of children.

The below table gives an overview of numbers and percentage of age difference for ages 10-14 years.

Age-group	Numbers			% of total		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Under 1	1,800	900	800	1.0%	0.5%	0.4%
1-4	8,100	4,200	3,900	4.3%	2.2%	2.1%
5-9	10,100	5,300	4,800	5.4%	2.8%	2.6%
10-14	9,700	4,900	4,800	5.2%	2.6%	2.6%
All other ages	158,400	77,900	80,700	84.20%	41.40%	42.90%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>188,100</b>	<b>93,100</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>49.5%</b>	<b>50.5%</b>

Estimate resident population of Herefordshire, Mid-2015. Source: ONS, Population Estimates Unit.  
 Figures rounded to the nearest hundred.

For specific younger age the following breakdown shows each age from 0-9 years:

	All ages	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Herefordshire	188,099	1,780	1,859	2,034	2,058	2,132	2,054	2,042	2,070	2,012	1,925

Sources: ONS, Population Estimates Unit.

The total number of pupils on school roll has risen by 326 from 22,770 in spring 2013 to 23,096 in autumn 2016, representing a 1.43 increase over three years. In 2016 the highest number of pupils were in reception year 1 and year 2, whilst fewer with in years 9, 10 and 11.

The current population of children looked after in Herefordshire is 304; 120 with children protection plans; and 2016 data indicates there are 116 young people not in employment, education or training (2017 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).

The number of children under 16 estimated to be living in poverty in Herefordshire increased in 2014 after four successive years of declining numbers. The increase in number from 3,990 to 4,390 reflects a percentage increase from 13.2% to 14.7%. Despite the local increase, rates in the county continue to be significantly lower than across the West Midlands and England (The Children in Low-Income Families Local Measure, HM Revenue and Customs).

#### Disability and health

The disability characteristic is based on a person if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the 2011 census 18.7% of people said they had some form of limiting long term health problem or disability - this is similar to the national percentage and the 2001 census.



In 2015/6 there were an estimate of 1,500 individuals in Herefordshire suffering from severe mental health disorders. The HCCG report also outlined that some people are more likely to experience poor mental health if other factors are present – called socio-economic determinants of mental health, the Herefordshire statistics are summarised below. These have a specific impact on children (e.g. young carers) or secondary impact on the child (households on low incomes):

### Socio-economic determinants of mental health

Determinants	Profile for Herefordshire
Employment and income	9,120 people out of work claiming benefits 14,500 households on low incomes
Education	55,050 people with no qualifications 840 people with learning disabilities
Family and caring	27,525 people live alone 900 lone parents claiming benefits 21,000 people provide unpaid care 240 looked after children 400 young carers
Crime and anti-social behaviour	7,800 crimes recorded in 2013/14 15.92 per 1000 population domestic violence incidents 547 per 100,000 population first time entrants to youth justice system
Housing	200 homeless families
Health	6,400 people reporting long-term mental health

In 2015/16 data from the National Child Measurement Programme data indicates that 9.8% of reception year children in Herefordshire were obese, while a combination proportion of obese and overweight was 22%. For 6 year olds the prevalence of obesity was 19.8% whilst combined figure of obese and overweight children was 33.8%. For both age groups there were no significant differences between local and national figures.

Public Health England Data (Oral Health Survey, 2016) shows 41% of children among 5 years old have tooth decay whilst the mean number of decayed, missing or filled teeth in 5 year olds in Herefordshire was 1.43 – a figure twice as high as the West Midlands and 30% higher than England as a whole.

### Race

The protected characteristic of race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Taken from the 2011 census shows that 93.7% of the Herefordshire population is white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, and British. Herefordshire's EAL (English as an additional language) pupils are culturally diverse, speaking a wide range of first languages. EAL pupils are currently 13 points behind their peers - some progress made in Early Years Foundation Stage reduced 2% in 2015.

### Sex / Gender

There are 51% females to 49% of men in the county and females outnumber males at almost all ages over 40. The difference is more evident as people reach late 70s as a result of the longer life expectancy of women.

### Pregnancy and Maternity

The protected characteristic definition is based on pregnant women or women who are in the first 26 weeks after giving birth. Births in Herefordshire fell throughout the 1990s, and began rising from

**First Language**

The five largest language groups other than English in the autumn 2016 school census were:

- Polish - 771 pupils
- Lithuanian - 155 pupils
- Other than English - 127 pupils
- Romanian - 94 pupils
- Portuguese - 77 pupils

In spring 2013, a total of 58 different languages other than English were recorded in the school census. By autumn 2016, 65 different languages other than English were spoken in Herefordshire schools.

