

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 27 February 2020**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall, Pontrilas Road, Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire, HR2 0EL**

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

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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 30 January 2020.</p>	9 - 20
4.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p>	
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p>	
<p>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i></p> <p><i>9:30am on Monday 24 February 2020.</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>QUARTER 3 2019/20 CORPORATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>To review performance for quarter 3 2019/20 and the budget outturn.</p> <p>To provide assurance that progress is being made towards achievement of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.</p>	21 - 66
7.	<p>REVISED HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME FOR HEREFORDSHIRE 2020</p> <p>To approve the Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020.</p>	67 - 138
8.	<p>BETTER WAYS OF WORKING IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>The report is to outline further delivery of the "better ways of working" initiative that enables employees to work flexibly and to consolidate use of premises. This decision will specifically relate to the future occupancy of the</p>	139 - 150

Nelson House building and consider changes to Plough Lane and Elgar House offices to accommodate any increased occupancy of these buildings. The report will include details of any required financial investment and associated savings, details of any required procurement and any guidance to changes to staff working practices that will enable the improved usage of the workspace.

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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 Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 30 January 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)
 Councillor Felicity Norman, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)
 Councillors Pauline Crockett, Gemma Davies, John Harrington, Liz Harvey, Trish Marsh and Ange Tyler

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors John Hardwick and Peter Jinman

Group leaders in attendance Councillors Alan Seldon and Jonathan Lester

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Jonathan Lester

Other councillors in attendance: Councillors Graham Andrews, Sebastian Bowen, Elizabeth Foxton, Jeremy Milln, Roger Phillips and Nigel Shaw

Officers in attendance: Chief executive, Director for economy and place, Director for children and families, Solicitor to the council, Chief finance officer and Director for adults and communities

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

119. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

120. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 9 - 10)

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

121. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 11 - 12)

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

122. BUILDING MAINTENANCE, SMALL WORKS AND CLEANING SERVICES FOR HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report and summarised the background to the decision, stating that she did not believe that outsourcing should be the go-to option. She explained that the proposed new contract would be of sufficient length to allow more options for the future of the service to be explored. A correction to the length of the contract had been published which would push the end of the contract beyond the purdah period for the next Council elections in 2023. The contract would include measures to reduce the use of products containing phosphates.

The strategic property services manager highlighted key points of the report. In particular that:

- The contract would follow the current model with one contract for maintenance and cleaning, this had been found to deliver benefits as there was only one management structure;
- Market testing had established that there was interest in bidding for the contract;
- Lessons learned from the operation of the current contract would be incorporated into the new contract;
- In recognition of the climate emergency declared by the council new key performance measures would be included in the contract to assess such things as use of fuel and use of local labour to reduce travel distances.

In discussion of the report cabinet members noted:

- The council wanted to encourage local companies to bid for contracts and would be working to make the tendering processes as easy as possible for local companies to access;
- In seeking to avoid the use of phosphate chemicals, care should be taken in the substitute products used and all substances used should be evaluated.

Group leaders were invited to give the views of their group. Concerns were expressed about the performance of the current contractor and it was hoped that the new contract would see improvements. In response it was noted that key performance dashboards would be introduced to monitor the delivery of the contract.

It was agreed that:

(a) a property maintenance and cleaning service contract be procured for two years and nine months from 1 September 2020 – 30 June 2023 with provision for a one year extension; and

(b) the director of economy and place be authorised, following consultation with the cabinet member for assets, contracts and procurement, to award a contract to the successful provider for each or both services following tender evaluation, with a contract value of up to £12m per annum.

123. USE OF RESERVE FUNDING TO SUPPORT HEREFORD TRANSPORT AND SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE REVIEW

The cabinet member finance and corporate services introduced the report. She explained that the review of the transport packages needed to be properly resourced so that it delivered the evidence required. The financial resilience reserve stood at £10m and it was considered that use of £360k from the reserve was affordable and appropriate.

The cabinet member infrastructure and transport explained the reasons for the review of the strategy that had been inherited from the previous administration and noted that only £91k would be spent on a peer review of the work done to date on the transport packages. The £360k to be funded from the reserve would consider alternative transport options. All three elements of the review would be completed by 31 July 2020 and would include wide ranging consultation. Input from scrutiny would be welcomed.

It was noted that introducing 20mph limits in residential areas would not form part of the options considered under this review but that this could be progressed alongside.

