

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 24 October 2019**

Time: **6.30 pm**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

Sarah Buffrey

Tel: (01432) 260176

Email: sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet

Membership

Chairperson Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Pauline Crockett
Councillor Gemma Davies
Councillor John Harrington
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Trish Marsh
Councillor Ange Tyler

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019.</p>	11 - 34
4.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p> <p><i>(See guidance below on how to submit a question)</i></p>	
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p> <p><i>(See guidance below on how to submit a question)</i></p> <p><i>How to submit questions</i></p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is 5pm on Friday 18 October 2019.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk or to the monitoring officer in writing at Herefordshire Council, County Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford HR4 0LE. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</i></p>	
6.	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL UPDATE 2018/2019</p> <p>To review the progress of the corporate parenting strategy.</p>	35 - 72
7.	<p>FOSTERING AND ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORTS 2018/19</p> <p>To review Adoption and Fostering Services performance and approve related documents.</p>	73 - 102
8.	<p>ANNUAL REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES</p> <p>To note and approve the annual earmarked reserves review.</p>	103 - 110

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO: -

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- 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.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Public Transport Links

- The Shire Hall is a few minutes walking distance from both bus stations located in the town centre of Hereford.

RECORDING OF THIS MEETING

Please note that filming, photography and recording of this meeting is permitted provided that it does not disrupt the business of the meeting.

Members of the public are advised that if you do not wish to be filmed or photographed you should let the governance services team know before the meeting starts so that anyone who intends filming or photographing the meeting can be made aware.

The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

The council is making an official audio recording of this public meeting. These recordings form part of the public record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's web-site. To listen live or to hear the entire recording once the meeting has finished navigate to the page for the meeting and click the larger blue arrow at the top of the agenda. To listen to an individual agenda item click the small blue arrow against that agenda item.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit and make your way to the Fire Assembly Point in the Shire Hall car park.

Please do not allow any items of clothing, etc. to obstruct any of the exits.

Do not delay your vacation of the building by stopping or returning to collect coats or other personal belongings.

The Chairperson 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:

Cllr David Hitchiner (Leader) (Herefordshire Independents)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Felicity Norman (Deputy Leader) (The Green Party)	Children and Families
Cllr Gemma Davies (Herefordshire Independents)	Commissioning, Procurement and Assets
Cllr Trish Marsh (The Green Party)	Environment, Economy and Skills
Cllr Liz Harvey (It's Our County)	Finance and Corporate Services
Cllr Pauline Crockett (Herefordshire Independents)	Health and Adult Wellbeing
Cllr John Harrington (It's Our County)	Infrastructure and Transport
Cllr Ange Tyler (Herefordshire Independents)	Housing, Regulatory Services and Community Safety

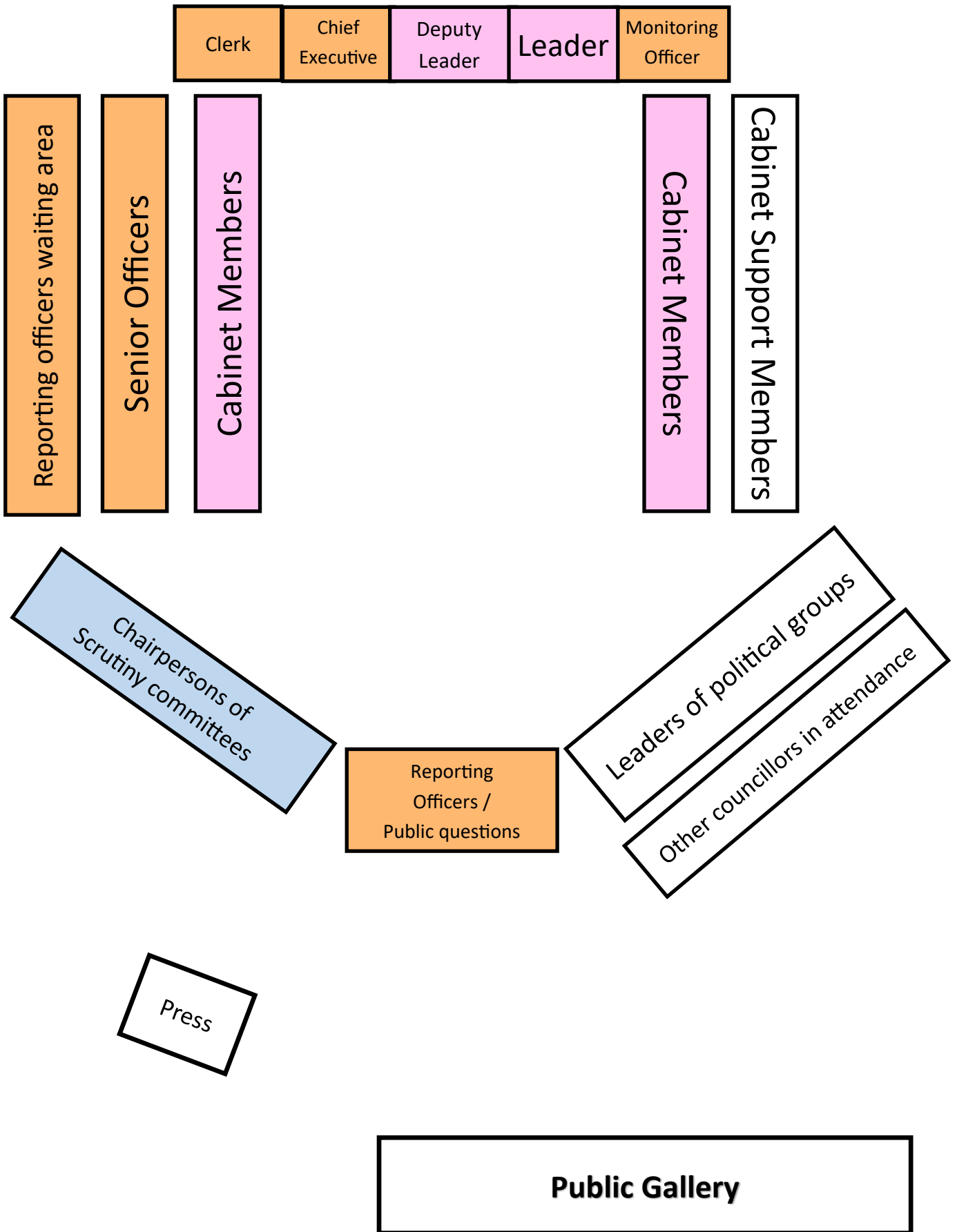
The Cabinet's roles are:

- 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:

Pink	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
Blue	Chairmen of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
	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 26 September 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council (in the chair)
Councillors Pauline Crockett, John Harrington, Liz Harvey, Trish Marsh and Ange Tyler

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors John Hardwick and Alan Seldon

Group leaders in attendance Councillors Jenny Bartlett and Bob Matthews

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Elissa Swinglehurst, Carole Gandy and Jonathan Lester

Other councillors in attendance: Councillors Christy Bolderson, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Jennie Hewitt, Jeremy Milln, Nigel Shaw, David Summers and William Wilding

Officers in attendance: Alistair Neill, Richard Ball, Chris Baird, Claire Ward, Andrew Lovegrove and Karen Wright

81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors David Hitchiner and Gemma Davies.

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

83. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

84. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 20)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

85. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 21 - 24)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

86. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The cabinet member environment, economy and skills introduced the report and highlighted three minor corrections as follows:

- Both resolutions were passed unanimously by Council;
- The y (upwards) axis of the graph at paragraph 13 of the report was incorrectly labelled and should read carbon dioxide in *thousand* tonnes;
- The date of the climate emergency resolution in appendix 1 should read 8 *March* 2018.

In introducing the report, the cabinet member made the following key points:

- the council recognised the active lobbying by many members of the public, in particular young people, and the strong emotions raised by this subject;
- the council was prepared to adopt challenging new targets;
- carbon emissions had already been reduced by over 40% against the 2008/9 baseline;
- significant reductions in budgets over this period had been challenging but drives for efficiencies and changes in ways of working to reduce costs had also delivered environmental benefits;
- the council had met its carbon target two years early but this did not mean that work would stop, initiatives both within and outside the council had been continuing since the climate emergency motion was passed in March 2019;
- it had to be recognised that many homes and businesses in Herefordshire were not cash rich, programmes such as the warm homes programme had enabled investments;
- every tonne of carbon saved would make a difference, even apparently small actions could have a ripple effect and become a large change;
- the level of public support had been noted, working together would magnify the impact of council actions;
- climate change appeared in many sections of the new corporate plan which was currently under consultation;
- it was recognised that most changes would be neither quick or straightforward, some changes would only be possible as contracts came due for renewal;
- Herefordshire would work with other councils to lobby for changes to the national framework that prevented the council from doing certain things.

In discussion of the item cabinet members noted that:

- additional detail on planned actions would be provided as soon as possible;
- the new policy would set out actions for the council and also seek to influence partners;
- every aspect of the council's operations would be considered through the lens of the climate emergency;
- the council would also seek to learn from good practices elsewhere in the country and overseas;
- this was an issue that cut across cabinet portfolios;
- the voices of young people and their support for action on climate change had been heard.

Group leaders were invited to give the views of their political groups. It was noted that:

- all groups were supportive of action to tackle climate change;
- the cost of initiatives would have to be looked at carefully;
- the commitment of young people was welcomed;
- working with partners such as parish councils was very important;
- the use of supplementary planning documents should be explored to work towards targets, the review of the core strategy would need to take account of the agreed response to the climate emergency motion;
- the Energy from Waste plant was making a transformational contribution;
- different ways of working would be fundamental, increasing flexible and home working would have an impact on the trips generated by coming and going of staff.

It was agreed that:

The executive's response to the resolutions relating to the climate emergency passed by Council in March and July 2019 be agreed as detailed in Appendix 1.

The meeting adjourned between 2:58 and 3:09. Councillor Matthews left the meeting at this time.

87. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2019 - 2020

The cabinet member children and families introduced the report. The head of service at West Mercia Youth Offending Service highlighted the following key points:

- The plan had been prepared and adopted by the Youth Justice Management Board in May 2019, it now required endorsement by the four councils in the West Mercia area;
- The plan had been prepared in accordance with government guidance and outlined key performance data and actions planned to be taken during the current financial year;
- The previous system dealing with first time entrants met statutory guidance but allowed for an initial youth caution to be issued without this being part of a joint decision-making process between the police and youth justice service, it was felt that a lot of young people receiving youth cautions could be diverted through an informal disposal process where their needs would be addressed and services provided without giving the young person a criminal record;
- All decision making would now come through a joint panel which included colleagues from other agencies such as the early help services of the council, the panel would look at the nature and severity of the offence alongside the needs of the young person.

The chair of the children and young people scrutiny committee noted that the actual numbers were small but the way they were required to be reported skewed the statistics. The scrutiny committee received each annual plan but found the process frustrating as much of the action had already happened. The action plan had been scrutinised and endorsed. More recent statistics had been shared with the committee, which showed an improved picture and the committee had requested that in future the latest available statistics were shared as part of the process.

It was reported that the latest available figures for 18/19 showed 43 first time entrants compared with 76 in the previous year. The rate of reoffending within 12 months for the cohort October 16 – September 17 was 30.5% in Herefordshire compared with a national rate of 38.9%. This was a significant reduction on the previous Herefordshire figure of 44.4%.

Group leaders welcomed the decrease in numbers but noted that it was difficult to highlight trends from the available data with the small numbers involved. It might be worthwhile to focus on early help in relation to first time offenders and it would be helpful if the report could say why there was a general reduction in the trend.

The director for children and families explained that the board was in the second year of a three-year approach and that there had been recent improvements in operational matters that enabled the local service to have access to council systems to share information in the interests of children and young people.

The cabinet member children and families commented that she was heartend to hear that numbers were moving in the right direction and that intervention was in place to support young people who had contact with the youth justice system.

It was agreed that:

The Youth Justice Plan 2019/20 (appendix a) be recommended for approval by full council.

88. GAMBLING POLICY 2019-2022 (REVIEW)

The cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety introduce the report, noting that the Gambling Act 2005 required the council to produce a statement of principles to be applied when exercising licensing functions. The reviewed policy was largely unchanged from the previous version but did reflect new guidance from the gaming commission.

The principal licensing officer reported that gambling was not a large issue in Herefordshire although there were issues of protection of children and vulnerable people. It was market driven and in decline in Herefordshire.

Cabinet members noted that:

- The policy was in relation to physical premises;
- The need for signage in other languages to support migrant workers had been included in the local area plan risk assessment and premises were expected to have documents available to support those who need that help.

The chairman of the general scrutiny committee stated that the committee had gone through the revised policy with a fine toothed comb. He was pleased to see that eight of the eleven recommendations had been incorporated and he understood the reasons why the others could not be taken on board.

Group leaders were invited to express the views of their group. Concern was expressed that quite a few of the recommendations were simple fixes and it was important that policies were carefully reviewed. It was noted that the policy had been consulted on and that efforts were made to ensure that language was appropriate and understandable.

It was agreed that:

the revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2019-2022 (attached at appendix 1) is recommended to Council.

89. TRAVELLERS SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

The cabinet member infrastructure and transport introduced the report, supported by the strategic planning manager and senior planning officer. It was highlighted that:

- There was a requirement to provide for the accommodation needs of travellers through the development plan process that was met by the DPD which would sit underneath the council's core strategy;
- The document set out plans to provide some additional pitches on existing sites and a new transit site near Leominster;
- The document had been subject to extensive consultation including with the gypsy and traveller community;
- The new temporary stopping place adjacent to the A49 near Leominster was supported by the police and sought to address unauthorised encampments by providing a suitable location for such encampments to be moved to;
- The transit site would have no permanent structures but hard standings would be provided and the site would be opened up on an as needed basis, with negotiated stay periods depending on the circumstances;
- The examination in public had recommended additional pitches and an additional existing private site had been identified to address this need;
- Madley had been identified as an area for future investigation, there were some outstanding issues but this might be a suitable location for a site in future;
- Capital bids would be made to support development of sites as necessary, it was anticipated that additional pitches would be available over the next five years.

Group leaders acknowledged the hard work of officers in developing the plan and recognised it was a necessary document to add to the core strategy.

It was agreed that:

(a) the Herefordshire Travellers sites Development Plan Document (DPD) 2018-2031 (appendix 4 and at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/796/travellers_sites_document_examination/7), incorporating the Planning Inspector's recommended main modifications (appendix 2) and the schedules of additional modifications (appendix 3) be recommended to Council for adoption; and
(b) it be recommended to Council that delegated authority be given to the programme director growth to make any further minor modifications, (e.g. typographical) to ensure consistency with other development plan documentation.

90. ACCOMMODATION BASED SUPPORT SERVICE FOR CARE LEAVERS

The cabinet member children and families introduced the report, supported by the head of community commissioning and resources and the head of looked after children. It was noted that:

- This would be a new service for young people with complex needs;
- The properties to be used included some already owned by the council and an additional property that had been acquired, works to renovate the buildings were expected to be completed by Spring 2020 and the new service would be commissioned alongside these works;
- The needs of young people needing this type of service were carried but included risk of exploitation and criminal behaviour;
- There was growing demand for this type of service and in the past the council had placed young people outside the county, this had been at a cost and the quality of provision had been variable, this new service would be more cost effective and give the council greater control over quality;
- It was hoped that many service users would transition to being fully independent but this would not always be the case, the service would work with partners in the NHS, probation service and universal services such as further and higher education providers with regards to appropriate ongoing support;
- There had been substantial market engagement in advance of the procurement so the council could be confident that potential providers would come forward;
- The buildings would offer a range of types of accommodation according to the needs of the individuals and would have an on site facility for staff to work with the young people;
- Using council owned properties gave a measure of control and simplified operating arrangements, the council would lease the building to the service provider so they would be responsible for collecting rents and maintenance of the building;
- It was noted that there was reluctance from social housing providers to take on young people in this cohort due to perceived risks such as non-payment of rents;
- The proposal was welcomed as an example that arm's length commissioning might not be the best option in all circumstances.

The chair of the children and young persons scrutiny committee reported that the committee had scrutinised the care to be provided within the building to understand the support being offered to care leavers. The committee had been assured that support would be 24/7 with a lot of one to one support and involving outside agencies as necessary. The committee felt that the service should be reviewed at a future point to ensure that the desired outcomes were being achieved, and had requested that a visit be arranged to the property before it was occupied.

Group leaders welcomed the proposed approach and agreed that the service should be reviewed at a future point to check it was meeting its stated aims. The decision to acquire the building for the service was lauded.

It was agreed that:

- (a) the commissioning of a service to provide support and accommodation management for vulnerable care leavers in council owned properties through an open procurement process be approved;**
- (b) the director for children and families be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the service including award of contract for the accommodation based service for a period of up to five years and with a maximum value of £2.5m.**

91. HEREFORD BID2

The cabinet member environment, economy and skills introduced the report noting that:

- Business improvement districts were a recognised tool to deliver economic benefits, allowing business to lead in providing services additional to those already provided by the council;
- Initiatives such as the Stronger Towns fund require strong business input, giving the Hereford BID an important role to play;
- The Hereford BID board were keen to welcome new members.

The economic development manager explained that there was a voting process to approve continuing the BID for a further period with all businesses located with the BID area entitled to vote. The council had 25 votes to cast. Consultation had taken place with the approximately 400 businesses in the BID area and the majority were strongly in favour of continuing the BID.

Cabinet members noted that the work done by the BID supported tourism, particularly as the council was not able to give as much support in this area as it might wish due to financial constraints, and had increased footfall in the city centre.

Groups leaders commented that it was pleasing to see that business supported the BID as good value for money. It was suggested that they be encouraged to share positive experiences with the market towns to encourage other BIDs to be set up. It was also suggested that ongoing events should reflect the climate emergency.

Cabinet members noted that a Herefordshire BID that would cover all market towns was in development and this could be a very positive step. The increase in the rateable value threshold for business to pay the levy was welcomed as good for smaller businesses.

It was agreed that:

- (a) the Economic Development Manager be authorised to vote in favour of Hereford BID for the second, five year term (2020-2025);**
- (b) payment of the levy on Herefordshire Council properties in the BID area be approved, valued at £21,495 in year one (an increase of £14,790 on the current levy paid) for a period of up to five years; and**
- (c) The Director of Economy and Place (liaising with Legal Services) be authorised to finalise and arrange for the execution by the Council of all necessary contract documentation relating to the BID extension.**

The meeting ended at 4.12 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 26 September

Question 1

Ms J Morris, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

In addition to their public realm contract, BBLP and WSP have provided additional professional expertise at council meetings as well as extra design resources and environmental assessments. The Council claims that every new fee proposals from these companies, which is treated as an extension to the existing contract, is reviewed and monitored and subjected to detailed change control mechanisms. With the SWTP still not on the new Verto Capital monitoring system in March 2019 and over £4.million spent in professional fees with these companies, would the cabinet member please explain what work has been done to confirm that these additional contract costs are within the detailed, up to date budgets and are competitive despite not going out to tender.