2002. Births rose by 22% from a low of 1,570 in 2002 to 1,900 in 2010 and have plateaued since then to around 1800 to 1900 per year. Births to women from “new Europe” mostly Polish and Lithuanian accounted for 11% all new births in the county in 2013.

## Geography

The following tables show the population spread across the county and age profile in different areas.

Table: Population by age in different areas of Herefordshire, mid-2015 Population Estimate

Area		0-15	16-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Hereford city	No.	11,400	11,100	12,200	15,200	7,500	3,100	60,400
	%	19%	18%	20%	25%	12%	5%	100%
Leominster town	No.	2,100	1,900	2,100	3,000	1,900	800	11,900
	%	18%	16%	18%	25%	16%	7%	100%
Ross town	No.	1,800	1,700	1,800	2,900	2,000	900	11,100
	%	16%	15%	16%	26%	18%	8%	100%
Ledbury town	No.	1,600	1,400	1,700	2,600	1,800	900	9,900
	%	16%	14%	17%	26%	18%	9%	100%
Kington town	No.	500	500	500	900	600	300	3,300
	%	15%	15%	15%	27%	18%	9%	100%
Bromyard town	No.	800	700	700	1,200	800	400	4,600
	%	17%	15%	15%	26%	17%	9%	100%
Other urban or town & fringe*	No.	1,400	1,100	1,300	2,000	1,200	500	7,500
	%	19%	15%	17%	27%	16%	7%	100%
Rural village & dispersed	No.	12,200	9,800	11,100	25,100	16,200	5,000	79,400
	%	15%	12%	14%	32%	20%	6%	100%
Herefordshire	No.	31,700	28,100	31,400	53,000	32,000	11,900	188,100
	%	17%	15%	17%	28%	17%	6%	100%

Source: Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates for the UK, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2016.

\* E.g. built up areas not within city boundary, such as Holmer; larger villages like Colwall and Credenhill. Sources: ONS small area population estimates mid-2015 & Defra's rural-urban classifications 2011.

The number of children in areas follows the population spread across the county, and though the percentage spread is relatively equal for children in the different areas, the actual numbers differ significantly.

Another factor to consider is the availability of own transport – from the 2011 census 25.6% of households had no car or van. A report from 2015 emphasised the role played by transport in reducing loneliness and social isolation at any age<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the terminology and definition the most “deprived” areas of the county are in Hereford city and the market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and for the first time Bromyard. There are currently 12 LSOAs<sup>2</sup> in the county that are in the 25% most deprived nationally; four more than there were in 2010 - ‘Leominster - Gateway’, ‘Hereford City centre’, ‘Courtyard’ and ‘Bromyard Central’. ‘Golden Post - Newton Farm’ remains the most deprived area in the county – the only LSOA<sup>1</sup> to be in the 10% most deprived nationally. The least deprived areas are in Hereford city and the surrounding rural area, Ross-on-Wye, and Ledbury.

<sup>1</sup> Promising approaches to reducing loneliness and isolation in later life, Age UK and Campaign to End Loneliness, 2015

<sup>2</sup> LSOA refers to Local Super Output Area, representing a geographical area with a minimum size of 5000 residents and 2000 households, or an average population size of around 7,500. LSOAs improve the reporting of small area statistics.

## 4. Consultation on initial proposals

The options for each of the children centre buildings formed consultation with users through an online questionnaire open between 12 June and 17 July 2017. The survey was also promoted on the council's Facebook page and Twitter, and via printed / posters. Full response is published on-line at: [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ccbuildings](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ccbuildings)

There was 513 response from across the children centres as below:

Which children's centre do you currently use? Please tick all that apply	Number of respondents	% of respondents*
Widemarsh centre in Hereford	206	40%
Ryefield centre in Ross on Wye	99	19%
Hope centre in Bromyard	85	17%
Greencroft centre in Hereford	83	16%
Ledbury children centre	72	14%
Coningsby centre in Leominster	69	13%
Broadlands centre in Hereford	63	12%
South Meadow centre in Hereford	59	12%
Kingstone centre in the Golden Valley	17	3%
Peterchurch centre	16	3%
All survey respondents*	513	100%
Not answered	10	

\*Base= all survey respondents

Most repondees stated they used their designated children centre within the last 1-2 months:

When did you last use a designated children's centre?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Less than a week ago	36	8%
1-2 weeks ago	48	11%
2-4 weeks ago	84	19%
1-2 months ago	184	41%
2-6 months ago	56	12%
6 -12 months ago	27	6%
More than a year ago	17	4%
Total respondents	452	100%
Not answered	61	

58% of respondents used a children's centre at least once a week; over half of them used it more than once a week.