Group leaders were invited to express the views of their group. It was stated that:

- There was anger from some residents and business about the delay and concern that a bypass would not be delivered;

- If there were options to relieve congestion more quickly than constructing new roads then these would be welcomed by most businesses;
- There had already been considerable expenditure on assessing the southern link road project and Hereford transport package to determine that it was the right thing to do;
- The delay had resulted in the grant funding for the southern link road being lost and the prospect of £3.8m being clawed back by the LEP would spend all of the proposed council tax increase for 2020/21;
- The southern link road was an important project which would connect to the Hereford enterprise zone and open up land that was needed for growth;
- The packages put together by the previous administration included active travel measures and it was believed that the review would demonstrate the need for the planned bypass.

In response to points raised cabinet members noted that issues with the governance of the procurement exercise in relation to the south wye transport package meant that the council could not be assured that value for money could be delivered. These problems had been inherited and caused unfortunate delays. In addition, the council had declared a climate emergency in March 2019 and this needed to be taken into account. The cabinet sought to deliver the aims and objectives that had been inherited with alternative schemes.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Cabinet approves the amendment of the financial resilience reserve reducing by £360k to fund the costs to complete the review work associated with the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package.**

124. CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24

The leader of the council introduced the report and invited the assistant director people and performance to set out the approach that had been taken to producing the new corporate plan. Cabinet members noted that:

- Workshops had been held to understand the ambitions for the new plan and to pull together the various strands;
- Three key areas had been identified – environment, community and economy – along with common themes across these areas of sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing;
- A one page plan had been developed and then tested through public and stakeholder events including parish councils, the business sector and specific public groups;
- The plan had been amended to reflect the feedback received and then a second phase of consultation was undertaken which included budget proposals;
- The same five priority areas had been highlighted in the face to face and online consultation, although in a slightly different order;
- All three scrutiny committees had considered the draft plan and all the recommendations had been included in the latest version.

The leader thanked the assistant director and all officers who had worked on the draft plan. He noted that the design work had been done in house and included photographs taken by students from the Herefordshire College of Arts. He also thanked the scrutiny committees for their input which he felt had resulted in an improved plan.

In commending the draft plan to cabinet, the leader stated that this was a county plan designed to deliver for the people of the county not for the council itself. He believed in community and that the council must work with communities to understand their needs and involve them in its work. He believed in the prosperity of socially responsible

businesses and improved connectivity between the council and business. It was for the cabinet to behave in the ways set out in the plan by working in partnership, using resources wisely, respecting each other and listening to each other.

While it was recognised that many strands of the plan were interwoven, cabinet members were invited to highlight key activities and projects within their portfolio areas. These included:

Finance and Corporate Services

- Improving connectivity, sustainability and wellbeing of the county;
- Responding to climate change;
- Delivering more affordable housing;
- More balanced investment in sustainable development

Housing, regulatory services and community safety

- Delivering housing for Herefordshire that recognised the challenges for residents in finding a suitable and genuinely affordable home;
- Roll out of the talk community programme;

Commissioning, Procurement and Assets

- Developing the way in which the council deals with waste collection and disposal taking account of changing legislation, the needs of residents and the environment;
- Supporting cultural services in adding social value, for example through contact with vulnerable members of society and developing tourism opportunities;
- Developing community wealth building, keeping money in the local economy as far as possible and making it easy for local businesses to enter supply chains;
- Working with communities to see where they can take on council assets if they can run them better;
- Working with anchor organisations to establish a core set of values.

Infrastructure and transport

- Increased emphasis on protecting the environment and tackling climate change, building the climate emergency declared under the previous administration;
- Completing the transport review to consider options to relieve congestion in the shorter and medium term;
- Encouraging young people to come and to stay in Herefordshire;
- Developing the tourism industry within the county

Children and Families

- Continuing to support improvement in outcomes in primary schools and improving Key Stage 4 results;
- Continuing to invest in and develop school buildings;
- Continued investment in supporting care provision, building on the achievement of the previous plan;
- Developing an edge of care offer linked to whole family support;
- Delivering high quality children's social care, working with the new Children and Young People safeguarding partnership.

Environment, Economy and Skills

- Tackling the impact of climate change on businesses and aiming for zero carbon working with a coalition of partners;
- Continuing to support the Hereford Enterprise Zone while also investing in Ross Enterprise Park and the other market towns;

- Renewing support for tourism by rolling out a countywide business improvement district with the active participation of private enterprise and support from town councils.

Health and Adult Wellbeing

- A changing approach to social care with family, friends and communities adding to the support for individuals;
- Taking a proactive approach to digital connectivity and making use of tech enabled solutions;
- Working alongside NHS partners, including integration of services where this made sense.

The chairman of the general scrutiny committee noted that the committee had reviewed the draft plan on two occasions. He thanked the members of the committee for their work and noted that all recommendations had been listened to. He urged the cabinet to support communities rather than seek to build new ones.