Response

The SWTP project management and design functions provided by BBLP are services which are within scope of defined services of the Public Realm Service Delivery contract and these services were therefore commissioned using this contract and are not an extension as the question suggests. The process of commissioning this work involves detailed scrutiny of fee proposals before commissioning and any changes to commissions during delivery are managed through the contract change control mechanism.

Approved budgets, spend and forecast spend reports are monitored as part of the project management of the programme as well as being reported to cabinet. The £4m figure referred to in the question is not recognised. The scheme is managed using the councils VERTO system and the current forecast project cost remains within the £35m budget set out in the 2014 Strategic Outline Business Case for the project. In addition, each report informing decisions about this project and published on the council's website contains a summary of scheme budget and cost forecasts.

Question 2

Mrs J Tonge, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the cabinet member confirm that the time savings quoted for a bypass in the 2018 HTP Consultation leaflets were 'made up', and not the result of any detailed modelling?

Response

No I cannot. Officers have confirmed to me that the journey time statements set out in the 2018 Hereford Transport Package public consultation materials were based on traffic modelling outputs available at the time of publication taken from the traffic model established for Hereford. This model has been developed in accordance with Department for Transport specification and can be used to understand how a wide range of transport projects, including walking, cycling public transport and road schemes would work.

The consultation brochure compares a journey time on the A49 in 2032 with the bypass scheme open to a present day journey time on the A49. The information presented is based on the 2016 traffic model. Should the bypass scheme progress, traffic modelling work would continue and

further traffic modelling information would be set out in future public consultations about the scheme.

Question 3

Dr N Geeson, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

At the last meeting of the General Scrutiny Committee (23 July 2019) I asked about the Hereford Transport Package Consultation on Walking/Cycling/Buses that had closed on 11th March 2019, and when the results of the consultation would be available. I was told that “the HTP consultation feedback is being analysed and a report summarising this feedback will be presented to the new administration cabinet later this summer and will published on the council’s website at that time”. Is this important feedback now available please?

Response

I agree that it is important to publish the results of this consultation.

The public consultation report was not completed whilst the new cabinet took some time to review the Hereford Transport & South Wye Transport projects following the election. However the report will be finalised and published shortly.

Supplementary question

I had asked about the results of the Hereford Transport Package public consultation on walking, cycling and buses that was back in March 2019 and these are still not published. The transport sector currently accounts for around 27% of all greenhouse gas emissions so in addressing the climate emergency how fast do councillors expect to promote more widespread use of clean electric buses, cycling and walking to reduce emissions across Herefordshire?

Response

The short answer is as quickly as possible. We are in a period of pause and review of the two major transport schemes but that does not prohibit us from looking at the schemes and the type of sustainable transport that we have always espoused we would look at and is a major intention of ours. We are in the process of putting capital bids in for budget consultations in February. That should give an indication of how we are moving forward. It remains a huge and very important ambition. It is easy to talk about sustainable transport but if it is not prioritised it will not happen, we intend to do that.

Question 4

Mrs J Richards, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the number of lorries (HGV’s) crossing the Greyfriars Bridge has actually fallen consistently since 2000?

Response

No it is not possible for me to confirm this. We don’t have automatic count information which separates out HGVs from other vehicles from before 2010. The data we do have access to from the permanent traffic counter on Greyfriars Bridge records the number of vehicles greater than

6.6m (which would include HGVs). We have this data from 2010 from this recorder which shows that the number of such vehicles has fluctuated over this period. This is set out in the following table:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
AADT (all vehicles)	46522	46304	46388	45735	46464	46701	46386	46018	45511
AADT >6.6m	5350	5337	5107	5096	5285	5098	5149	5338	5552
AADT <6.6m	41172	40968	41282	40641	41179	41604	41237	40680	39959

Supplementary Question

Thank you for your reply, which was surprising, as I have seen graphs from the Department for Transport that do show a decrease in HGVs over Greyfriars Bridge. However, if we can at least agree there has been no particular increase in HGVs over Greyfriars Bridge since 2000, can we also agree that the number of HGVs over the Greyfriars Bridge is not relevant to the need for a bypass or not.

Response

You are right that there are different figures available. The figures the council use are on the counter that has been in place since 2010. It does not separate HGVs from other vehicles over 6.6m long so includes things like vans and smaller lorries but the relative numbers of anything over 6.5m is comparatively small compared to the traffic movements over the bridge and that is something that is important to remember.

Question 5

Ms H Thomas, H Weston and Sons Ltd, Much Marcle

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

If there is no bypass for Hereford City, is Herefordshire Council now advocating that all HGVs must drive through Hereford City Centre to get to their onward destination?

Response

No this is certainly not what I am advocating. I took the decision to pause the bypass scheme to allow further time to review the scheme (which would include HGV movements and impacts) in more detail. I am concerned that as currently developed, the bypass and the southern link road may not be compatible with the climate challenge, carbon reduction and emerging policy and that there may be other options that could deliver transport and growth objectives and these should be considered. All options need to be considered as we look to the long term and towards providing a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for the whole of Herefordshire, not just for the immediate future but for generations to come.

Question 6

Mr R Palgrave, How Caple

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

At Council's Cabinet meeting in January 2018, the minutes report: "The cabinet member infrastructure responded that the eastern route for a bypass was not a viable alternative and that the enterprise zone was booming. The cabinet member economy and communications stated that unemployment in Herefordshire was at an historic low and that the enterprise zone had been highly successful." Does the current cabinet member for Infrastructure believe that in the subsequent 18 months, the Hereford Enterprise zone has gone from boom to bust and that the delay in completing the Southern Link Road is to blame?

Response

I do not believe the Hereford Enterprise Zone to be 'bust'. It continues to be highly successful, a number of major developments are underway such as the £9million development of the Cyber Quarter - Midlands Centre for Cyber Security (through a joint venture between the council and the University of Wolverhampton) and the £7 million development of business incubation space in the former World War One Shell Store.

The council recently approved £5m of funding in August to support the next phase of infrastructure works required to bring brownfield sites back into economic use, in response to a high demand for business space on the Enterprise Zone.

Supplementary question

As I am sure you know, planning permission for the Southern Link Road (SLR) was granted in July 2016. The following May amendments were made to the environmental impact assessment regulations, requiring that development proposals should include an assessment of their climate impacts both from construction and when in operation. No such assessment has been made for the SLR because its planning permission pre-dated this change to the regulations. In 2015, the committee on climate change prepared a report for government which provided a methodology to assess the climate impacts arising from the construction of large infrastructure like roads. Based on this methodology the construction emissions of the SLR would be in the order of 2,500 tonnes of CO2 equivalent and those of the Hereford Bypass would be around 19,000 tonnes. For context the reported emissions in 2018/19 from the councils own estate were 15,600 tonnes. Given the declared climate emergency and the aspiration for the council to be carbon neutral by 2030, will you please ensure that the construction climate impacts of the SLR and the bypass are fully considered as part of the pause and review process you have initiated.

Response

I can confirm that we will be applying any current legislation or requirements to our review. We intend to look at the data as it was presented and as it is presented against climate emergency declarations both nationally and locally and we will take into account any updates on regulations.

Question 7

Mr D Hinksman, H Weston and Sons Ltd, Much Marcle

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

If there is no bypass are the council confident that the alternative routes that drivers currently take to avoid congestion – Holme Lacy bridge, Mordiford Bridge and Bridge Sollers bridge – are routes capable of carrying this additional traffic; not only cars but HGVs too. Increasingly Mordiford bridge is gridlocked as lorries try to negotiate it.

Response

I have not at any time since my election suggested that the rural routes you refer to in your question are the appropriate routes for HGV traffic to travel on and there are already restrictions in place which prevents this on the route through Holme Lacy and Mordiford. As I set out in my response to question 5 the decision to pause and review the bypass scheme will enable options to be considered for a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for the whole of Herefordshire.

Question 8

Mr A Morwiecki, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

The 2017 investigation into Blueschool House required capital projects to have a fully auditable budget with costs tracked against spend. The Council website reports that in response “the chief executive made a statement in which he:

- apologised unreservedly for what had taken place
- accepted all the recommendations made by the auditors”.

The November 2018 public inquiry on the SWTP heard the only budget available was the 2014 Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). The public have since been told that the 2014 SOBC budget was not an “approved budget”. The funding for the SWTP ATMs has been cut from £8million to £5million and professional fees of £4.7Million are over the £750,000 budget in the SOBC. If the Chief Executive agreed the Internal Audit recommendations, where is the approved detailed budget for the SWTP with costs tracked against it?

Response

Approved budget, actual spend and spend forecasts for the South Wye Transport Project are monitored as part of the project management of the project as well as being reported to cabinet. The scheme is managed using the councils VERTO system and the current forecast project cost remains within the £35m budget set out in the 2014 Strategic Outline Business Case. In addition, each report informing decisions about this project and published on the council’s website contains a summary of scheme budget and cost forecasts. The ATM budget has not been cut from £8m to £5m as your question suggests. The 2014 SWTP SOBC document sets out an estimated ATM cost of £5m within the overall scheme budget of £35m and this has not been reduced. I am not clear what the figure of £750k in your question refers to. It is not from the 2014 SOBC document and it is not correct to suggest that this figure represents the current approved budget for SWTP fees.

Question 9

Mr E Morfett, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Councillor for infrastructure confirm that average annual traffic passing over Greyfriars Bridge has barely increased since 2000 and remained around 45,000 per day since 2012, based on Department of Transport road counts?

See: (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/manualcountpoints/36537>).

Response

The council holds automatic traffic count data for the Greyfriars Bridge dating back to 2006. In assessing changing flows since this period we have commenced at 2007 as this is the point at

which the ASDA roundabout work was completed. The table below summarises the data for Greyfriars Bridge which is held by the council. This indicates that traffic flows have fluctuated slightly between a high of 47,133 and low of 45,511 during this period.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
AADT (all vehicles)	46,412	47,133	46,734	46,522	46,304	46,388	45,735	46,464	46,701	46,386	46,018	45,511

Supplementary question

In reviewing the council's executive response to the climate emergency declaration I was disappointed to find after months of research it lacked vision and a strategy to focus effort on actions to address the issues. My concern is that this council, like Oxford, will pay lip service to the climate emergency while pursuing policies that double transport emissions for car dependent housing estates and increase road capacity. The key elements lacking in this councils executive response to the emergency declaration in my opinion are: a strategy and timeline to reduce our carbon footprint in areas of greatest impact, namely power generation consumption and transport emissions; developed economic cost and benefit analysis of such steps including congestion charging, electric bus fleets, low emission zone levies and commuter parking charges; funding to ensure a robust response to take positive actions like the green bond initiative that enables cities to finance green infrastructure through access to public markets. My question is what is the vision of this council to achieve rapid CO2 and NOX reduction and what steps will it take in the near term to achieve this and how will it fund this important strategic development to protect future generations.

Response

My understanding of the response that we have provided today is that it is a response to the motion passed unanimously in March. The appendix gives a bit more meat, perhaps a bit more oomph that you were expecting, and we will then have a policy document that will follow that which will have the detail worked out and pretty much cover the sort of responses you are requiring. In terms of what our commitment is to addressing climate change and the emergency and whether it is lip service or not, it is not. This council is determined to uphold the unanimous declaration and I commend the conservatives in the previous administration for follow through so strongly on that and enabling that to be passed on the day. I comment them also on the Core Strategy, which in fact has as a predominant aspiration to reduce dependency on the car. I think that we will try as an administration to match those lofty ambitions and add some detail of our own in light of the new emergencies.

Question 10

Mr M Churchward, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet member confirm that Highways England did not require a cap on vehicle traffic leaving Asda or the Old Market shopping development but did so for the HEZ?

Response

The ASDA food store and Oldmarket development did not have an LDO associated with them. The ASDA food store was permitted in March 2005 as part of a planning application for a number of uses whilst the outline planning permission for the Old Market shopping development was permitted in 2011. There were no "traffic caps" required by the Highways Agency as part of these permissions but the planning application for each included a detailed assessment of traffic that

would be generated by the development, the impact on the highway network including the trunk road network and mitigation works to ensure there was no detriment as a result of the development – this involved junction improvements as part of the Asda development.

The Hereford Enterprise Zone Local Development Order contributes to the development of Hereford Enterprise Zone by applying simplifying planning arrangements to avoid the need for individual planning applications where proposals accord with the conditions imposed by the LDO. The conditions of the LDO exclude development that would either on its own or in combination with other development lead to an increase in morning and afternoon peak hour trip generation above a trip limit agreed between Herefordshire Council and Highways England in a separate Memorandum of Understanding.

However, the LDO does not prevent development taking place which is not expressly permitted through the Order. Proposals for such development would be subject to the normal planning application process and may proceed if planning permission is granted. In addition, proposals which constitute permitted development would still be able to proceed without the need for planning permission from Herefordshire Council whether covered by this LDO or not.

Question 11

Mr D Allison, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet member confirm that the overall traffic across the bridge (@45000 annual average daily flow) has not increased since 2012 and barely increased since 2000?

Response

Please see the response to question 9.

Question 12

Ms L Lewis, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet member confirm that Highway England's own figures show that Herefordshire is in the lowest possible category for businesses dependent on the on the strategic road network?

Response

Highways England has identified Herefordshire as a county with 0-3% forecast growth (2015-2030) in employment in Strategic Road Network-reliant sectors. This is however, not the lowest categorisation, with some parts of the country having less than 0% reliance on the SRN.

Question 13

Ms N Eyles, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

From Freedom of Information requests on the SWTP I note that there is an email in January 2019 from the Marches LEP asking the Head of Infrastructure of Herefordshire Council to re-profile

“the outputs for housing units and jobs created” to bring them forward from 2032/33. The Growth Deal funding agreement between Herefordshire Council & Shropshire Council (for the Marches LEP) showed that the road scheme would be completed in 2018/19 and would do nothing to improve journey times; congestion or pollution. What evidence is available to support the request by the Dept for Transport that, despite the delays on this project, that these jobs and new houses will now be delivered ahead of 2032/33?

Response

The request came from the Marches LEP and not from the Department for Transport as the question suggests. It is not unusual for us to review output dates with funders over the life of a project.

It was not requested because the programme for the delivery of scheme has changed from that set out in the original contract. It is not unusual for the programme of a project of this size to change as events occur which were not originally anticipated. The SWTP scheme programme has been updated regularly and programme updates have been provided and agreed every quarter to the Department for Transport and the Marches LEP since the project began.

Question 14

Ms K Sharp, Hereford

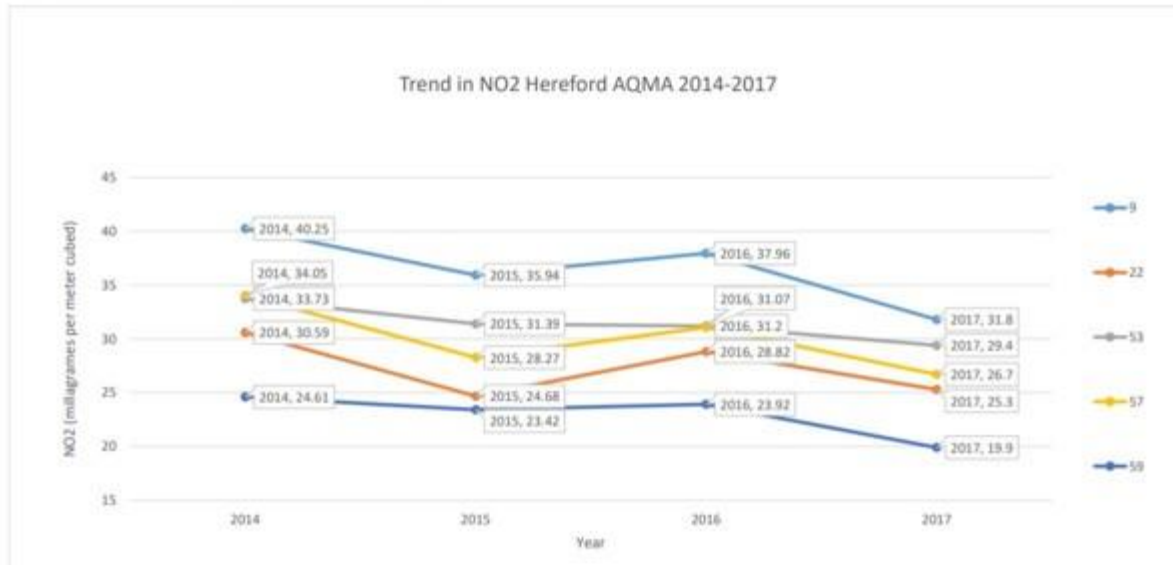
To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet member confirm that that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels as an indicator of air pollution have generally fallen, and that the Hereford AQMA now records levels consistently below the national objective level of 40µg/m³?

See:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200145/business/133/environment_and_pollution

Figure A.1 – Trends in NO₂ Hereford AQMA 2014 - 2017



Response

I cannot confirm that interpretation. The council's environmental health service continue to monitor nitrogen dioxide across the county, including several monitoring points in Hereford's Air Quality Management Area. Although recent reports have implied a reduction in trend, this may be because several monitoring points have had to be moved and therefore a simple comparison is not possible. This is explained more fully in section 3.2.1 of the 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report which can be accessed at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/18377/air_quality_annual_status_report_asr_2018.pdf

For this reason, the council will continue to monitor and observe the trend, reporting on this annually.

Question 15

Mrs C Protherough, Clehonger

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Can the Cabinet member confirm that Highways England did not require a cap on vehicle traffic leaving Asda or the Old Market shopping development but did so for the HEZ?

Response

Please see response to question 10.

Question 16

Mr T Meadows, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

According to the previous Cabinet Member for Infrastructure the “Destination Hereford” programme has been successful in increasing walking and cycling levels in Herefordshire since it started in April 2011, and has contributed towards a 5% reduction in car use between 2016 and 2017 and a 26% increase in cycling in the same period. Apparently, this council is the only one in the West Midlands to win funding from all three rounds of the Department for Transport funding programme. With such success in getting residents out of cars, reducing pollution, getting residents active, tackling congestion more quickly and at a much lower cost than road building, what offers better value for the local taxpayer – expensive road schemes which are designed to increase car use, or a good comprehensive network of active travel measures across the city?

Response

I agree that behavioural change initiatives like Destination Hereford and investment in active travel measures can offer good value for money and be successful in encouraging people to use modes other than the car. Appropriate road schemes which are not designed to increase car use but to mitigate other issues also can offer value for money in the right circumstances. The review of the Hereford Transport Package will enable us to determine what approach or combination of approaches would deliver the best value for the local taxpayer.

Question 17

Mr D Gillam, Peterchurch

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

What steps will the Council take to publicise the Climate & Ecological Emergency and when will the Council create an appropriate communications strategy that helps everyone in Herefordshire to understand the urgency of the situation we are facing?

Response

We take the climate emergency and the protection of our environment extremely seriously. At cabinet today we will be considering the executive response to the resolutions passed by Council in March and July of this year, and what actions to take. A communications strategy will be considered as part of developing the council’s action plan to address these issues.