How often do you use a children's centre?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
More than once a week	159	32%
Once a week	134	27%
Few times a month	78	16%
Once a month	46	9%
Not often	30	6%
Ad hoc - e.g. for appointments	50	10%

Never	6	1%
Total respondents	503	100%
Not answered	10	

Among the most common uses of a children’s centre, ‘Health visitor appointment’ and ‘Courses and classes for children’ were stated by around 50% of respondents. ‘Midwife appointment’, ‘baby massage/yoga’ and ‘breastfeeding support’ were among the next most common uses of children centres as stated by 38%, 29% and 23% of respondents.

Additional relevant points relating to protected characteristics regarding respondees:

- 5% of respondents were male and 95% were female (Herefordshire population profile: 51% to 49%)<sup>3</sup>
- 1% of respondents were aged 65 years and over, 78% were aged 25-44 years, 13% were aged 45-64 years and 7% were 24 years or younger. According to Herefordshire’s population age profile (27% of the population were aged 25-44 years) it is clear that people aged 25-44 years were strongly represented in the consultation.
- 6% of respondents’ day-to-day activities were limited a little or limited a lot because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.
- 77% of respondents identified themselves as English, 23% as British, 3% as Welsh and 4% identified themselves as another national identity (respondents could select more than one answer for this question).
- Of the respondents who answered the question about their ethnicity, 95% identified themselves as ‘white’, 4% as ‘other white’ and 1% as ‘other ethnic group’.
- 2% of respondents felt that they had been treated differently (positively or negatively) because of who they are.

People were asked if they agree or don’t agree with the proposal (note – respondees gave a view of several sites, not just designated centre):

Centre	Agree	Don’t agree	% agree	% don’t agree
Greencroft, Hereford	180	51	78%	22%
Widemarsh, Hereford	144	113	56%	44%
Broadlands, Hereford	86	106	45%	55%
South Meadow, Hereford	178	18	91%	9%
Kingstone, Golden Valley	144	25	85%	15%
Hope Centre, Bromyard	208	14	94%	6%
Ledbury	120	61	66%	34%
Coningsby, Leominster	114	67	63%	37%
Ryefield, Ross	75	121	38%	62%
Peterchurch, Golden Valley	142	15	90%	10%

## 5. Summary and Recommendations

5.11% of the Herefordshire population consist of children between the ages of 0-9 years. Whilst many of these children will fit with universal service offer and do not need high level of local authority intervention or some only for a short time at a time of need or crisis, the impacts of early years can have an effect on a person their whole life.

<sup>3</sup> [Annual Mid-2016 Population Estimates for Herefordshire, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2017](#)

Therefore the local authority's first duty is to allocate its resources to targeted and proactive intervention for the children and their families who need support. There is also a range of preventative opportunities – often referred to as early help which could have the result of reduced intervention later in life. Families and the wider community has a role to play in early help specifically for universal service, but also a public sector intervention where needs are identified.

General recommendations:

- Use resources based on creating the best outcome for children in need through outreach activity.
- To have a strong focus on health, including mental health that could have a significant impact later in life.
- To retain facilities where relevant, to have a focus on information share, clinics for children, child care need and opportunity for interaction between children and families for mutual support and social networks.
- Promotion of positive health particularly focuses on tackling obesity, good dentistry, and mental health.
- That universal services are supported by community led activity, including in schools, nurseries, libraries and leisure centres.

Mitigation to address comments on disagreement with proposals:

Greencroft, Hereford:

- As part of the new arrangement instigate agreement with the school to retain services where possible, redesigning spaces to enable activities to continue and areas for midwife and health clinics

Widemarsh, Hereford:

- Retain reception function as a well used site with multi-functional use.
- Promote nursery education funded places available due to the Children's Act 2016
- Any future partner organisation appointed through a procurement process with criteria to support the objectives of the services

Broadlands, Hereford:

- Reconsider option that supports the sustainability of at least core children centre services.

South Meadow, Hereford:

- Retain the sensory room and promote where relevant

Kingstone, Golden Valley:

- Agreement with the nursery to maintain open activities where relevant.

Hope Centre, Bromyard:

- Services provided by Hope to be part of the wider review of children centre services.

Ledbury:

- Service agreement with the school to retain element of children centre services and community activity.
- Recognise that the Masters House is not a replacement for a children's centre, but could support children's activities and promote them e.g. summer reading challenge etc.

Coningsby, Leominster:

- That the design of the library, including utilisation of specific space on site currently used for activities has the ability to cater for group sessions for children centre activities.

Ryefield, Ross:

- Consider expanding to the outdoor space at the library.
- Consider an opportunity to use the library exclusively for children centre services when the library is not open (each Wednesday) and an area that can be confined on occasions for certain children centre activities.
- Additional space, preferably close to the library, that can be used for 0-5 years activity that could cater for the MAO and storage.