Group leaders were invited to express the views of their group. Points raised included:

- Support for endeavours to increase the amount of affordable housing but concern regarding the cost of borrowing to deliver council owned housing and whether this would give the best rate of return for the investment;
- Many businesses would link connectivity to measures to reduce congestion;
- Action on fuel poverty was welcomed;
- Anything that helped communities in Herefordshire to thrive would be welcomed;
- Consideration of fixes for congestion in the city on a short term basis could deliver improvements;
- The public would want to see delivery of projects.

In concluding the debate the following amendments were proposed:

The addition of the following wording to reflect support for farming communities: “We are proud of our rich rural heritage and will work in partnership with our farming community and land managers to promote sustainable stewardship of the County’s farmland, soils and woods.” *(Proposed by cabinet member environment, economy and skills, seconded by cabinet member infrastructure and transport.)*

The addition of reference to the public rights of way, bridges and street lights maintained by the council alongside 2000 miles of road. *(Proposed by cabinet member infrastructure and transport, seconded by cabinet member environment, economy and skills.)*

The addition of images to break up the text of the introduction by the leader of the council and the background information on the county. *(Proposed by cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets)*

Typographical corrections throughout the document to ensure consistency such as referring to the County Plan. *(Proposed by cabinet member health and adult wellbeing).*

It was agreed that:

- (a) The draft corporate plan 2020-24, as set out at appendix A, be recommended to Council;**
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director People and Performance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any amendments necessary arising from the discussions at Cabinet, prior to consideration by council specifically:**

- i. **An additional sentence to be inserted committing the council to working with the farming community to promote sustainable stewardship of the County's farmland, soils and woods;**
- ii. **Reference to maintenance of public rights of way, bridges and street lighting to be inserted alongside maintenance of roads;**
- iii. **Additional photographs to be inserted to break up the large blocks of text in the introduction from the leader of the council and the background information on the county;**
- iv. **Typographical corrections to ensure consistency through the document.**

125. 2020/21 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The leader of the council introduced the report and it was confirmed that no significant changes to the scheme were proposed.

Cabinet members noted the importance of the scheme and the links to challenges identified in the corporate plan such as low wages and levels of fuel poverty. The chief finance officer explained that the council worked with a number of agencies to support households in distress. Discussions had taken place with the citizens' advice bureau and it had been established that the council met the standards for and would look to sign up to the CAB protocol on council tax.

Group leaders expressed support for the scheme. The potential impact of the roll out of Universal Credit was raised. It was felt that the current scheme had worked reasonably well but the risk of people falling through the cracks was noted.

It was agreed that:

(a) The council tax reduction scheme for 2020/21, with the same parameters as the existing scheme, be recommended to Council for approval.

126. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 ONWARDS AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

The cabinet member finance and corporate services introduced the report. She stated that a number of new items were proposed to be added to the programme that had been inherited and that the programme would be kept under review. New items included:

- Rolling out of super hubs;
- Investment in schools, care home and extra care services;
- Delivery of employment land and incubation space in the market towns;
- Match funding toward the heritage action zone in Leominster;
- Investment in the passenger transport fleet and commercial fleet.

During the four years of the county plan a total of £415m investment was planned, of which around 25% might be funded from prudential borrowing. The council would seek to create new income streams. The proposed programme was prudent and affordable, with headroom for further projects to be brought forward if needed.

Group leaders were invited to express the views of their group. Changes to the Section 106 agreement regime were welcomed as they would release funds into communities. Additional funding for road maintenance was welcomed as the road network was something that everyone used.

It was agreed that:

the following be recommended to Council:

- (a) the proposed capital programme from 2020/21 attached at appendix 3; and**
- (b) the capital strategy document at appendix 4.**

127. SETTING THE 2020/21 BUDGET AND UPDATING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The cabinet member finance and corporate services introduced the report. Key highlights were noted as:

- The proposed budget took into account the local government financial settlement, revenue support grant funding of £0.6m and new homes bonus grant of £2.2m;
- It was proposed that the new homes bonus one off funding be used to assist in the delivery of housing, including addressing the phosphate issues that were holding back housing development;
- Herefordshire had risen to the challenge of reducing central grants in recent years coupled with rising demands and costs in adult and children's social care, which now comprised around 80% of the council's total budget;
- A balanced budget had been achieved with a proposed 2% council tax increase ring fenced for adult social care and a further 1.9% for other services;
- The total council tax increase of 3.9% was reluctantly recommended in order to maintain the council's statutory services and continue non-statutory services which were valued, the increase would equate to £1.14 per week on a band D property;
- The council tax reduction scheme would support those households who were struggling and some residents such as care leavers would pay no council tax at all.