Supplementary Question

At the UN climate action summit this week the UN secretary general said ‘science tells us that on our current path we face at least 3 degrees Celsius of global heating by the end of the century. The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win.’ The UN estimates that the world would need to increase its efforts between three and five-fold to contain climate change to the levels dictated by science, a 1.5 degree rise at most. Bearing in mind the slow pace of the council’s response so far, will you commit to spending five times more next year than you did this year to tackle the climate emergency locally?

Response

We are more focused on the result of the investment so don't think I can promise that we would go times five but one thing we do very carefully is to check the actual impact of interventions we are planning. We have had a very successful five years with the previous plan. I will be confident that we will set this plan and we work out how to make it work but I would not be able to make the commitment about the actual amount of money at this point. We need to write the plan and a future step will be to adopt it.

Question 18

Ms W Ogden, Much Birch

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

In response to the Climate Emergency declared over six months ago please can the Cabinet explain how every Herefordshire Council service and administrative department can give assurance that their actions, policies and contracts are working in ways which support the declaration: in order for the impact of changes/actions needed to be included in the 20/21 budget and longer term plans?

Response

As you will see from the report appearing on today's agenda, in our proposed response to the resolutions passed by Council earlier this year we will be considering the development of a checklist against which our strategies and plans may be assessed going forward, as well as other actions we can take in the short to medium term.

Question 19

Dr K Jamieson, Ross-on-Wye

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

While the commitment to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 is vital and necessary, carbon is not the only problem. What additional actions will the Council be taking to address the wider ecological crisis that threatens our food supply?

Response

As you will see from the report appearing on today's agenda, in our proposed response to the resolutions passed by Council earlier this year we will be considering what actions to take including potential impacts upon wider ecology and food supply.

Supplementary question

When I read the councils climate response I was shocked. I pinned a lot of hope on your response after you declared a climate emergency last March and I lost that hope. There was nothing in the document that spoke to me about the scale and the urgency of the response that is required. Would you be willing to recognise that we are all facing a life threatening emergency and whether you would be willing to fundamentally change the way you work so that the whole council can act now?

Response

I think the answer to that will come up in the response to the report that we are just about to get to. I think it is best for that to speak for us. Thank you for coming as this is very important.

Question 20

Mrs C Monkley, Much Marcle

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

It is good to hear that the Council has this month changed to a 100% renewable electricity supplier. This encourages the production of more renewable energy. It does not mean that the Council will be using 100% renewable electricity as the electricity comes from the National Grid which is supplied by a mix of sources. Please will the Council commit to producing all the electricity that Herefordshire (not just the Council) uses, from renewable sources within Herefordshire?

Response

As you will see from the report appearing on today's agenda, in our proposed response to the resolutions passed by Council earlier this year we will be considering updating the council's Carbon Management Plan. The extent to which the production of renewable energy in Herefordshire could contribute to meeting the energy needs of the council will be evaluated as part of that work.

Supplementary question

As it has taken from March to September for this council's response to the climate emergency that it declared then, and the response contains aspirations but not commitments, as part of the group who encouraged the council to declare the emergency, I don't feel heard. The system only allows the public a day to respond to the document you put out, because of that I feel only marginally engaged with. The system also means that the public who put in questions, like me, got just hours to digest the answers. That means I feel that my views are considered not very relevant. The specifics in my questions were not answered in the response therefore I feel ignored. I feel these things hamper a constructive relationship between the public and the council and I would like this system to change please. Since March, when this declaration was declared, the rate of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide has accelerated. Since March, the rate of damage to our global oceans has accelerated. Since March, the rate of melting of our polar ice caps and glaciers has accelerated. Since March, the rate of ecological damage we are doing globally has accelerated. All of these things have human consequences. Human displacement and personal devastation is accelerating. In short, the rate of human caused climate destabilisation is accelerating. I ask you to hear and feel my anguish, my fear and my frustration. Will the council commit to producing all the electricity that Herefordshire needs from renewable sources within Herefordshire? Why should we expect anyone else to produce our electricity?

Response

I hear your intense pain at this situation. I know that producing that much renewable energy in Herefordshire would be far from uncontroversial. What we are going to do is look at that as part of the process. It is certainly a possibility but it would not be an easy win.

Question 21

Ms P Cramsie, Newton St Margarets

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

Now that you are endorsing the Climate Emergency motion, does this mean that, since time is of the essence, you will consider signing up to already-existing initiatives such as the the Woodland Trust's Tree Charter, which would include the mass planting of trees, and Bee-Friendly's

Hedgerow Manifesto, which would enable pollinator corridors to be established across the county, aiding wildlife as well as food security?

Response

As you will see from the report appearing on today's agenda, we will be considering in our proposed response to the resolutions passed by Council earlier this year, what actions to take. Subject to Cabinet's approval of these proposals, I will ensure that the potential benefits of joining existing initiatives such as those referred to are explored as part of developing our action plans.

Councillors' questions at Cabinet – 26 September 2019

Question 1

Councillor Diana Toynbee, Greyfriars Ward

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

In January 2019 I received a written answer from the previous Cabinet member for Infrastructure that the forecast spend of £2,508K for 2018/19 would, amongst other things, deliver

- Procurement of a contractor for the Southern Link Road construction and mobilisation
- Completion of the full business case for the South Wye Transport Package for submission and sign off to Department for Transport
- Development of a programme for delivery of the active travel measures.

As work has continued into this financial year, please tell me where I can find the signed and submitted full business case, the programme for the Active Travel measures and the name of the contractor for the construction of the Southern Link Road?

Response

Whilst the development of the full business case for the south wye transport package and the contractor procurement process for the southern link road progressed in 2018/2019 these were not completed as originally programmed and work extended into 2019/2020. There is therefore not yet a final business case, and approved programme of active travel measures or an appointed contractor to publish. As a result actual spend in 2018/2019 was £2.006m which was less than that forecast in January 2019 as elements of this work was reprogrammed into 2019/2020.

Work in 2019/2020 was further impacted by the purdah period and the elections in Spring 2019 and following the formation of a new administration we took some time to consider both the South Wye and Hereford transport packages to ensure they remained the best option to meet the desired outcomes and any new or emerging priorities, such as those associated with the climate emergency.

I therefore took the decision in August to pause and review this scheme and the Hereford Transport Package. My decision was called in and reviewed by the General Scrutiny Committee and I am considering their recommendations before taking my final decision.

Question 2

Councillor Roger Phillips, Arrow Ward

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

During the pause if the Cabinet member seriously considers building an eastern bridge crossing without a link between the A438 and A4103 (the Worcester and Ledbury main roads); will he establish the impact the crossing would make on the level of traffic through Lugwardine and Bartestree villages, on Cotts Lane and Lumber lane, and also in Tupsley on the Ledbury road and Hampton Dean highway?

Response

No decision has yet been taken to progress the eastern bridge scheme. If a decision were taken scheme development would include the appropriate assessment of impacts of the scheme. This would include traffic modelling and forecasting the impact of the scheme on the highway network. It is likely this would include the areas referred to in your question. Any decision regarding this scheme would be the subject of a further decision report.

Question 3

Councillor Bob Matthews, Credenhill Ward

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

Owing to the fact that the county is desperately in need of a considerable number of secure and well paid jobs, can the Cabinet Member inform us of what her plans are to deal with this extremely serious situation. There are thousands of houses under construction within the county, so I am sure that she will agree that it is of paramount importance that these jobs and adequate support services are delivered without delay.

Response

Growing the economy, developing higher value sustainable employment opportunities for current and future residents is a key priority for the council. The county faces a number of significant economic challenges such as having a very low wage economy (19% below the national average weekly wage), low productivity (27% below national average Gross Value Added per head of population), and an aging population/ workforce with 24% of people 65 or over, compared to a national average of 18%.

As we set out at the Parish Summit on the 20th September, within the Corporate Plan consultation document a priority is to '*Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources*'. The council continues to deliver the Invest Herefordshire economic vision, and is proactively working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and businesses to deliver the Marches Strategic Economic Plan.

In the first few weeks of the new administration we have enabled the £19 million development of the first purpose built student accommodation in Hereford and underwritten part of NMiTE's Growth Deal grant to establish teaching space on Blackfriars St. This will support the critical development of Higher Education provision in the county, developing higher level skills, retaining/ attracting younger people, creating the workforce to attract business investment. We have also approved £5m to support the continued successful development of the Hereford Enterprise Zone, establishing high quality business space to enable growth. The £9 million development of the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security and the £7 million development of business incubation space at the Shell Store remain on track to open in the summer 2020.

As per recent government announcements, the council have also secured £2m of Heritage Action Zone funding to support the development of Leominster, and up to £25m of stronger towns funding to support the development of Hereford.

We are reviewing employment land and business space needs across the wider county.

Supplementary Question

I thank the cabinet member for her report but I must point out that most of what she has mentioned was well in place with the previous administration so there is still a lot of work to do. A prosperous and sound local infrastructure is vital to deliver all the climate change and other services that this county needs so we should all be working strongly in support of that view. Could I ask how often does she meet the local business people at Rotherwas and elsewhere in the county? Also there is no mention at all of the tourist trade which I think is an extremely undervalued trade within the county that is one of our strengths. Could she take this up and try and take that forward.

Response

I have been out to the LEZ two times, I haven't yet managed to circle the actual businesses but I have had a lot of discussions with Mark Pearce and his team. Tourism now explicitly appears in one of the cabinet portfolios. Only yesterday, I was at a meeting of the Herefordshire Sustainable Tourism and Food Partnership which is drawing up a proposal to have a Herefordshire Business Improvement District (BID), which would focus on tourism businesses across the county. Despite the relatively small number of people in economic development, they do an excellent job in keeping, as much as they can, tourism on the board and they were instrumental in securing a number of capital bids recently which should help among other things with tourism.

The cabinet member undertook to look at regular reporting on job creation following clarification of the measurements Councillor Matthews was seeking.

Question 4

Councillor Nigel Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty Ward

To: cabinet member, corporate strategy and budget

The Marches LEP agenda includes an update growth deal projects. Table 3 (p24) notes that the NMiTE phase 2 (£5,660,000.00) and South Wye Transport Package (£27,000,000.00) are now high risk in relation to generating full spend by 31 March 2021.

The report notes, "The decision to undertake 'pause and review' work on the Southern link road presents the LEP with a significant risk due to the timescales involved in ensuring that £27m of Growth Deal Funding is spent by 21 March 2021."

In the LEP board meeting on the 24th September how is the Leader proposing to explain to our LEP partners how the Authority will mitigate the risk for the LEP on each project and what kind of impact does he think this situation will have on any future application for government funding by the Authority, through any source?

Response

The meeting to which Councillor Shaw refers has taken place.

South Wye Transport Package: A robust discussion took place over this issue with the case being put forward for the funding to remain in Herefordshire, and being available should a decision be made which would enable work on the Southern Link Road to start before the end of March 2021. The council, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Department for Transport (DfT) are due to meet in October to discuss the pause and review and explore funding options,

and an additional meeting of the LEP Board is due to take place following that meeting. The South Wye Transport Package includes a wide range of active travel measures in addition to the proposed road. To date LEP partners, DfT and Midlands Connect have all been understanding of the need for a pause and review to ensure all options are considered to deliver the best outcome for the county.

NMiTE: Representatives from NMiTE attended the same meeting and will attend the same additional LEP Board meeting to present more refined plans for the next phase of their Growth Deal allocation. They have developed their plans in consultation with the council, LEP executive team and a wide range of local partners.

So far as future applications are concerned, we have been encouraged by some of the responses we have received. I think that if we continue to present strong cases, there is every reason to believe that if our proposals address the climate emergency as well as economic development, employment and housing needs, we will receive a good reception from government.

Supplementary question

I thank Councillor Hitchiner for his reply and appreciate that he remains in such good humour in respect of our relationship with the LEP. I hear that the LEP was also put in good humour by his request to change the purpose of the SWTP package into funding for electric buses, however a further result of this pleading at Tuesday's Board meeting was a resolution for LEP members to propose new projects to spend the funding currently secured by Herefordshire, quite possibly elsewhere in Shropshire or Telford and Wrekin to be submitted by end of October, after which this funding will presumably be forfeit by the Council.

I do sympathise with Councillor Hitchiner as he and his Independent group are being pulled into ever more extreme position by his Green and IOC supporters that now appear to be dictating the administration's policies. Can Councillor Hitchiner confirm that he is getting tired of leading this county towards economic stagnation and his arm is being twisted to step down as Leader in favour of a representative from one of these other groups in the coming year?

Response

A written response will be provided.

The following written response was provided.

I am sorry I wasn't present to answer in person, but thank Councillor Shaw for his concern for my welfare. I would wish to reassure him that I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead this Council in the development of its new corporate plan to address the current and future needs of Herefordshire; I do not tire easily, and certainly not when pursuing the best interests of this county. I would also like to assure him that both my arms are in their usual position.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 October 2019
Title of report:	Corporate Parenting Annual Update 2018/2019
Report by:	Cabinet member children and families

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review the progress of the corporate parenting strategy.

Recommendation(s)

That:

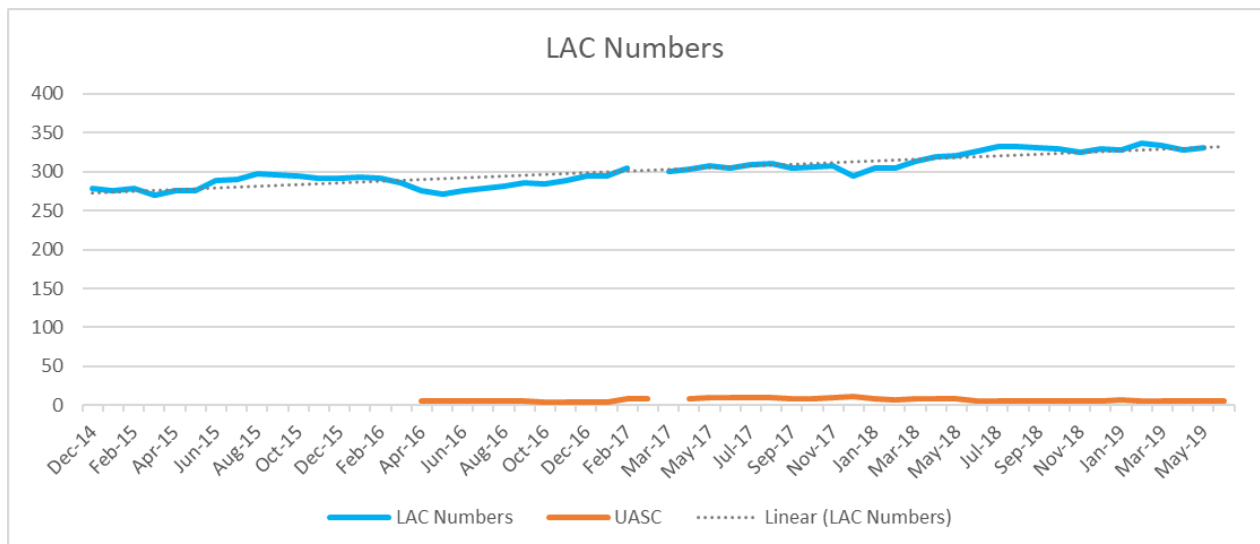
- (a) the progress of the corporate parenting strategy as outlined at appendix 1 to this report be considered and cabinet set out any further actions to improve the delivery of the strategy.**

Alternative options

1. The cabinet could decide not to receive an update on the progress of the corporate parenting strategy action plan. As part of the role of all councillors being corporate parents it was agreed within the action plan that an annual update would be provided to the executive. If cabinet decided not to receive an update then this would be in contradiction to the previous decision when the strategy was adopted.

Key considerations

2. Put simply, the term 'corporate parenting' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by the council. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for a looked after child in the same way that a good parent would act for their own child.
3. The corporate parenting strategy was first considered by Scrutiny committee prior to its approval by Cabinet in July 2017 and have requested regular updates on progress of the strategy.
4. Appendix 1 outlines the progress made at the end of year two of a three year strategy. Key achievements during 2018/19 include:
 - a. decision to exempt care leavers from council tax
 - b. purchase of a building to provide accommodation for care leavers
 - c. three care leavers have been employed as apprentices in the Council
 - d. six care leavers are studying at University
 - e. Housing Solutions team have employed a specialist 16+ worker
5. Key areas that have been slower to progress are:
 - a. numbers of looked after children have continued to increase although have stabilised in recent months. A new alternatives to care panel was introduced in September 2018 to scrutinise all requests for children to become looked after and this has been successful at slowing the number of children being admitted to care. During the last year additional resource was agreed to improve the support available to Special Guardianship carers and this is now resulting in new applications for Special Guardianship Orders being made.
 - b. placement disruptions result in some children having to move schools. Work continues to reduce placement disruptions by improved matching and support for foster carers.
 - c. high numbers of looked after children impact upon capacity of LAC health team. The LAC health team have developed a business case for additional resource that is being considered by the Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - d. turnover of staff in some teams remains quite high and so some children have had several changes in their Social Worker which means children and young people are unable to build long term trusting relationships. Work continues to recruit and retain a permanent workforce and the council has invested further in the offer for social workers, including market forces supplement and implementing ideas from staff themselves such as individual learning accounts.
6. On the 31 March 2019 Herefordshire Council had 334 children in its care and were providing support for 160 care leavers. Herefordshire has a rate of 92 looked after children per 10,000 which compares with statistical neighbours rate of 53 per 10,000 and a national rate of 64 per 10,000.



Community impact

7. In accordance with the code of corporate governance Herefordshire Council must ensure that it has an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. The council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.
8. It is a council priority to 'keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life.' The delivery of the corporate parenting strategy contributes to the council achieving its ambitions in key strategies in the corporate plan, health and wellbeing strategy and children and young people's plan.
9. The corporate parenting strategy is the overarching plan that sets out how the council will meet its collective responsibility as a corporate parent. The progress of this strategy will directly impact upon the well-being of the council's looked after children and care leavers.

Equality duty

10. 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.
11. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are

paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The corporate parenting strategy is intended to promote equality of opportunity for all of our looked after children and care leavers and actively work to minimise any disadvantages that they may face especially those with a protected characteristic. The strategy has been effective in raising awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst Councillors and Council leaders resulting in agreement to exempt care leavers from Council tax and development of more supported accommodation options for care leavers within the County.

Resource implications

12. None arising from the recommendations. The resource implications of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to the recommendations. There are no direct resource implications arising from the corporate parenting strategy. The delivery of the strategy would achieve significant savings if the numbers of looked after children reduced to a level comparable to our statistical neighbours. However, the purpose of the strategy is to raise the quality of care and support provided to our looked after children and care leavers by working within current resource to promote opportunities and remove obstacles that may limit the ability of children and young people to meet their potential.

Legal implications

13. The Children and Social Work Act 2017, introduced a duty on councils to have regard to the following corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people;
 - a. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
 - b. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - c. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - d. to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - e. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - f. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - g. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Risk management

14. None arising from the recommendations. The risks associated with any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations. Without an effective corporate parenting strategy improvements in the life chances of our looked after children and care leavers would not be achieved and in all likelihood would decline. In addition to the direct impact upon children and young people this is likely to damage the reputation of the council.

Consultees

15. The Corporate Parenting Panel has contributed to and considered the annual review. The Corporate Parenting Panel includes as members Your Voice Matters, which represents care experienced children and young people in Herefordshire.
16. The children and young people scrutiny committee received the annual update at its meeting on 15 July 2019. The committee made no recommendations to the Executive.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate parenting strategy action plan review 31 March 2019

Background papers

None identified



Herefordshire Council

Corporate Parenting Strategy – progress review 2018/19

2017-20

Priority 1 – All elected members and senior leaders across all key partners understand and act on their responsibilities as corporate parents

Progress

- Cabinet agreed that all care leavers aged up to 25 are exempt from paying Council tax

Key challenges

- Partner agencies have not progressed corporate parenting at a leadership level

Next steps

- Mandatory training on corporate parenting responsibilities will be delivered to all Councillors following elections in May 2019 and all councillors will be asked to contribute to the directory of interests and skills
- Proposal for Herefordshire Council's covenant for care leavers will be presented to Cabinet in July 2019

Priority 2 – Families are supported to care for their own children

Progress

- LAC reduction strategy is in place and 19 children had left care and are now subject of Special Guardianship orders (SGO) as a result. The rate of children being admitted to care has reduced this year as a result of the Alternatives to Care panel.
- Additional resource for Early Help and robust application of thresholds has resulted in the number of Early Help assessments doubling during the year
- Requests for children to be admitted to care are considered by a weekly Alternatives to Care panel chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding. Alternatives to children becoming looked after are explored robustly with a focus on supporting families to remain together if this can be achieved safely.
- Additional resource for family support workers has enabled intense support to be provided to families where a child is on the “edge of care” and work is underway to develop a specific service to prevent children coming into care and to support reunification of children at the earliest opportunity
- Practice improvements in Children's Social Care is reducing the risk of difficulties escalating to a crisis point

Key challenges

- The number of children ceasing LAC has reduced again this year although recent changes to SGO support should see an increase during 2019/20

- Staff turnover and high vacancy rates in some teams makes practice improvements difficult to embed

Next steps

- Continue with LAC reduction strategy and develop resource to support edge of care work and reunification of looked after children to their families
- Implementation of Signs of Safety will support a strengths based approach to working with families and further practice improvement
- Work to recruit and retain Social Workers is ongoing

Priority 3 – All looked after children have a safe and stable home

Progress

- Number of fostering households increased from 155 to 162
- Sufficiency strategy was approved by Cabinet and sets clear targets for recruitment of foster carers and additional funding has been agreed for marketing and recruitment activity and an assessing Social Worker
- 25 children have been long-term matched with their foster carer during 2018/19
- Support available to Special Guardianship carers has improved with supervised contact and improved offer of financial support
- Refugee Action have been commissioned to provide additional support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the County and evaluation has demonstrated that young people are feeling safer in the community
- Herefordshire's adoption service will join Adoption Central England (ACE) from 1st July 2019

Key challenges

- Increase in numbers of looked after children means we do not have enough foster carers to meet need resulting in some children having to be placed outside of Herefordshire which makes it more likely that they have to move schools and have less contact with family and friends. This results in increased time taken for visits by social workers, disrupts relationships with other professionals and once children have settled makes it unlikely that they will move back to Herefordshire foster carers
- Decrease in placement stability this year although likely to be partly due to an improvement in data quality
- Refugee Action service is not viable to continue beyond September 2019 and so will end
- There has been a reduction in the number of HIPSS carers and it is very difficult to recruit carers to this service

Next steps

- Continue drive to recruit foster carers
- Explore alternative options to support UASC young people through youth services already established in Herefordshire

Priority 4 – All looked after children are supported to reach their potential in education

Progress

- Looked after children in Herefordshire are achieving better than the national average in the Early Years and reading is a strength in the primary phase where Herefordshire LAC are performing above average compared to national LAC
- Six care leavers studying at University with 2 expected to graduate summer 2019
- E-PEP system has been improved following Ofsted feedback
- Funding in place for IT equipment to support looked after children and care leavers who need it for education or training

Key challenges

- Looked after children in Key Stage 4 are not achieving as well as looked after children nationally and this limits their progression options.
- Gap between Herefordshire LAC and national all pupils increased this year from 21 to 28.8
- Placement disruptions for children result in some children having to move schools disrupting their education
- High numbers of looked after children impact upon capacity within the virtual school which means minimal support is offered to young people outside of the PEP meeting
- National funding changes to further education have implications for care leavers who wish to pursue a level 3 course (A-level equivalent) in year 14 as they will no longer be funded for the whole course.

Next steps

- LAC reduction strategy and increasing the number and choice of foster placements will help to mitigate these challenges

Priority 5 – All looked after children enjoy the best possible health (in mind and body)

Progress

- Compliance with timescales for completing initial and review health assessments has improved overall
- Improved joint working between LAC health team and children's social care

- Mental health pathway agreed that will review every child with a high SDQ score to ensure appropriate support and/or intervention is provided to meet need

Key challenges

- Delays in notifying the LAC health team when children are admitted to care or move placements causes difficulties
- High numbers of looked after children impact upon capacity of the LAC health team which is very small
- Meeting health needs of children who are placed out of County

Next steps

- A business case is being considered by the CCG to expand the LAC health team
- Change Mosaic workflow so that LAC health team are notified of placement moves
- Develop support for care leavers if LAC health team expansion is agreed

Priority 6 – All looked after children enjoy a range of play, sport, leisure and cultural opportunities

Progress

- Approaching local businesses and organisations to offer discounts to looked after children, foster carers and care leavers shows a willingness amongst the business community to engage

Key challenges

- Foster carers don't always have permission to make day to day decisions delegated to them and these aren't always reviewed regularly enough
- A shortage of foster carers means that some children have to be placed out of County disrupting their friendships and ability to continue attending clubs and activities.

Next steps

- LAC reduction strategy and increasing the number and choice of foster placements will help to achieve stability for children

Priority 7 – All looked after children are listened to and treated with respect

Progress

- Your Voice Matters, children in care council, have clear priorities which are being supported by the Corporate Parenting panel

- Your Voice Matters have worked to develop a training programme for Councillors on Corporate Parenting that will be delivered as part of the mandatory induction programme in May 2019

Key challenges

- Numbers of children and young people involved in YVM remain low despite efforts to encourage more to get involved
- Low numbers of children and young people have been supported to chair their own LAC review
- Turnover of staff in some teams remains quite high and so some children have had several changes in their Social Worker which means children and young people are unable to build trusting relationships

Key challenges

- YVM are working hard to raise awareness about their group and increase engagement of looked after children
- Work to recruit and retain Social Workers continues

Priority 8 – All looked after children are supported and enabled to live happy, healthy and financially secure lives when they leave care

Progress

- The Council has exempted care leavers from Council tax up until the age of 25
- The Council has purchased a building in the city centre that will provide 5 units of supported accommodation for care leavers and outreach support to care leavers in a further 3 flats.
- The 16+ team moved to a new venue in the city centre that enables young people to drop in to receive support if they need it
- Three care leavers are working within the Council in apprenticeship roles at the end of March 2019
- Housing Solutions team have employed a specialist 16+ worker who works very closely with the 16+ team

Key challenges

- Some young people struggle to maintain their tenancy. At times young people have had to be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation because no other safe alternative could be found
- The number of care leavers placed at SHYPP is low
- A growing number of young people are at risk due to the impact of “county lines” in Herefordshire

Next steps

- A project board has been established to address the underlying causes of low use of SHYPP and to develop a wider offer of placements e.g. short-term beds and “taster flats”
- Multi-agency arrangements to identify and support young people at risk from exploitation is being developed

Corporate Parenting Action Plan 2017-20

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst elected members.	Include Corporate parenting workshops within mandatory induction programme for Councillors	Governance services with Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council	% of Councillors completing mandatory induction programme Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators	28 of 53 (53%) elected members have attended corporate parenting training during 2017/18. Mandatory training for all Councillors is planned as part of member induction in May & June 2019	0%	53%	53%
1	Increase awareness and understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities amongst senior Council officers and partners.	Offer Corporate parenting workshops to senior officers within the Council and partner organisations	Management board with Head of service for looked after children and Children in Care Council and Children's scrutiny	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators	Corporate parenting issues have been debated at management board resulting in commitment to develop a Care Leavers Covenant	n/a	n/a	
1	Councillors will have looked after children and care leavers at the forefront of their work and offer of support	Ask the question "how does this support Herefordshire's looked after children and care leavers?" in	Elected members	Progress within action plan and against key performance indicators	Decision reports have been amended and now include mandatory question regarding impact upon corporate parenting			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>relation to all Council and community business</p> <p>Commit to a minimum percentage of all work experience placements and apprenticeships being made available to LAC and care leavers</p> <p>Develop a directory of interests and skills of members so that they can offer to support/mentor individual children and young people who wish to explore that field</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Elected members including children's scrutiny</p>	<p>% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile</p> <p>% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is lower than national average and improves each year to be in the bottom quartile</p>	<p>Data quality has improved. Care leavers covenant makes firm commitment and will be presented to Cabinet in July 2019</p> <p>Compilation of directory of interests and skills has commenced and will be completed at mandatory corporate parenting training in May 2019</p>	<p>29% EET (England 50%) 56% NEET (England 41%) 16% n/k (England 10%)</p>	<p>43% EET (England 51%) 37% NEET (England 39%) 20% n/k (England 10%)</p>	<p>38% EET 41% NEET 20% n/k</p>
1	Ensure that the Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and Clinical	Provide guidance within report templates	Council, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key	Council have completed this.			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
	Commissioning Group considers the impact upon corporate parenting responsibilities prior to any decision.			performance indicators	No progress by WVT or CCG			
1	Ensure that Councillors, WVT and CCG are held to account for progress of the Corporate Parenting strategy	Present an annual report on Corporate Parenting to full Council and CCG Governing body and thematic information to children's scrutiny committee	Head of service for looked after children, WVT and CCG	Progress within Action Plan and against key performance indicators	Annual reports are presented to Council Cabinet, scrutiny committee and WVT's governing body.			
1	Enable children and young people in care and care leavers to hold their Corporate Parents to account	Provide information to explain what a Corporate Parent is and the role and function of the Corporate parenting panel for children and young people Strengthen accountability of the Corporate parenting panel to the Children in Care Council	Head of service for looked after children and Participation Team Corporate parenting panel and Children in Care Council		Children and young people have prepared training resources in partnership with Children's Social Care in readiness for training dates. YVM have allocated agenda space at Corporate Parenting panel to raise issues and			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
					members of panel routinely attend YVM.			
2	The rate of looked after children will gradually reduce	<p>Ensure families receive multi-agency support to enable them to meet their children's needs</p> <p>Ensure children are only admitted to care when there is no safe alternative</p> <p>Focus upon permanency planning to ensure children do not remain in care longer than is in their best interests</p> <p>Provide clear information on support available to Special Guardianship carers to enable</p>	<p>HSCB</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>Children's Social Care</p>	Rate of looked after children will reduce and be at or below national average	<p>Number of families supported by Early Help has increased from 553 to 1088 during 2018/19.</p> <p>Children are only admitted to care if Alternatives to Care panel agree</p> <p>LAC reduction strategy is being progressed with 19 children leaving care as a result of the strategy by 31st March.</p> <p>Contact service resourced to provide supervised contact for SGO carers</p>	<p>Rate of LAC 84 per 10,000 England average 62 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC admissions 27 per 10,000 England average 28 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC cessations 24</p>	<p>Rate of LAC 87 per 10,000 England average 64 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC admissions 31 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC cessations 27</p>	<p>Rate of LAC 92 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC admissions 26 per 10,000</p> <p>Rate of LAC cessations 23</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		prospective SGO carers to make informed decisions			SGO financial support policy reviewed to remove disincentive to apply for SGO	per 10,000 England average 27 per 10,000	per 10,000	per 10,000
		Ensure that foster to adopt placements are considered in all cases	Children's Social Care and Legal Services		1 foster to adopt placement was made during 2018/19			
		Ensure service demands are shared to inform the development of early help services	Children's Social Care		Additional resource for early help resulting in double the number of children being supported			
		Early help strategy fully and effectively implemented	Children and young people's partnership					
		Ensure clear joint protocols are effective in preventing homelessness for	Children's Well-being and Strategic housing team		16+ specialist housing worker employed by Housing Solutions team	Data not available	3 young people accommodated due to	4 young people accommodated due to

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		young people aged 16+					risk of homelessness	risk of homelessness
3	Continue to grow the fostering service to meet placement needs of looked after children and care leavers and improve placement stability	Review and revise recruitment strategy every year to focus on gaps in placement provision	Fostering service	Number of children placed and spend on children placed in independent fostering agencies and residential care	Recruitment strategy updated in accordance with new sufficiency strategy. 24 young people in SLP placement on 31/3/19.	151 foster carer households	155 foster carer households	162 foster carer households
		Specifically target recruitment of foster carers to meet needs of BME children	Fostering service	Profile of foster carers in comparison with looked after children	Information systems are being developed to enable monitoring.	22 supported lodgings providers	20 supported lodgings providers	15 supported lodgings providers
		Further develop and improve training for foster carers to increase skill level	Fostering service	Placement stability in comparison with national average and	Placement stability has reduced since last year although in part due to	74 children in placement	101 children in placement	81 children in placement

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>and resilience of foster carers particularly for those caring for teenagers</p> <p>Ensure consistent practice in relation to minimising risk of placement disruption and learning lessons when disruptions do occur.</p> <p>Promote foster carers as professionals by holding joint training and where appropriate co-producing training with foster carers for Children's Social care workforce and celebrating achievements of foster carers</p>	<p>Children's social care</p> <p>Children's Social care and Foster carers</p>	<p>previous local performance</p>	<p>improved data accuracy.</p> <p>Use of consolidation meetings to reduce risk of placement disruption has been embedded in house and efforts to use with IFA's is ongoing</p> <p>Not yet progressed</p>	<p>nt for 2.5 years +</p> <p>15 children with 3+ moves in 12 months</p>	<p>nt for 2.5 years +</p> <p>10 children with 3+ moves in 12 months</p>	<p>nt for 2.5 years +</p> <p>31 children with 3+ moves in 12 months</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Ensure effective support is in place to enable children to step-down from residential care</p> <p>Ensure effective placement provision to reduce numbers of children placed in residential and provide effective step-down to foster placements</p> <p>Train Foster Carers and Social Workers to understand and apply restorative justice solutions to incidents in placement</p>	<p>HIPSS</p> <p>Children's Social Care and Commissioning</p> <p>Youth Justice service, foster carers and children's social care</p>		<p>HIPSS has been re-commissioned for 3 (+1+1) years and TISS contract has ended</p> <p>Targeted recruitment of HIPSS carers has not been successful this year and 2 approved HIPSS carers resigned very quickly.</p> <p>Not yet progressed</p>	33 children in residential care	23 children in residential care	24 children in residential care
3	Develop effective adoption support services	Working with Regional Adoption	Adoption service	Number of adoption disruptions	No adoption disruptions during the year	0	0	0

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
	Continue focus upon recruitment of adopters for sibling groups, older children and those with complex needs	agency and third sector Working with Regional Adoption agency	Adoption service	The average time between receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family in comparison with national data and previous local performance	Previous performance affected by sibling group who had been in care for 6 years being adopted	255 days (England 220 days)	227 days (England 201 days)	
3	Understand numbers affected and levels of risk to looked after children who go missing and/or are at risk of child sexual exploitation Train Children's Social Care staff and foster	Develop consistent recording methods to enable accurate monitoring and analysis of themes Complete multi-agency thematic audits	Children's Social care and performance team HSCB	Data is accurate Outcomes from audits	Recording process reviewed to ensure accurate recording including children placed out of County Multi-agency audit completed January 2018 on emotional and mental health and actions agreed Additional resource to support work with	33 children missing on 94 occasions	27 children missing on 84 occasions	32 children missing on 97 occasions

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
	carers to manage and reduce risk of CSE	Working with Barnardo's BASE project	Barnardo's BASE project and Social Work Academy	Levels of risk to individual children reduces over time	children at risk of exploitation, HSCB are revising policy and practice consistency is improving. WRASAC now commissioned to provide support instead of Barnardo's.			
4	Reduce the gap in educational achievement between looked after children and their peers	Closer analysis of exclusion data and joint approach with schools to address inconsistencies in practice between schools	Virtual school	Reduction in gap in achievement between looked after children and the general population as compared with national average and previous local performance	Outcomes in 2018 were mixed: Early Years - cohort performed better than looked after children nationally. Key Stage 1 - performed better in reading than looked after children nationally. Key Stage 2 – below national for attainment but scores in reading and maths were above national LAC (+0.93 and +1.98 respectively) and a higher number of Herefordshire children	Attainment 8 score 23.2 (England 18.9) Progress 8 score - 1.01 (England -1.19) Gap between Herefordshire LAC and	17.6 (England 18.8) Progress 8 score - 1.41 (England 1.24) Gap between Herefordshire LAC and national all	Not available until January 2020

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		Continue to implement virtual school plan	Virtual school	Numbers of young people choosing to go to University and successfully completing their course	made positive progress in writing than national LAC. Attainment in the Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test was above national average for LAC. Key Stage 4 - underperformed compared to national LAC. However, all of them were able to access post 16 provision and commenced in the autumn term 2018. 3 young people commenced university in September 2018. 2 young people are due to graduate in the summer of 2019	national all pupils - 21.0	pupils – 28.8	
		Implementation of E-PEP and challenging schools on use of Pupil Premium	Virtual school		Completed – analysis of Pupil premium is completed termly			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Consider whether to introduce a Board of Governors for Virtual School to improve oversight and challenge</p> <p>Training for foster carers, social workers, school governors and virtual school staff to raise aspirations amongst looked after children and enable effective support for children's learning</p> <p>Explore opportunity to make refurbished IT equipment that the Council no longer requires available for looked after children and care leavers</p>	<p>Children's Well-Being directorate and Cabinet member</p> <p>Virtual school, children's social care and foster carers</p> <p>Virtual school and Hoople</p>		<p>Completed – the Corporate Parenting Panel acts as the governing body</p> <p>Since September 2018 a further 5 training sessions delivered to carers, 1 to governors and 6 sessions to schools.</p> <p>Policy now in place</p>			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Work with local FE colleges and Universities to develop opportunities for taster days for looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Develop a clear offer of the practical, emotional and financial support available to care leavers who go to University</p>	<p>Virtual school</p> <p>Children's social care</p>		<p>Not yet started.</p> <p>Completed</p>			
5	Ensure the physical and emotional health needs of our looked after children are met	Completion of health assessments within statutory timescales	LAC health team	Compliance with timescales for completion of health assessments	<p>Total IHA's completed in timeframes 63.2% (68 were eligible a drop from 90 last year)</p> <p>Total RHA's completed in time frames 86.9% (283 were eligible an increase from 270 last year)</p>	67.5%	71.3%	

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Effective and timely liaison with colleagues to ensure needs of children placed out of County are met and smooth transition of services if children move placements</p> <p>CAMHS will offer training to Social Workers, inductions for ASYE and attend</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>CAMHS and Children's Social care</p>		<p>This is an overall increase.</p> <p>LAC Health Team see children placed in Counties bordering Herefordshire. This ensures continuity of assessment and where appropriate referral for health services. Health reviews completed by Out of County Health Teams are Quality Assured and Health care Plans reviewed to ensure progress. Difficulties arise when LAC health team are not informed about placement moves.</p> <p>CAMHS have provided training and weekly consultation to social work teams commencing May '19.</p>			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>team meetings in children's social care to develop skills and understanding of mental health issues within Children's Social care workforce.</p> <p>Ensuring accurate recording of disability on MOSAIC</p>	Children's Social care and performance team		Data now recorded accurately and any gaps monitored and resolved swiftly.			
5	Use data to target support and resources effectively to ensure children's needs are met and risk of placement breakdown is reduced	Continue to increase the number of SDQ assessments completed and use data to review whether this indicates the need for changes to a child's care plan and/or support for their carer	LAC health team, fostering team and children's Social Workers	Placement stability	Work continues to improve understanding of value of SDQ's amongst foster carers and social workers to improve completion rates. A new mental health pathway is due to commence to plan for children with a high SDQ score.	158 children eligible – 112 completed – 70.8%	205 children eligible – 138 completed – 67.3%	214 children eligible - 149 completed - 69%

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
5	Enable care leavers to understand their health needs and how to access additional support when they need it	<p>Ensure all care leavers receive their health passport and a copy is kept on their file</p> <p>Offer a regular drop-in advice service for children in care aged 16+ and care leavers</p> <p>Train 16+ team in C-card scheme</p> <p>Explore opportunities for CAMHS to be expanded to provide support for young people up to the age of 25</p>	<p>LAC health team</p> <p>LAC health team</p> <p>Sexual health team and 16+</p> <p>CCG</p>	<p>Care leavers who are EET and in suitable accommodation</p> <p>Care leavers who are parents</p>	<p>No progress due to capacity of the LAC health team.</p> <p>No progress due to capacity of the LAC health team.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Agreed but timescale for implementation not yet clear</p>	<p>Suitable 70%</p> <p>Unsuitable 14%</p> <p>Unknown 16%</p> <p>(England – Suitable 84%, Unsuitable 7% and U/k 10%)</p>	<p>Suitable 72%</p> <p>Unsuitable 8%</p> <p>Unknown 20%</p> <p>(England data not available yet)</p>	<p>Suitable 67%</p> <p>Unsuitable 6%</p> <p>Unknown 27%</p>
6	Commit to enabling children and young people being able to take part in the activities that are “normal” and socially	Develop guidance for practitioners and managers to support delegated authority for carers and a	Children’s social care and Corporate Parenting panel		Focus on embedding culture of completing and regularly reviewing delegated authority. Improved but not yet consistent enough.			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
	acceptable for their peers	pragmatic approach to risk assessments						
7	Develop the Children in Care Council (CICC) so that it is able to represent the voice of all children in care and is able to hold the Corporate Parenting panel to account	<p>Increase numbers of children and young people engaged in or with the CICC</p> <p>CICC to develop its priorities for change</p> <p>Ensure CICC is enabled to engage fully with the work of the Corporate Parenting panel</p>	Participation team, Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Panel	% of looked after children who engage with CICC	<p>YVM are having regular events to encourage new members to join.</p> <p>Council have pledged additional finances to support the promotion of YVM.</p> <p>New leaflets have been designed and are now being sent out to all looked after children.</p> <p>2019 priorities have been established and are being discussed and supported by CPP.</p> <p>Out of county contact is being increased due to Participation Worker attending Team Meetings.</p>			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
					Contact with wider community groups and participation groups occurring in order to promote YVM as a whole.			
7	Support our workforce to develop confidence and competence in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	Deliver training on “culturally competent” practice	Social Work academy	% of workforce trained	Included with continuing professional development programme	No data available	No data available	No data available
7	Ensure that contact arrangements for children and young people are in their best interests	Embed the use of contact assessment tool Regularly review contact arrangements including whether contact needs to be supervised	Children’s social care Children’s social care	Placement stability data	No progress			
7	Improve understanding of children’s wishes and feelings	Analyse results of the voice of the child survey	Participation team		Survey lead to “everyone is someone” conference in September 2018 –			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Offer “U chair” training on a regular basis and encourage children and young people to chair their own LAC reviews</p> <p>Purchase licenses for “mind of my own” (MOMO) app</p> <p>Analyse information provided through MOMO and other sources of information to inform service improvements</p>	<p>Participation team and IRO service</p> <p>Children’s social care</p> <p>Children’s social care</p>		<p>challenging discrimination.</p> <p>U Chair information included within PACK ATTACK leaflet. Individual sessions offered.</p> <p>Request for YVM to have access to MOMO data in order to inform the messages they share and increase the numbers of YP they represent.</p> <p>Independent Voice of the Child forum being created through Participation Team.</p> <p>YVM representatives sitting on City Youth Council and Youth Reps group. And engage with</p>			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
					other Participation groups.			
7	Decrease the number of children and young people who have a change in social worker and/or IRO	Recruit permanent staff to vacancies Improve retention by addressing issues highlighted within the annual Social Work health check survey and developing a clear CPD offer	Hoople and Children's social care Children's social care	Workforce stability data	CPD offer has been developed and is in process of being implemented	Turnover rate of 17.65% National rate of 17%	Turnover rate of 17.6% West Midlands rate of 15.9%	Turnover rate of 14.25%
8	Ensure that there is a range of accommodation available to care leavers that meets need and allows for a gradual move to independence that is financially sustainable	Re-commission housing support to deliver accommodation with support that meets the needs of care leavers Work with housing providers (including private rented sector) to develop move on	Housing strategy and Children's Social care Housing strategy and Children's social care	100% of care leavers in suitable accommodation % of care leavers successfully sustaining a tenancy	Service will be re-commissioned in 2020. Continued joint working with current service provider to develop and improve to meet service needs Building has been purchased which will provide 5 units of accommodation for care leavers and	Suitable 70% Unsuitable 14% Unknown 16% (England – Suitable 84%, Unsuitable 7%)	Suitable 72% Unsuitable 8% Unknown 20% (England – Suitable 84%, Unsuitable 7%)	Suitable 67% Unsuitable 6% Unknown 27%

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017 and U/k 10%)	31 st March 2018 and U/k 9%)	31 st March 2019
		<p>accommodation and shared housing options suitable for care leavers</p> <p>Implement Young Person's accommodation strategy</p> <p>Develop clear policy on financial support for care leavers</p>	<p>Adults well-being and relevant partners</p> <p>Children's Social care and Chief finance officer</p>	Number of care leavers who present as homeless	<p>support to a further 3 flats</p> <p>Completed</p>			
8	Increase the number of care leavers who are safe	Implement a joint approach to assessing and managing risk for adolescents	HSCB	Number of care leavers subject of regular risk management meetings (RMM)	Policy and practice guidance currently being revised.	RMM held for 5 care leavers	RMM held for 3 care leavers	RMM held for 2 care leavers
8	Reduce the number of looked after children and care leavers who are not in education, employment or training	Offer a minimum of 1 week's work experience to every looked after child within the Council, WVT or CCG	Council, WVT and CCG	% of looked after children and care leavers who are NEET at age 19 and 21 is better than national average and improves each year	Commitment to providing this is part of draft care leavers covenant due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2019	29% (England 50%) EET 56% (England 41%) NEET	43% EET (England 51%) 37% NEET (England 39%) 20% n/k (England 10%)	38% EET 41% NEET 20% n/k

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>Establish a baseline of how many looked after children and care leavers undertake an apprenticeship and increase this each year</p> <p>Ensure care leavers are supported to access supported internships and traineeships as opportunities develop as appropriate</p> <p>Offer a guaranteed interview to every looked after child or care leaver who</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Hoople and Council</p> <p>Hoople and Council</p>		<p>2 care leavers employed in Adults and Communities and 1 in Children and Families directorate</p> <p>Working group to plan support is in place</p> <p>To be included in Care Leavers covenant due to be presented to Cabinet in July 2019</p>	<p>16% (England 10%) n/k</p> <p>0</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>3</p>

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		<p>meets the person specification for a job within the Council (including apprenticeships)</p> <p>Require services contracted or commissioned by the Council or CCG to offer work experience and apprenticeships to looked after children and care leavers</p> <p>Have a business advisor linked to the Virtual School to help develop employment opportunities</p>	<p>Council and CCG</p> <p>Virtual school and Careers Enterprise co-ordinator</p>		<p>Commissioning teams are reviewing processes to incorporate benefits for looked after children and care leavers into social value element of contracts</p> <p>No progress</p>			
8	Provide a venue for a drop in service for young people in care aged 16+ and care leavers that	Identify a long term venue for 16+ service within the City centre	Council		16+ team and Participation teams moved to city centre venues in December 2018 which provide			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
	enables them to feel safe and valued				good quality space that meets needs.			
8	Ensure joined up services are provided for care leavers that meet need	Develop joint protocols with relevant partners including Housing Solutions team and Probation service.	16+ team and head of service for looked after children with relevant partner agencies		Protocol with DWP, specialist 16+ worker employed by Housing Solutions team, improved joint working with Probation service			
8	Improve the quality and consistency of support provided to looked after children and care leavers to develop their independent living skills	<p>Clear expectations for carers in placement plans and pathway plans about what they will do to support development of independent living skills</p> <p>Consider establishing a support group for carers of older young people</p> <p>Develop a clear policy for foster carers on saving for looked after children</p>	<p>Children's social care, foster carers and SLP providers</p> <p>Foster carers and Fostering Team</p> <p>Fostering Team</p>	Number and % of care leavers sustaining a tenancy	<p>Method of measuring this has not yet been developed.</p> <p>Independent living skills checklist is being piloted by 16+ team</p> <p>No progress</p> <p>Completed</p>			

Priority	What will we do?	How will we do it?	Who will do it?	How will we measure success? What difference will have been made?	Progress	Performance indicators		
						31 st March 2017	31 st March 2018	31 st March 2019
		Expand the Council Volunteer scheme to enable employees to provide support to looked after children and care leavers	Council		No progress			
8	Develop a clear care leavers "offer"	In consultation with looked after children and care leavers once legislation is in place and clear guidance produced	16+ team, young people, Participation team and Head of Service for LAC		Care leavers offer is being consulted upon and will be published in June 2019			



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 October 2019
Title of report:	Fostering and Adoption Service Annual Reports 2018/19
Report by:	Cabinet member children and families

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review Adoption and Fostering Services performance and approve related documents.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **the performance of the adoption service as outlined at appendix 1 to this report be reviewed, any risks to achievement of objectives noted and relevant mitigating actions approved; and**
- (b) **the performance of the fostering service as outlined at appendix 2 to this report be reviewed, any risks to achievement of objectives noted and relevant mitigating actions approved.**

Alternative options

1. No alternatives. Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014 and Fostering 2011 (NMS), Cabinet should receive updates on the management, outcomes and financial state of Herefordshire Council's adoption and fostering services; it is open to Cabinet to identify additional or alternative actions to improve performance, but in doing so regard must be had to the resource implications of additional actions.

Key considerations

2. The annual reports set out the activity and performance for the Adoption Service and Fostering Service during 2018-19.
3. The Adoption Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting adopters; matching children with adopters who can meet their needs and supporting those affected by adoption either as a child, adopter or birth family of an adopted child.
4. Key achievements for the service include:
 - a. 56% of our children being placed with their adoptive family within 14 months of being accommodated, we are performing better than 8 of our statistical neighbours
 - b. 7% of children aged 5 years and over leaving care who are adopted for 2015-18 compared to a national average of 5%
 - c. 22% of children leaving care being adopted in comparison with an England average of 14%.
 - d. The OFSTED inspection in June 2018 identified several areas of good practice in Herefordshire's adoption service including timeliness of adoption decisions, matching decisions and post adoption support.
 - e. Agreement for Herefordshire joining Adoption Central England (ACE) and being on target to achieve this by 1st July 2019.
5. Improvement plans for 2019/20 focus upon successful integration with ACE and continued reduction in time to place children for adoption.
6. The Fostering Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting local authority foster carers to provide a home for children and young people who are looked after. Children become looked after because their parents have been assessed as unable to meet the needs of their children, in most cases due to abuse or neglect.
7. Key achievements for the service include:
 - Restructure of the service to improve recruitment and retention.
 - Increase in fostering enquiries
 - Higher number of carers seeking Special Guardianship arrangements
 - Increase in Staying Put arrangements
 - Broadening of training programme
8. Key priorities for development during 2018-19 were:
 - Increase in number of carers approved
 - Increase in number of available beds with current cohort of carers
 - Improve retention through improving benefits package available to foster carers

- Increase in children achieving permanency in special guardianship arrangements
- Increase placement stability
- Increase in support for Special Guardianship Orders
- Development of training programme – therapeutic parenting and online resources
- Mosaic workflow upgrade completion

Community impact

9. It is a council priority to “keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life”. The fostering and adoption services support the council in achieving its ambitions in key strategies in the corporate plan, health and wellbeing strategy and children and young people’s plan.
10. Adoption provides a permanency option for looked after children and so where it is in the child’s best interests enables children to become part of a family outside of the looked after system. Ensuring every looked after child achieves permanency is a key part of the Corporate Parenting strategy with adoption a key element of this.
11. Fostering provides a safe and secure home for looked after children enabling them to recover from trauma and supporting them to reach their potential. Providing sufficient local carers able to meet these needs is a key priority within the Corporate Parenting strategy.

Equality duty

12. 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.
13. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. The adoption and fostering services welcome applications from all sectors of the community and is ambitious in seeking placements for children whatever their level of need.

Resource implications

14. For 2018/19 the adoption service budget was £773k. At outturn the service had an underspend of £104k due to a combination of staffing vacancies, reduction in spend on adoption allowances and adoption panel expenses.
15. The adoption service generated income of £103k from selling placements to other local authorities and spent a total of £160.5k on purchasing adoptive placements resulting in a

net cost to the authority of £57.5k. It is anticipated that this budget pressure will reduce when the service joins ACE as a greater choice of adoptive placements will be available across the ACE region to enable matching of children.

16. The fostering service had a budget of £4,719k with an outturn position of being overspent by £246k. This relates to the need to provide more in-house placements than was budgeted for. This does mean that it would have cost more in external placements if we had not used in-house placements as we are required to provide placements for each of our looked after children. The increased spend on placements was off-set to some extent by underspends on staffing due to vacancies during the year.
17. The external fostering budget which is used to fund independent fostering agency, residential placements and the Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service (HIPSS) had a budget of £5,408k with an overspend of £1,936k. This budget is under pressure due to the very high numbers of looked after children in the service resulting in there being insufficient placements available in house. The service continues to work hard at recruiting carers and in reducing the number of children who are placed in residential care.

Legal implications

18. The National Minimum Standards are issued by the Secretary of State under the Care Standards Act 2000 and detail the conduct and standards required for Adoption and Fostering Services and as such are taken into account during inspections by Ofsted.
19. Standards state that the executive side of the local authority:
 - a. receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency
 - b. monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
 - c. satisfies itself that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration; and
 - d. the executive formally approves the statement of purpose and reviews them at least annually.

Risk management

20. Without an effective adoption service, looked after children would spend longer in the care of the local council. This would be detrimental to their wellbeing and life chances. If the support needs of adoptive families are not met, children may return to the care system. An effective adoption and looked after children's service is important to ensure that we are able to offer a robust and timely approach to securing permanence for children unable to be brought up safely within their own families and to ensure access to services that will best support their individual needs.
21. Without an effective fostering service children who need to be looked after by the council may be placed away from their own community. This can cause disruption to their education and relationships with their families and friends.
22. If recruitment targets are not met, there is a risk of increased dependence on independent agencies and residential units located further away from a child's networks incurring higher costs and budget pressures.

Consultees

23. Chairs of the Adoption and Fostering panels have been consulted and had the opportunity to contribute to the annual reports.
24. The children and young people scrutiny committee received the annual update on 15 July 2019 and made no recommendations to the Executive.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Adoption Service annual report 2018-19

Appendix 2 – Fostering Service annual report 2018-19

Background papers

None identified

Adoption Service Annual Report 2018-19

OFSTED Registration: SC057941

1. Executive summary

The adoption service is considered to be a well performing team within Children's Social Care. This report sets out performance and achievements during 2018/19 and priorities for 2019/20.

The adoption team is staffed by an experienced and stable group of practitioners who are able to offer advice and support to colleagues within other teams in all matters relating to adoption. The number of children adopted during 2018/19 has remained relatively stable in comparison with recent years and there has been a very small reduction in adopters being approved. Timescales for children being adopted are longer than the national target however this is due to the successful adoption of older children who had been looked after for several years.

The service will join Adoption Central England (ACE) on 1st July 2019 and so the priority for this year is to ensure a smooth transition that achieves the anticipated benefits of greater choice of adopters for children and improved adoption support whilst mitigating the risk of the change impacting upon service delivery.

2. Introduction

Under the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014 (NMS), Cabinet should receive updates on the management, outcomes and financial state of the adoption service; it is open to Cabinet to identify additional or alternative actions to improve performance but in doing so regard must be had to the resource implications of additional actions.

The NMS are issued by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and are issued for use by Ofsted who take them into account in their inspections.

Standard 25.6 states that:

The executive side of the local authority

- receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency every six months;
- monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children and/or service users;
- satisfies itself that the agency is complying with the conditions of registration.

Standard 18.3 states that:

- The executive side of the local authority formally approves the statement of purpose and children's guides and reviews them at least annually

The Department for Education published 'Regionalising adoption' in June 2015 and 'Adoption: A vision for change' in March 2016, outlining plans to radically redesign the whole adoption system- the structures, systems and workforce. In order to deliver their vision new service models were proposed, delivered through Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) working together to deliver adoption services. By 2017 local authorities were expected to

have effective plans and proposals in place and by 2020 all local authorities are to be part of a RAA, or to have delegated their adoption functions to a RAA.

During 2016 Herefordshire and Birmingham City Council explored the potential of jointly becoming a RAA, alongside partners from voluntary adoption agencies. This proved not to be viable and Herefordshire then expressed a formal interest in joining Adoption Central England (ACE), comprising Coventry, Warwickshire, Solihull and Worcestershire, a RAA which went live on 01.02.18.

Whilst the proposal was initially considered at the ACE Executive Board in May 2018. In January 2019 the ACE Executive Board gave provisional agreement to Herefordshire joining ACE, with Herefordshire Cabinet approving the recommendation on 28th February 2019. Herefordshire is due to join Adoption Central England (ACE) on the 1st July 2019.

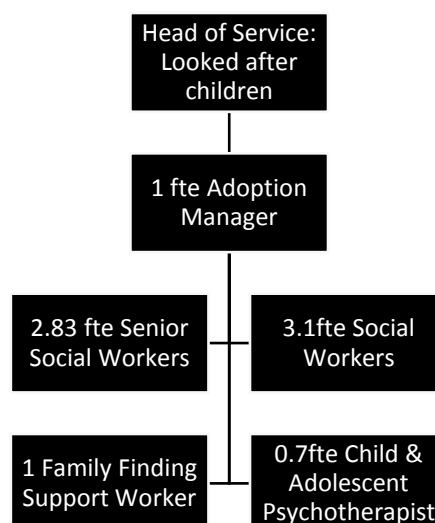
ACE is a shared local authority service based on a Hub and Spoke model of service delivery. The service is hosted by Warwickshire County Council which operates as the Hub and there are offices (Spokes) in Coventry, Solihull, Warwick and Worcester. When Herefordshire joins there will be a 'South' Hub and Spoke to cover Worcestershire and Herefordshire, with a base for ACE staff at Worcester and in our Hereford office, alongside the Child Protection and Court teams.

The gap between the current adoption service resource and funding to ACE will be used to carry out functions currently completed by our adoption service that will not be covered by ACE e.g. Child and Adolescent therapist preparing children for adoption, quality assurance of adoption reports, tracking of children with a plan for adoption, matching of children who are not "hard to place" and support and quality assurance of adoption support plans.

It has therefore been agreed that three posts from our existing adoption team (one social worker, one family support worker and the child and adolescent therapist) will be retained within Herefordshire and will move to work within our Child Protection and Court teams, as an Early Permanence Hub, with specific functions to support the work related to children with a plan for adoption.

3. Establishment

As of 31.03.19 the adoption team had no vacancies.



4. Children

After four months of being looked after, all children should have a plan for permanence ratified at their second LAC review. When the plan is for adoption, a child's permanence report (CPR) outlining the family history, the child's needs and why adoption is the intended plan, is prepared by the child's social worker and presented to the agency decision maker (ADM). When the ADM decides adoption is the appropriate plan, this will become the care plan put to the court.

A child can only be placed for adoption if a court has granted a Placement Order or the parents have requested this and given their permission.

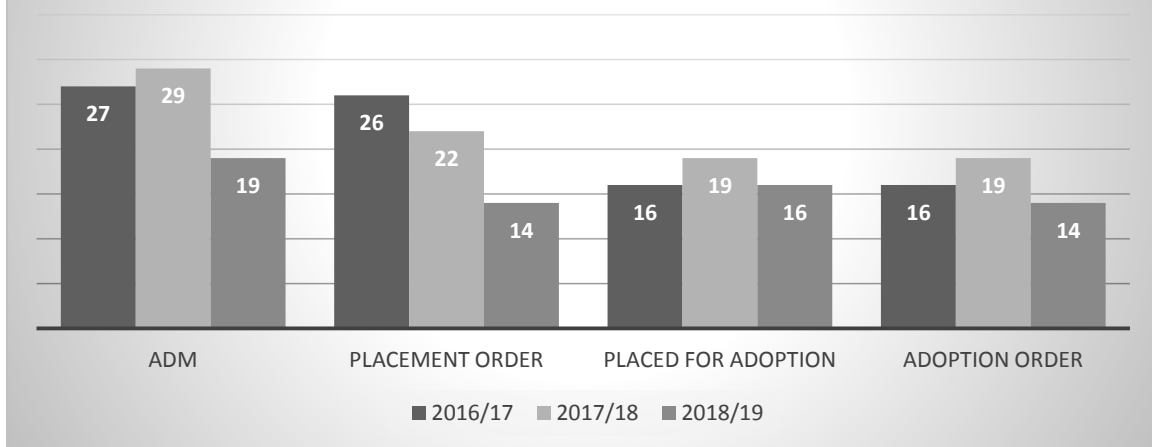
It is accepted that the younger a child is when placed for adoption, the better the outcome and local authorities are urged to consider placing children with approved adopters who are also approved foster carers so that the child does not have a change of carers. If this is not possible, an appropriate match with prospective adopters should be identified as soon as possible, ideally by the time permission to place the child for adoption has been obtained.

In 2018/19 the ADM for Herefordshire adoption agency decided that adoption should be the plan for 19 children; plans for 3 of these children subsequently changed. In 2 of the cases the Court did not grant the requested Placement Orders and for the third the local authority agreed within the court process that further information regarding the child's medical needs were required before confirming a permanence plan.

14 Placement Orders were granted, down from 22 the previous year. Figures recently released by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) show that the number of care applications made by councils to family courts has hit a three-year low, falling five per cent year on year. Cafcass figures show a total of 13,536 applications made from March 2018 to April 2019, compared to 14,221 for the same period in 2017/18, a difference of 685 applications.

Cafcass has put the continuing fall in care applications down to improved edge-of-care support. The reasons for the reduction in Herefordshire are not clear but this will be monitored carefully during 2019/20 and joining ACE will enable easier comparisons with performance in other Local Authorities and shared learning from good practice.

ADM decisions, Placement Orders granted, children placed for adoption and Adoption Orders granted 2016-19



16 children were placed with adoptive families, which included 3 sibling groups, one foster to adopt placement and one child being matched with their foster carers who they had lived with since becoming looked after. 14 adoption orders were granted.

As of 31.03.19 we had 9 children with a placement order but not yet placed for adoption. This included a sibling group of 4 where it had not proved possible to identify a family for them together and 2 placements are subsequently being sought. One child was in a 'foster to adopt' placement and prospective adopters had been identified for 3 and were due to be presented to a matching Panel.

No adoption disruptions have occurred this year.

5. Recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters

We had 61 initial enquiries over the year, comparable to the 60 last year.

We have been holding quarterly information events, where people interested in adoption can meet with members of the team and adopters.

The assessment process for adopters is in two stages with the expectation that the first stage is completed within two months and the second stage within four months, though prospective adopters can take up to 6 months between the two stages if they choose. During Stage 1 prospective adopters attend an intensive 3 day 'preparing to adopt' training course, with a further one day training in Stage 2.

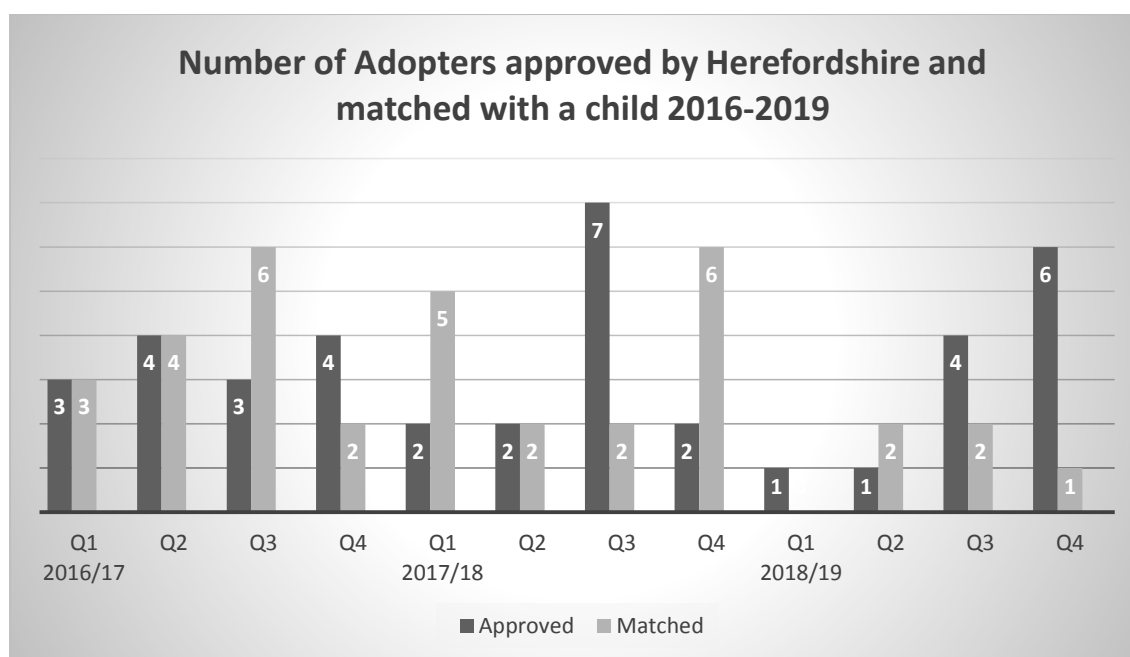
Over the year we accepted 14 Registrations of Interest (down from 18 in 2017/18) of which: 10 families have progressed to a Stage Two assessment, and the remaining 4 are due to progress imminently. One family withdrew from a Stage 2 assessment having decided adoption was not right for them.

3 were 'fast track' assessments (a process whereby certain previous adopters and foster carers can bypass Stage 1 and enter the process directly at Stage 2); 2 families being previously approved adopters and one being foster carers who wished to adopt the child already in their care.

In 2018/19 13 families were approved as adopters - the same number as in 2017-18 (compared to 14 families in 2016/17 and 15 in 2014/15).

At the end of the year we had 4 families in Stage 1 and 4 in Stage 2. We had 8 families approved but not yet formally matched with a child; 3 of whom were in the process of being matched.

During 2018-19 we had to purchase 6 placements at a cost of £160,500 however 2 children from other Local Authorities were placed with Herefordshire providing an income of £103,000.



6. Adoption panel

Report from Panel Chair, Avriel Reader.

The role of the Adoption Panel is three fold;

- a) to make recommendations to the Agency Decision maker(ADM) regarding adopters suitability to adopt
- b) to make recommendations to the ADM regarding the suitability of approved prospective adopters to be matched with a child
- c) to make a recommendation the ADM regarding whether a child relinquished by birth parent/s should be placed for adoption.

The Adoption panel also has a responsibility to quality assure reports brought to panel and report on a regular basis to the Agency regarding quality and adherence to standards and regulations.

Child Permanence Reports (CPR) which are presented to panel at matching are generally of a good standard and in the main contain a good level of information. Sometimes gaps in knowledge about a child and his or her birth family could be more thoroughly researched. This information is critical to enable a good match to be made, to ensure the adopters have sufficient information to enable them

to 'tell a child their story' and to enable the child/young person to understand their adoption journey. This understanding is critical to their self-esteem and sense of self.

The current adoption team is fortunate to have a very stable, experienced and committed group of staff who are clearly well managed. The reports prepared to assist in the approval process – Prospective Adopter Reports (PAR) continue to be of a very high standard which assists the adoption panel in making strong recommendations to the ADM. The number of prospective adopters coming to panel remains similar year on year with 13 approvals coming to panel this year, the same as 2017/18.

Herefordshire continue to recognise the importance of bringing timely matches to panel in this year 19 children have been placed for adoption including three sibling groups. Placing siblings together where possible is shown by research to be highly beneficial to good outcomes for children and should be considered where possible. Disruptions to placements remain low indicating that careful matching processes are critical. It is recognised that one of the critical components of successful outcomes for adoption is the provision of adoption support post placement. Herefordshire have continued to use the facility of the Adoption Support Fund to aid children and families post placement.

One of the key strengths of the Herefordshire adoption service is the continued employment of a child and adolescent therapist. This service is of considerable benefit in assessing children's needs prior to placement and assisting with transitions for the child from foster care to their adoptive placement. This service has assisted many children to make what is in many cases a very traumatic change to their new family. In some cases children who have experienced traumatic early lives and several moves are helped to try and make sense of this change and begin to make new attachments whilst being supported emotionally by the therapist, the social workers and the foster carers.

The adoption panel continues to have a committed core membership and panels are always quorate and supported by the agency advisor. The panel would benefit from inclusion of members from different ethnic and cultural groups which represent the local community and we will continue to seek new members where possible. Members of the panel have attended training offered by Adopt West Midlands event which this year focussed on placing siblings together and up to date research into contact arrangements. The training and understanding of up to date research assists the panel in making effective recommendations for children.

The panel fully understand the importance of Life Story Work for children and their adopters. This is critical in helping adopters to understand and 'tell' the child's story and for adopted children to make sense of their adoption. The panel are pleased that the agency has recognised the importance of this service and allowed additional resources to enable this work to be carried out by staff with this specific role. This indicated that the agency has listened to feedback from adopters and staff.

During the year discussions and decisions have been taking place with the Regional Adoption Agency Adoption Central England for Herefordshire to become a member. This will bring to an end the adoption panel in Herefordshire as it is currently constituted. Panel members will be offered the opportunity to transfer to that service.

On behalf of myself and panel members many of whom have served on the panel for many years with huge commitment, we hope that the children in Herefordshire who have a plan for adoption will be well served by this new service. We also hope the new service will continue to recruit and support adopters and birth parents. We were pleased to hear that some services will be retained by Herefordshire (including the child and adolescent therapist).

7. Post adoption support

During 2018/19 Herefordshire has secured over £52,000 of funding for specialised therapeutic support through the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) this year to support our adoptive families, an increase of 131% from 2017/18.

We received over 40 contacts from adoptive families seeking support. Many of these contacts resulted in brief interventions, often just the opportunity to talk through particular issues has helped adoptive families through a difficult period, preventing the need for more intensive involvement or services, or signposting them to one of our workshops.

Two 'Family Fun' days have again provided the opportunity for adopted children and their families to get together in an informal setting.

Regular workshops for adopters have been held covering subjects such as talking to your child about being adopted, contact with birth family, emotional coaching, understanding children's behaviour, therapeutic parenting, Theraplay and educational needs of adopted children. Support has also been offered through consultations with our Child and Adolescent Therapist.

The Letterbox system is currently supporting the adopters of over 196 children to maintain contact with members of their birth families, involving approximately 678 exchanges of news per year. 76 new Letterbox agreements were made during the year.

The agency also has a statutory duty to make support available for anyone living in Herefordshire who have been affected by adoption. This includes

- Counselling, seeking and sharing birth record information with adopted adults
- Counselling and supporting birth family members whose child is likely to be or has been adopted
- Counselling and assessing those wishing to adopt through the non-agency route- usually step-parents.

We received 19 enquiries from adopted adults wishing to access their birth records, 14 of which had progressed to a referral by the end of the year. Locating and securing adoption files from across the country can be a time consuming activity and we have experienced a lot of delay with some agencies and Courts providing records.

We received 20 referrals to provide support to birth parents whose children were in proceedings or had been adopted, 14 of whom engaged with the service.

The number of non-agency adoption enquiries (all from step-parents) again showed an increase – up by 7% to the previous year, with 35 enquiries being received. We continue to encourage people to consider alternative ways of obtaining parental responsibility and initial discussions with families focus on the lifelong implication of adoption for the child and of the need to focus on the child's needs, not the adults. If families decide to pursue an application to the court they have to give us 3 months' notice. At the end of the year we had 2 ongoing assessments.

8. Performance and quality assurance

Regional and national data for 2018/19 is not available for comparison at the time of writing however the adoption scorecard for year ending March 2018 has recently been released.

Children			
	A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (days)	A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)	A3: Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %)
LA's 3 year average (2015-18)	541	227	55 (56%)
Distance from 2015-18 performance threshold (426 and 121 days)	115 days	106 days	n/a
1 year trend - Improvement from 2017 to 2018	Average time in 2018 was shorter than in 2017	Average time in 2018 was shorter than in 2017	n/a
3 year trend - Improvement from 2014-17 to 2015-18	Average time in 2015-18 was shorter than in 2014-17	Average time in 2015-18 was shorter than in 2014-17	n/a
England 3 year average (2015-18)	486	201	11010 (56%)

Whilst for Indicators A1 and A2 Herefordshire's 3 year average is slightly above the national average, the 1 and 3 year trend indicates timescales are shortening and as reported last year, our 3 year average figures will continue to be impacted by the cohort of children including a number of children who had been accommodated for a number of years prior to adoption becoming the plan. This includes two sibling pairs, one of which had been in foster care for more than six years and the other for 3 years. The 'headline' figure does not reflect the very positive outcomes for these children.

56% of our children were placed with their adoptive family within 14 months of being accommodated, with Herefordshire performing better than 8 of our statistical neighbours who ranged from 41 – 77 %.

The scorecard highlights that for Herefordshire the percentage of children aged 5 years and over leaving care who are adopted for 2015-18 was 7% compared to a national average of 5% and whilst the percentage of children leaving care being adopted remained as for the previous 3 year period at 22%, the England average dropped from 15% to 14%.

The OFSTED inspection in June 2018 identified several areas of good practice in Herefordshire's adoption service including timeliness of adoption decisions, matching decisions and post adoption support.

Complaints, compliments, comments

Feedback is sought from prospective adopters, adoptive parents and social workers from within the council and from other agencies at various times throughout the adoption process. The preparation training for adopters is universally praised in terms of content and presentation and social workers from other agencies involved in introductions of Herefordshire children to their adopters report very favourably on the thoroughness of the planning and the support provided during the transition from

foster family to adoptive family, with the intervention of the child and adolescent therapist very much appreciated. Adopters overwhelmingly express their satisfaction with the service they have received from the adoption team and many compliments are received about individual social workers and the support offered by them to adoptive families.

Prospective adopters often comment that they have approached a number of adoption agencies and chose to proceed with Herefordshire due to the friendly, efficient response they received during their initial enquiries.

No complaints have been received during the year.

There continue to be frustrations about the time taken for life story books and later life letters to be provided for children placed for adoption. However funding was agreed at the latter end of 2018 for a new 'team' within LAC Support Services, dedicated to clear the backlog which had accrued and to provide an on-going service. 7 later life letters and 9 Life Story books had been completed at end of year with a number more now nearing completion. There are 26 cases being actively worked on and 27 pending – a combination of adopted children, children placed but not yet adopted and children with a plan of adoption but not yet placed.

The feedback from adopters regarding the life story books they have received has been very positive and they value the information which will help their child to know their birth family and understand their life story.

9. Key achievements during 2018-19

- 15 children placed for adoption, including 3 sibling groups, along with a foster to adopt placement.
- 13 adoptive families trained, assessed and approved
- 14 adoption orders granted for Herefordshire children and 2 adoption orders granted for children from other local authorities placed with Herefordshire adopters.
- A 131% increase in funding secured from the adoption support fund enabling Herefordshire adoptive families to benefit from specialist therapeutic support
- 56% of our children being placed with their adoptive family within 14 months of being accommodated, performing better than 8 of our statistical neighbours
- 7% of children aged 5 years and over leaving care who are adopted for 2015-18 compared to a national average of 5%
- 22% of children leaving care being adopted in comparison with an England average of 14%.
- The OFSTED inspection in June 2018 identified several areas of good practice in Herefordshire's adoption service including timeliness of adoption decisions, matching decisions and post adoption support.
- Agreement for Herefordshire joining Adoption Central England (ACE) and being on target to achieve this by 1st July 2019.

10. Key priorities for development during 2018-19

- Transition of the current adoption team into the regional adoption agency, ACE
- Development of the Early permanence hub to support and promote timeliness between court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family
- Improve early permanence planning to increase numbers of children placed in fostering to adopt placements
- Improved timeliness of life story books and later life letters and quality of child permanence reports

Gill Smith

Children's Social Work Manager, Adoption team

Fostering Service Annual Report 2018 - 2019

OFSTED Registration: SCO56304

1. Executive summary

The Fostering Service is staffed by an experienced and committed team. The team have been successful this year in increasing the number of children placed with family and the overall number of foster carers has increased this year. However due to the continued high number of looked after children and an increase in carers leaving the service there remains a significant shortage of in house placements. Recruitment and retention of foster carers is a priority particularly for older children, sibling groups, children with disabilities and long-term placements. Targets for 2019/20 are set out in the Sufficiency Strategy and within the Recruitment and Retention strategy.

2. Introduction

This report complies with Standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards which sets out the condition that the Fostering Service Manager will monitor and report to board members and management members about the management, outcomes and financial state of the fostering service every three months.

3. Establishment

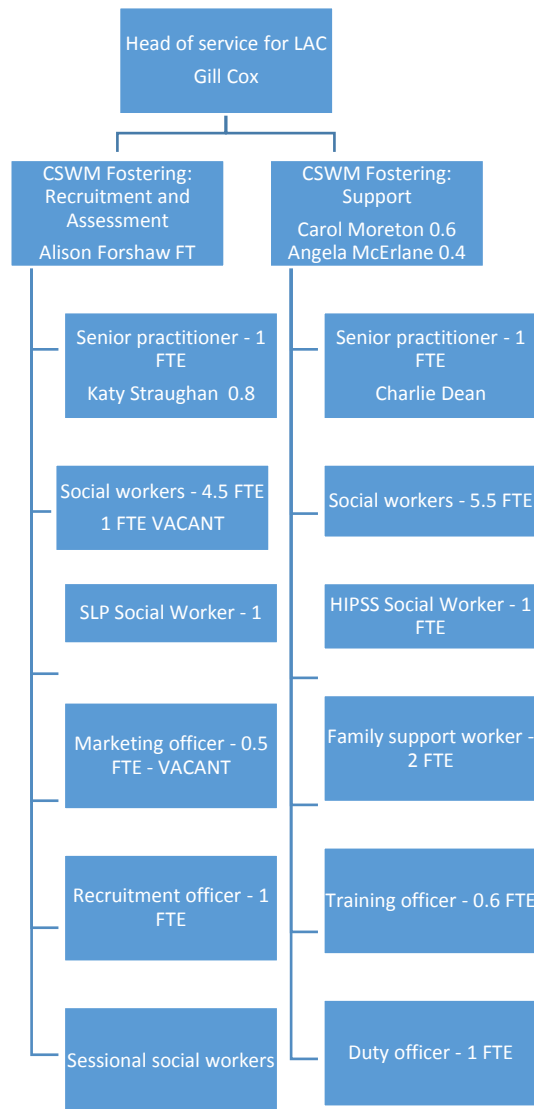
Early 2019 saw the introduction of a new model of working with the Fostering Service. The service now has two operational strands, a Fostering Assessment team and a Fostering Support team.

With a focus on recruitment and retention the new model ensures there is opportunity for a proactive approach to these two key areas rather than a generic team approach that tends to be reactive in nature particularly when short timescale kinship assessments have to take priority. Social Workers should become highly skilled in their particular area.

The risk is that social workers become too specialist and the plan is to provide opportunities to develop skills in each area. Monthly whole service meetings ensure continuity of information and learning. The teams are fully operational now and together staff share the delivery of the training programme and share the Duty system tasks on a daily basis.

Long term sickness impacted on marketing activity and short term support was sourced – recruitment to this temporary post is underway.

Unusually the Fostering Service has not been able to easily recruit permanent social workers through the year. Agency fostering social workers have been employed. However this is now resolved with new social workers now recruited. There remains a secondment vacancy within the Assessment team that will be re-advertised.



4. Foster Carers

General Foster carers

Statistics published by OFSTED in January 2019 show Local Authorities continue to experience a decrease in recruitment of foster carers at -1%. Herefordshire Fostering Service has continued to expand albeit at a much slower rate of growth this year:

2015/16 performance of 15% growth, (131 households)

2016/17 overall growth was at 10% (144 households)

2017/18 growth at 7.6% (155 households)

2018/19 growth at 4.5% (162 households)

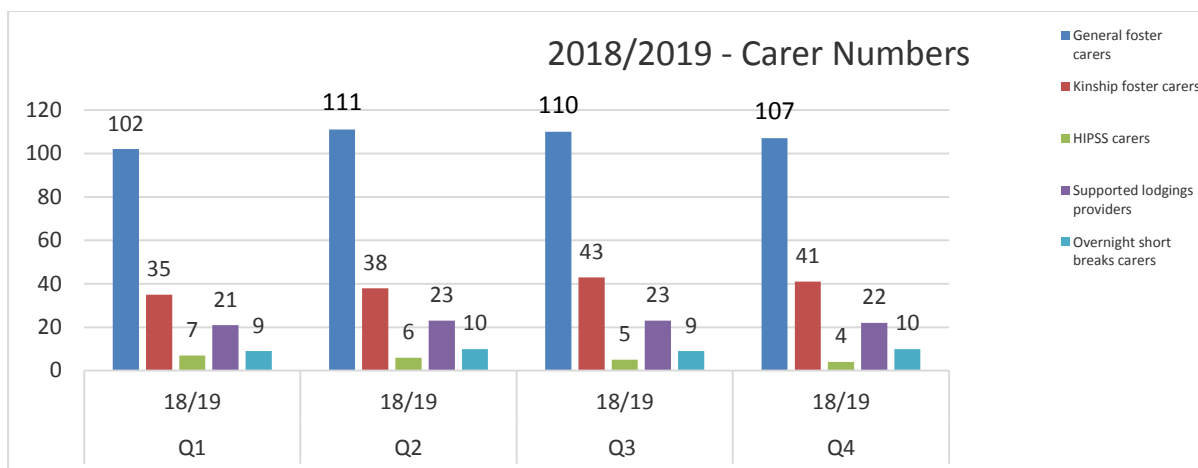
It is evident that recruitment is not keeping pace with the demand. There are significant risks if this trend continues particularly if existing foster carers choose to transfer to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) which we have seen an increase in during this year. A revised recruitment and retention plan has been agreed to provide renewed impetus and focus during 2019/20.

Foster carers as at end of month	March 2019	
General	104	
HIPPs	4	
Sleepover	10	
Kinship	44	55 children placed
TOTAL	162	156 children placed
Number of vacancies of which:	39	
• Respite carers only	24	
• Carers on hold	22 (14%)	

Supported lodgings and Staying Put	March 2019	Young people in placement
Supported lodgings	15	24
Staying put - general	10	10
Staying put - kinship	5	5

Carer type	New applications	Resignations
General	14	14
HIPSS	2	3
Kinship	18	12
Overnight short breaks	3	1
Carers not recommended by panel	1	N/a
TOTAL	37	30

We have successfully recruited 37 new foster carers this year which means we have more than offset the resignations again (30). One general carer was for a foster to adopt placement and three were Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or local authority transfers in with existing skills able to take sibling placements. For general carers resigning themes reflect retirement, change of circumstances (pregnancy, employment) or allegation; one transferred to an IFA. For kinship carers these are reunification or change to Special Guardianship Order (SGO). There have been no significant changes to previous patterns. Three kinship carers successfully transferred to the general foster carer population.



Retaining carers continues to be a challenge and we are beginning to note an increase in IFA transfers due to new agencies opening within the county offering enhanced fees and online training packages. Carers have raised concerns regarding support levels, lack of online training and lack of increase in fee payments since 2009. This is being addressed by the change in team structure, a business case regarding increasing the training budget and consultation and scoping around other local authority fees and allowances. Carers continue to receive an annual uplift in the child's allowance to at least match the Department for Education recommended minimum allowances. We continue to offer respite support assessments to formalise family and friend support to carers and reduce the number of moves a child experiences.

HIPSS carers

HIPSS (Herefordshire Intensive Placement Support Service) carers provide therapeutic placements for children who are either currently in residential care or at high risk of requiring a residential placement. We aim to be able to place these children locally in Herefordshire within a family based setting.

The service was intended to have 8-10 approved carers but has reduced from 5 carers to 4 over the year despite 2 new assessments.

The two new carers withdrew after comparatively short periods of work – one due to a new relationship and one due to a placement disruption/unable to work within model. The HIPSS Fostering social worker post was vacant for 5 months whilst the post was recruited to. The post has now been filled and a renewed recruitment and assessment plan is in place.

Three out of four carers have been with HIPSS since the scheme inception and it is important to recognise the additional emotional strain of such intense work with challenging placements and risks of “burn out” and the need to be prepared for this pool of carers reaching a natural retirement point.

Sufficiency has increased in that two further carers have been dual approved to take a new HIPSS placement whilst existing placements have stepped down to become ‘general’ placements. There is no longer an assigned HIPSS respite carer in place however, to date we have been able to provide respite on either regular or emergency basis from our existing pool of carers (one previously HIPSS) and SLP resources.

The HIPSS service has had staffing changes, but a dedicated manager and child psychologist are now in place. A HIPSS recruitment strategy is in place and will be implemented again with a new HIPSS social worker in post.

The contract for TISS, which provided therapeutic support to foster carers through consultations with clinical psychologists, training and some direct work with children, ended on 31st March 2018. Carers have missed this additional resource, however HIPSS have been able to offer consultation to social workers and a limited number of carer consultations. In order to mitigate the impact we have offered more training across both agencies i.e. Foundations of attachment to carers and staff to enable general carers to become more resilient in meeting the needs of more challenging placements.

During 2017/18 there were 3,001 residential bed nights purchased against a target of 1,774.

During 2018/19 there were 5518 residential bed nights purchased. 3600 is the target for 2024. To achieve this we will need to recruit and retain a pool of 8-10 HIPSS carers.

Kinship carers

A Connected Person is defined as "A relative, friend or other person connected with a child. The latter is someone who would not fit the term 'relative or friend', but who has a pre-existing relationship with the child. It could be someone who knows the child in a more professional capacity such as (for example) a child-minder, a teacher or a youth worker."

Relative is defined as "a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership) or step-parent."

In Herefordshire and other local authorities a connected person is referred to as a Kinship Carer. The term Friends and Family carer is sometimes used by other authorities. Locally the service can be directed by court to provide a 'kinship assessment' this can result in either a kinship fostering assessment or a Special Guardianship assessment depending upon the care plan for the child.

As directed by Regulation 24 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 if a decision has been made that a child needs to become looked after and needs to be placed immediately with alternative carers the child can be placed with a 'connected person' and a temporary approval of the connected person can be made following initial safeguarding checks. The temporary approval can last for up to 16 weeks (with an extension of up to 8 weeks to be used in exceptional circumstances). During this 16 week period a full assessment of the carers is made as for any other foster carer. During the period 75 viability (pre placement) and 14 Regulation 24 temporary approval assessments were completed.

As an example of work undertaken during Quarter 4 there were 22 full kinship assessments underway and at various stages of completion. Of these to date 6 have been fully approved as kinship foster carers and of the remainder it is likely 3 further may be approved. Drop out is due to:- withdrawal from the process, not approved, re-unification with birth parents, court order, carer not required i.e. a back-up plan for a child.

Year on year there has been an increase in children remaining with connected carers (kinship). At the same time last year we had 37 kinship fostering households and so the number has increased by 18.9% during the year.

Compared with statistical neighbours Herefordshire LAC figures are high – the figures above represent positive permanence outcomes for Looked after children and Herefordshire has a LAC reduction strategy that is particularly focussed on supporting kinship carers to apply for Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) where this is assessed to be in the child’s best interests. During Quarter 4 the real impact of a changing focus of permanence via SGO for children began to emerge with Orders being made for 5 children. Assessments were underway for a further 5 children in Quarter 4 with planning in place to complete further assessments in 2019/20. The new financial support policy for Special Guardians has had an impact.

Sleepover Scheme Carers

The Sleepover Scheme provides family-based overnight short break care to children with disabilities who ordinarily live at home with their parents. At year end we have 10 Sleepover Scheme foster carers providing breaks to 8 children under the Sleepover Scheme and 1 Looked-after child for regular respite. They have provided a total of 306 overnights under the Sleepover Scheme and 74 nights LAC respite. One household withdrew having made the decision to offer a long-term full time Shared Lives placement. 2 assessments for Sleepover Scheme Carers have been approved over the year.

Number of carers: 10

	Year 1 (2016-17)	Year 2 (2017-18)	Year 3 (2017-18)
No. of Enquiries	86	17	10
No. of Carers Approved	6	6	2
Carer withdrawn/resigned (drop-off)	1	2	1

Number of Placed Children: 8 (Sleepover Scheme)

Year	2016/17				2017/18				2018/19			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
No. of Children	1	4	3	3	6	5	6	8	8	9	9	8

LAC Respite and Overnight Short Break (OSB) capacity: We are continuing where possible to dual approve carers to meet the needs of children living with their parents and those who are looked after in order to support general foster carers and to prevent placement disruption/breakdown. It has been a challenge to develop capacity within the Sleepover Scheme by increasing the number of placements offered by one caring household. Most Sleepover Scheme Carers want to offer one placement to one child and to support one family with carers on the whole (with one exception) wanting to maintain a balanced lifestyle which incorporates some OSB care.

On the 31st March 2019 there were 2 children on the waiting list.

Family Support Worker within the Sleepover Scheme: Elaine Nation was successfully appointed to this post. Elaine works flexibly over 15 hours a week. This provides greater capacity to work with families accessing the scheme and OSB carers to ensure and support successful placements. This increased staffing also helps the Sleepover Scheme to work with families of children either on the waiting list or for whom an appropriate match cannot be identified at the point of referral.

Support and Training: The Sleepover Scheme continues to offer access to a OSB/Sleepover Scheme Carer's Group which is a group facilitated by the Sleepover Scheme Project Co-ordinator and Family Support Worker. We have been able to organise a shared training event in Positive Behaviour Support with other short-breaks providers to address a clear training need around Behaviour Management. Attendance at the carer's group and training is often low due to OSB carers more often than not having other employment which clashes with the training and group meeting times. This has been opened up to general foster carers also. Additional training is provided by colleagues in health for our carers usually on a child specific basis. Occupational Therapy assessment services are purchased privately on a case-by-case basis due to a lack of capacity in local NHS provision making all take-up of referrals much delayed and way outside the timeframe for placement planning.

Feedback on the OSB scheme is very positive from children, families and carers. In March 2019 a review was completed with some of the comments received below:

- Sleepover scheme is "a lot of fun"
- "The sleepover is amazing"
- "We don't have to constantly be looking at the constant risks to their safety"
- "Feel more relaxed"
- "Very well matched"
- "Lucky to have the carers that we have"
- "Happy to go & has a great time when there"
- "I love it!"
- "It is fulfilling for us to know we are helping others".
- "The scheme is working brilliantly"
- "Knowing we are doing something valuable"

Children in placement

Through improvements within Mosaic and improved data gathering methods quarterly statistical data relating to children in different types of placements is now available and is being reported on a monthly basis.

The number of looked after children remains high compared with statistical neighbours. We need to improve planning and supporting arrangements to live with family members, reunification, SGO and adoption as above.

Placement stability

Placement stability and permanence remains a focus of work. There have been 25 long term matches presented to panel and a growing number of kinship or general foster carers seeking Special Guardianship orders for children which takes them out of the care system: in 2018/19 5 SGO completed, 3 are filed and 9 currently in assessment stage following a revised SGO policy to increase financial support. Research published in March 2019 showed a statistical reduction in placement

disruption for children in SGO arrangements, but highlighted the need for greater support. However it is also indicative of the further work required to improve permanency for children outside of the looked after system.

Disruption rates:

Allegation (not resulting in s47)	1
Young person left placement	1
Internal 28 days' notice/Planned notice	22
Internal immediate notice	7
LADO	1
Regulation 24 breakdown	1
S47	9

We continue to work with carers to ensure a planned placement move when carers serve notice. The use of consolidation meetings and support plans prevent emergency moves.

The number of children in placement for over 2.5 years has reduced in the last year from 101 on 31st March 2018 to 81 on the 31st March 2019. Additionally the number of children experiencing more than 3 moves in 12 months has increased from 10 children to 31 children over the same period. The significant change in performance in this area is at least partly due to improved data quality but is very concerning. One of the reasons for re-structuring the team into an Assessment team and a Support team was to improve the quality of the support provided to foster carers with the intention that this will improve placement stability. This will be a priority for improvement during 2019/20 with development of the core training offer focussed upon understanding and providing therapeutic care, training pathways for foster carers to develop their knowledge and skills and those of the team who support them.

A new service called SEEdS (Social, Emotional, Educational Support) has been launched and will provide advice and support to foster carers and schools in understanding and responding to the needs of looked after children. The service is being run by Educational Psychologists within the authority and uses a strengths based approach.

Average placement cost

A greater number of looked after children are likely to move from a kinship fostering arrangement to an SGO arrangement than any other care arrangement. Kinship care arrangements cost on average £5k less than a general fostering arrangement.

In-house foster care - £550 per week

Independent Fostering Agency - £780 - £920 per week

The number of kinship care arrangements continue to vary across local authorities.

Supported lodgings provider (SLP) and Staying Put carers

Many young people struggle to reach independence but with planned high quality work they can be supported with a plan to achieve positive outcomes.

These young people have a higher than usual level of struggling to manage when they first move out of foster placements and, as for all our own children, often find 'leaving home' extremely difficult facing higher levels of risk around budgeting, substance misuse, unemployment and unstable relationships. Supported Lodgings providers support for young people and helps them prepare for living independently in a safe environment.

Supported lodgings providers have a shorter assessment than General foster carers, but include independent references, health and safety and safer carer policy. They are approved by the fostering Agency Decision Maker (ADM) outside of panel processes. Supported lodgings differ from foster placement in that they offer more 'long arm' support and advice and are expected to focus on development of independence skills, employment and education.

Currently there are 24 SLP beds available. There are 7 foster carers approved to provide either fostering or SLP placements offering potentially up to 7 beds at any one time but this is often impacted upon by demand for foster placements. One approved SLP carer offers placements specifically for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. We have a provider retiring soon.

The SLP support group has developed well and are actively engaged in service development e.g. contributing to the development of a Supported Lodgings Providers Practice Handbook.

We currently support 24 young people in SLP provision projections are for the next period that we need to provide for 30 young people each year through to 2024.

Staying Put

Staying put gives young people the right to remain living with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 as long as both they and their carers want this to happen. Herefordshire compares well with other local authorities (regional Fostering Network reports) and continues to pay fees for this time, but ceases mileage and additional allowances.

Staying Put activity has continued to grow gradually year on year with a steady growth in placements from 5-8 in 2017/18 to this year being 9-12 at any one time. This evidences we are meeting sufficiency and stability targets for older teens needing support onto independence. Carers are also becoming more accustomed to anticipating longer term commitments to children.

5. Recruitment and Assessments

Analysis of recruitment and assessment activity 2018/19:

- 191 Enquiries received
- 63 initial visits completed
- 20 applications received out of these enquiries
- 3 counselled out and 1 withdrawn
- 16 continued to assessment with 6 of these already approved

After a period without a Marketing Officer in May 2018 saw the arrival of a new marketing officer. Unfortunately long term sickness for the officer began shortly afterwards. In September a temporary contract arrangement saw a previous Marketing Officer return to cover the post.

Reigniting the Facebook and Twitter campaign has seen an increase in enquiries from 5 in April 2018 to 27 in March 2019 and an updated Recruitment and retention strategy. The Council has agreed additional investment to support this work which includes an additional Assessing Social Worker from September 2019.

Alison Forshaw took over the management of the marketing and recruitment function from February 2019. Looking forwards there is an ambitious marketing and promotional plan with stands at major county events, digital media around these and around social media platforms and some innovative approaches to raising awareness that Herefordshire children need Herefordshire carers. [Truth Be Told](#) a film made in collaboration with other local authorities was in creation during the period. Early stage ideas and planning to include an exhibition and a local film – script has been completed. Word of mouth remains important and foster carers are now offered £500 incentive for “referring a friend” who is subsequently approved as a foster carer.

Recommendation (word of mouth) and website continue to be the top two ways in which enquirers are aware of fostering for Herefordshire. We have always been able to evidence that if we are not out in the community promoting fostering, the enquiry figures will dip.

A number of regional partners have asked for information about our recruitment strategy (Twitter, website and leaflets) particularly in relation to our use of the recruitment officer completing home visits (not a social worker) and specialist schemes such as HIPSS.

6. Fostering panel

We have a new Panel Chairperson and a Helen M vice Chairperson; the panel works well bringing a range of skills and experiences to the table. We were sad to lose Jenny Hyde as a councillor she was a long serving and very valued member of the fostering panel, her commitment and contributions will be missed. Foster panel would welcome future members who are able to be a champion for looked after children.

Panel membership has been boosted by recruitment of social work representatives on a rolling plan of attendance and a new Foster Carer representative ensuring that panel remains quorate at all times.

Fostering Panel training was held in December and focussed on feedback from the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) and good examples of Determination letters; the Role of a Panel Member and on the structure changes within the Fostering service. It also provided a good opportunity to introduce our new TRix Fostering Handbook that has been rolled out to foster carers.

The panel is independent of the Local Authority and as such its remit is to make recommendations on whether applicants are suitable to foster, and if current foster carers should be re-approved. It also has a quality assurance and monitoring role in terms of the work of the fostering service. The majority of cases heard by the panel are either new applications, including from ‘connected persons’ and first reviews of foster carers, but panel also considers reviews post allegation, brief reports (where a concern has arisen partway through an assessment) and a variety of other matters.

During the year the panel has considered some highly complex and contentious situations, one of which resulted in a request by the applicants/foster carers for an independent review by the Independent Review Mechanism. The Local Authority recommendation was upheld.

Panel Activity 2018/19	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Total
-------------------------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	--------------

Long-term Match	7	1	5	12	25
Brief Reports/Others	2	2	2	3	9
Resignations/Terminations	4	5	3	5	17
New Applications	11	11	6	8	36
First Reviews/Reviews	13	9	12	7	41
Home Reviews	18	26	19	33	96
HIPPS Assessment	2				2

Feedback is sought from all those whose cases are presented to panel and is generally positive. The implication of negative feedback is carefully considered, and panel adjusts its conduct where necessary. Panel provides feedback on assessment reports presented to it, and over the last year has found these to be overwhelmingly of a good or excellent standard.

Policy development around quality assurance processes across the local authority has included a revision of panel quality assurance paperwork and the system for collating and reviewing the performance of staff and the quality of work presented which was implemented from April 2018.

Other matters of concern relevant to the operation of the panel are fed back directly to the relevant Heads of Service.

There has been one appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism. The Independent Review Mechanism for Fostering and Adoption (IRM) provides independent panels that review decisions made by adoption and fostering providers. The IRM upheld the decision made by our Agency Decision Maker to not approve an applicant.

7. Training

Fostering team:

- Managers have attended operational training where appropriate.
- Mandatory on line training, including information governance update
- DDP training – Foundations for attachment completed by all service staff
- Therapeutic parenting, PACE and emotional coaching workshops.
- Learning sessions – all staff – learning from case reviews
- Connected person assessment training

Foster carers

The training officer has refreshed and extended the training programme available to carers utilising the skills of fostering social workers and partner agencies. Our limited budget only covers mandatory first aid and one 2 day Positive Handling course per annum.

Of particular note has been the quality of training provided by fostering staff working with partners such as HIPSS, i.e. Foundations in Attachment and Family Support workers providing Solihull training to aid understanding of children's attachment needs and appropriate therapeutic parenting strategies. A programme of wellbeing and solutions circles has been developed to support carers themselves (and help prevent 'blocked care' or placement disruption through exhaustion.) The virtual school and Amanda Cotton and Ursula Beck in particular have provided high quality training with positive qualitative feedback reported to home review chairs.

In this year we have had 2 carers transfer to agency citing the quality of an agencies online training was a contributory factor in their decision making. A business case is being presented to increase

funding to facilitate this type of accredited training for those carers who live outside the county (i.e. kinship) or those who prefer to learn using these resources.

All foster carers undergo the Preparation to Foster training and Induction. Mandatory training is monitored through formal supervision and the annual review process. Fees are linked to a commitment to training as this is clearly linked to carers' resilience and capacity to support the needs of LAC children.

Quality assurance

The format for quality assurance of assessments was implemented for 2018/19 but the systems across the quality assurance unit, Business Support, fostering managers and panel chair have not become embedded due to changes in staff and structure. This will be revisited to enable the quality of assessments to be monitored and reported in a standardised format.

Complaints

There have been 4 formal complaints in the period, 2 around communication of decisions and 2 related to finance, one SGO and one fostering level. All were resolved at stage 1.

LADO

There were 21 referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for in house general foster carers of which:

- 13 were no further action/ threshold was not met.
- 6 contacts where allegations were substantiated of which three foster carers were subsequently de-registered and 3 foster carers who were reviewed at panel and were approved to continue as foster carers having received support and training.

Two foster carers subsequently resigned.

A further 4 referrals were received for kinship foster carers of which:

- 2 carers were subsequently de-registered
- 2 are due to be presented to fostering panel.

Compliments

Below is a sample of compliments formally received during the last quarter. Below an example of foster carer feedback to panel.

"The support from Celia was wonderful. She is a lovely, lovely person, not just an empathic social worker who "gets us", all of us. I was reluctant to accept yet another person to help because of T's reaction but Celia persuaded me that Georgina (Family Support worker) could support us too and she was brilliant! We are so very grateful for the support because we have managed to avoid a repeat of T having a total breakdown again and I feel this is because of the support and intervention that was put in place in a timely manner, and with monthly core group meetings. Without this I honestly don't believe we could have carried on much longer."

From a Kinship foster carer to their fostering social worker and family support worker *"thank you Sue and Ruby – it's been tough – thank you for support"*.

Feedback from the child’s social worker for panel. A kinship foster care arrangement - “...are fully committed to caring for L and his half sibling ‘M’.

“The foster carers are excellent in all areas both children are loved and part of their family.”

8. Key performance indicators

	Herefordshire	Statistical neighbours	National
Number of looked after children	92 per 10,000	53 per 10,000 (2017/18)	64 per 10,000 (2017/18)
Recruitment of foster carers	Growth of 4.5%	Not available	Decrease of 1%
Percentage of children placed with local authority foster carers	73%	Not available	67% (2017/18)
Percentage of children placed with independent fostering agencies	27%	Not available	33% (2017/18)
Number of children with 3+ moves in 12 months	10%	11% (2017/18)	10% (2017/18)
Number of children in the same placement for more than 2 ½ years	71%	71% (2017/18)	70% (2017/18)

9. Key achievements during 2018-19

- Restructure of the service to improve recruitment and retention.
- Increase in fostering enquiries
- Higher number of carers seeking Special Guardianship arrangements
- Increase in Staying Put arrangements
- Good working relationships established with other social work teams
- Broadening of training programme

10. Key priorities for development during 2018-19

- Increase in number of carers approved; HIPSS, General and Supported Lodging providers
- Increase in number of available beds with current cohort of carers
- Improve retention through improving benefits package available to foster carers
- Increase in children achieving permanency in special guardianship arrangements
- Increase placement stability
- Increase in support for SGO
- Development of training programme – therapeutic parenting and online resources
- Mosaic workflow upgrade completion
- Update foster carers charter



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday 24 October 2019
Title of report:	Annual review of earmarked reserves
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To note and approve the annual earmarked reserves review.

Earmarked reserves are established to hold revenue balances to fund future year commitments over and above the annual budget requirement. They generally arise where funding exceeds expenditure, usually due to the timing of receipts being ahead of incurring expenditure. As a matter of good practice a review is undertaken each year to establish the continued need for reserves held for earmarked purposes to ensure resources can be used to best effect whilst maintaining a prudent level of reserves to meet future anticipated commitments.

Recommendation(s)

That:

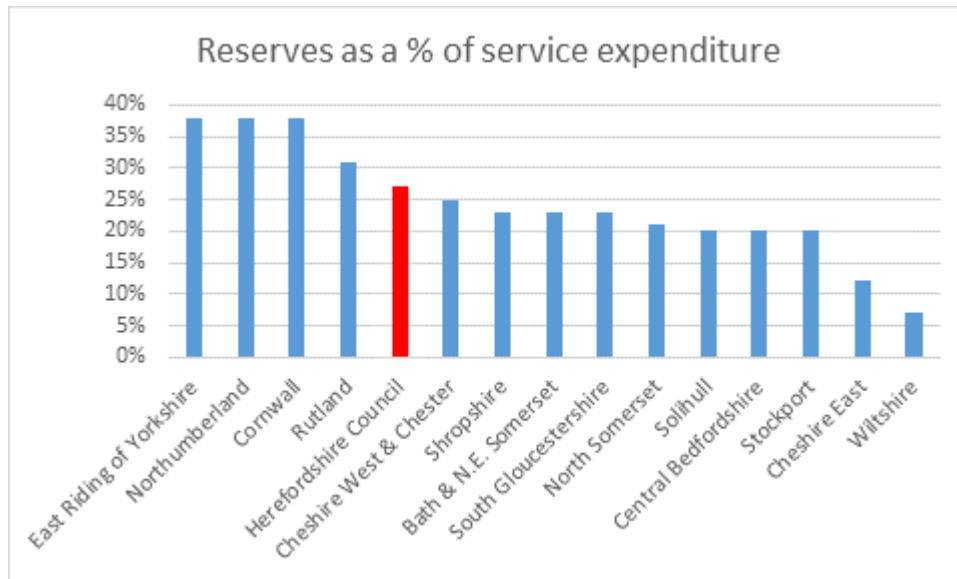
- (a) No specific changes be made to the reserve balances held, as shown in appendix 1, require approving from the annual review.**

Alternative options

1. To determine movements in reserves. Cabinet may determine to utilise some earmarked reserves for a different purpose; however should that mean those funds are subsequently required for their original purpose an alternative method of funding would need to be secured. Not all earmarked funds may be redirected for use – for example funding received from external sources for a specified purpose may not be able to be redirected if doing so would amount to a breach of funding conditions.

Key considerations

2. The council holds earmarked reserve balances to fund future year commitments over and above the annual budget requirement.
3. Earmarked reserves are sums specifically held to enable funds to be built up to meet known or predicted expenditure. They can be set up using one-off funds (such as year-end under-spends or grants) or by budgeting for a fixed amount to be taken from the revenue account each year and “saved” separately. Any expenditure then incurred within the year is taken from this “savings account”, thereby smoothing the impact on Council Tax. Appendix 1 provides a list of the balances held.
4. Whilst ensuring that the overall annual budget is balanced, the council has been carefully building reserves to a prudent level to manage future financial risk and to support future financial needs, both foreseen and unforeseen.
5. The council’s useable revenue reserves are split between general reserves and earmarked reserves that are held for certain purposes. Part of the council’s general reserve is held as a strategic reserve to cover emergency events such as unforeseen financial liabilities or natural disasters. This reserve is maintained at a minimum level of between 3% and 5% of the council’s net revenue budget. As at 31st March 2019 the general reserve balance totalled £8.5m, being 5.6% of the councils 2019/20 net expenditure. The remainder of the council’s general reserve balance is held to support one-off and limited on-going revenue spending and for smoothing the impact of the late delivery of savings plans.
6. The annual review, undertaken by the chief finance officer, challenged the value, appropriateness and status of earmarked reserve balances. The review concluded that the balances held remain reasonable and prudent in addressing some of the current and future challenges.
7. Part of the annual review included comparing the level of reserve balances held to our statistical neighbouring councils. This review concluded that, at 27% of service expenditure, the council has a slightly higher than average level of reserve balances as those held by comparator councils, with the average being 24%, shown below:



8. The council's earmarked reserves, which include school balances, are held to meet specific identified spending commitments. These reserves will only be used for the purpose for which they were created. The table below summarises the current earmarked reserve balance held, commitments already approved against these balances, proposed increases and anticipated remaining balance.

Directorate	Balance 01/04/2019 £m	(Drawdown) / addition in 19/20 £m	(Drawdown) / addition in 20/21 £m	Remaining balance £m
Adults & Communities	2.5	-	-	2.5
Children & Families	2.1	(1.3)	(0.3)	0.5
Central Total	39.0	1.7	2.1	42.8
Corporate Total	1.2	(0.2)	-	1.0
Economy & Place	5.0	(2.1)	(0.2)	2.7
School Reserves	9.8	(0.4)	(0.1)	9.3
Other small reserves	0.7	-	-	0.7
School unused grants	3.1	-	-	3.1
Public Health unused grants	1.0	-	-	1.0
Other unused grants	2.5	-	-	2.5
Grand Total	66.9	(2.3)	1.5	66.1

9. On reviewing the above it was noted:-
 - a. The individual reserve purpose and value was challenged and reviewed for appropriateness and on-going need. Some minor within directorate streamlining and consolidating has been actioned, this is shown in Appendix 1.
 - b. Other unused grant balances held in reserves, which means any grant conditions have been met, are to be reviewed by each directorate as part of the budget setting process to ensure the funds are spent in accordance with the grant conditions or to determine if the fund is no longer needed for that purpose for consideration of either returning to funder or seeking an alternative use.

Community impact

10. The use of reserve funding proposals demonstrates how the council is using its financial resources to best deliver the priorities within the agreed corporate plan, health and safety obligations and corporate parenting responsibilities.
11. Before each reserve balance is spent a separate report will detail the expenditure plans and how they will specifically impact the community.

Equality duty

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.
12. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this report is a factual summary, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

13. The use of reserve funding utilises existing resources. The actual incurring of expenditure against earmarked reserves will be subject to approval following the usual governance processes which will detail the resource implication of each proposal.
14. This review does not change the budget approved by Council in February 2019 and is proposed in accordance with the reserves policy included in the medium term financial strategy approved at the same time.

Legal implications

15. The review of earmarked reserves does not have in itself a legal implication, including reserves to manage risks is a prudent approach.

Risk management

16. Maintaining reserves for risk mitigation is recommended by Cipfa as best practice. The minimum levels referred to in the report are in line with Cipfa recommended practices. The recent corporate review identified that reserve usage should be reviewed which has led to the review and the concluding proposals recommended.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Reserve balances held

Background papers

None identified

Reserve balances held

Reserve Name	Balance 01/04/2019 £m	Reserve review move £m	(Drawdown) / addition in 19/20 £m	(Drawdown) / addition in 20/21 £m	Remaining balance £m	Reserve purpose
Providing Care Costs in adults and communities	0.5				0.5	Established to support providing care costs in Adults and Communities
Social Care Contingency	2.0				2.0	To support budget pressures in Adults and Communities in 2019/20
Exceptional Court ordered placement costs	0.4				0.4	Reserve established to fund identified potential Human Rights Act claims
Leaving Care Grant	0.1		(0.1)		-	Balances of leaving care grant allocations
Short Breaks	0.5		(0.2)	(0.3)	-	Reserve built up from underspends on short breaks to offset the cessation of funding from CCG
Social Work Training for Single Assessment Model	0.1				0.1	Grant received late 18/19 for National Assessment and Accreditation System early adoption
Structural Change in children's and families	0.8		(0.8)		-	Balance of £1.6m allocated in 18/19 to support changes to service delivery
Colwall mobiles	0.2		(0.2)		-	Replacement of Colwall School
Business Rates Smoothing	7.3	1.5			8.8	Rate retention in 2020/21 risk mitigation, expected to be deferred to 2021/22
Collection Fund Surplus	1.5	(1.5)			-	Collection Fund Surplus
Enterprise Zone Business Rate Growth	0.1		(0.1)		-	To continue to award discounts
Financial Resilience	10.0		3.6	3.3	16.9	Following MRP review and future uncertainties
Future Liabilities re Living Wage Claims	0.5				0.5	Established to meet any future liabilities re living wage claims
Insurance	0.3		(0.1)	(0.1)	0.1	Set aside for unfunded claims
Pensions Risk	1.2		(0.2)	(0.2)	0.8	Set aside for tri-annual revaluation / actuarial strain costs
Litigation	3.3				3.3	To fund the cost of settling disputes
Settlement Monies	5.0				5.0	To remedy road defects
Sparsity Reserve	0.9		(0.9)		-	Awarded to address rural pressures
Waste Disposal	7.7		(0.6)	(0.9)	6.2	Earmarked to fund cost increases during PFI
Whitecross School PFI	1.2				1.2	Earmarked to fund PFI costs until 2031/32
Elections	0.4				0.4	Reserve established to fund future elections
ICT	0.6				0.6	Specific ICT equipment commitments
Legal services Demand	0.2		(0.2)		-	Supporting potential children and families cases
Remedial Road Works	1.7		(1.7)		-	Road winter deterioration works
Community Health & Wellbeing Requirements	0.5				0.5	Allocated to support work against serious organised crime
Hereford Enterprise Zone	0.4		(0.2)	(0.2)	-	Balance built up 2016-2018 being used to fund activity in 19/20 and 20/21
Herefordshire Local Plan	0.1		(0.1)		-	To deliver the Herefordshire Local Plan
Industrial Estates	0.4	0.6			1.0	Tenant sinking fund
Library Services	0.1		(0.1)		-	Library works
Severe Weather Fund	1.2				1.2	To fund one off costs like gritting
Three Elms Trading Estate	0.6	(0.6)			-	Investment in the estate
Education Redundancy	0.2				0.2	For exceptional circumstances
School Balances	8.9				8.9	Specific ring-fenced school balances
Schools' sickness	0.3		(0.3)		-	School absences
Schools Pension Deficit over recovery 2017/18	0.4		(0.1)	(0.1)	0.2	To fund unforeseen future pension costs
Other small reserves	0.7				0.7	Earmarked for specific schemes
School unused grants	3.1				3.1	Unused grants
Public Health unused grants	1.0				1.0	Unused grants
Neighbourhood Planning	0.7				0.7	Unused grants
Adults & Communities Transitional Grant	0.6				0.6	Unused grants
Troubled families	0.2				0.2	Unused grants
Broadband	0.2				0.2	Unused grants
Other unused grants	0.8				0.8	Unused grants
Total	66.9	-	(2.3)	1.5	66.1	