Cabinet members thanked officers for their work in preparing the budget documents. In discussion of the report it was noted that a more detailed breakdown of the budget by directorate at appendix 3 would be included in the report to council so that it could be more readily matched to the till receipt presentation.

The following amendments were proposed:

Allocation of £200k from the public health ring fenced grant as the council's contribution towards the Hereford Cycling Circuit. Councillor Kenyon was commended for championing this project which would increase participation for cycle users including use of adaptive cycles and have benefits for both physical and mental health. With the addition of this funding, the project had only a small gap left to close to achieve full funding. The chief finance officer confirmed that he had discussed the allocation with the director of public health and the director for adults and wellbeing and that he was content with the proposed amendment. *(Proposed by cabinet member health and adult wellbeing, seconded by cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets.)*

To create a new earmarked reserve for climate change action. It was noted that the action plan had not yet been published but was close to coming forward. It was recognised that having a reserve in place would allow the council to fund initiatives to take forward actions identified in the plan. The chief finance officer confirmed that he was content with this proposal. *(Proposed by cabinet member finance and corporate services, seconded by cabinet member environment, economy and skills.)*

Group leaders were invited to express the views of their group. Points noted included:

- Additional funding for children's services and for vulnerable adults was welcomed;

- Concern that the additional income from the council tax increase would be used up in paying for the review of the transport packages and covering the cost of recoupment of fund by the LEP;
- Concern that many care providers were experiencing difficulties and that future lack of accommodation capacity might increase the number of people being sent out of the county, investment in this areas was welcomed;
- The allocation of funding to the cycle track development was welcomed as it was felt that the track would be of great benefit.

It was agreed that:

That:

- (a) the following be recommended to Council;**
 - a. the council tax base of 69,756.19 Band D equivalents;**
 - b. an increase in core council tax in 2020/21 of 1.9%;**
 - c. an additional precept in respect of adult social care costs of 2% applied to council tax in 2020/21 resulting in a total council tax increase of 3.9%, increasing the band D charge from £1,514.70 to £1,573.77 for Herefordshire Council in 2020/21;**
 - d. the balanced 2020/21 revenue budget proposal totalling £157.1m, subject to any amendments approved at the meeting, specifically the net spending limits for each directorate as at appendix 3;**
 - e. delegation to the section 151 officer of the power to make necessary changes to the budget arising from any variations in central government funding allocations via general reserves;**
 - f. the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 2020-24 at appendix 1 be approved; and**
 - g. the treasury management strategy at appendix 4 be approved.**
- (b) the responses to scrutiny committee's recommendations as provided in paragraph 63 be approved;**
- (c) up to £200k of the public health grant be ring fenced as the council contribution toward the provision of the Hereford City Cycle Track; and**
- (d) a new earmarked reserve be created to support activities related to climate change.**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 30 January 2020**Question 1****Mr R Palgrave, How Caple****To: leader of the council**

I asked at the 8 March 2019 meeting if Council would bring to the attention of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Herefordshire MPs the Council's concern about climate change and the outcome of the Council's climate emergency vote that day. I also asked if Council would request help in developing its climate action plans. My point was that without central government support, Herefordshire Council cannot make sufficient progress on this most important issue. In response, the Leader said that climate change is a national and global issue going beyond the county boundaries, and agreed that we need to call on others to help. He went on to say that he knew that our MPs will be happy to help us address the issues I raised. What response has Council had from our MPs and from MHCLG?

Response

I note that the questioner highlights comments made by the previous Leader of the Council in March 2019. In responding to the climate emergency, the support of our MPs and central Government departments such as MHCLG will be important. Whilst I am not aware of any specific response being received, our national government has also declared a climate emergency and is supporting action by local authorities to address the climate emergency. In developing our action plans, officers will be following all appropriate government guidance including that provided by MHCLG. As Leader, I can assure you that the new administration takes the climate emergency very seriously and is committed to developing clear actions to achieve net zero by 2030/31. I will therefore be personally writing to our MPs and the Secretary of State for MHCLG to ask them to confirm what practical support they are able to provide to enable us to deliver our plans.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 30 January 2020

Question 1

Councillor William Wilding, Penyard Ward

To: cabinet member, environment, economy and skills

Of the 285 councils to declare a climate emergency, only 35 seem to have published 'Action Plans'. Could you tell me when Herefordshire intend to publish a plan, and if the General Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on the Climate Emergency can see whatever plan has so far been prepared?

Response

The Council intends to publish its new Carbon Management Plan in April this year. This document will set out the Council's plan to reduce its own carbon emissions over the next 5 years and will set out an interim target on our journey to carbon neutrality by 2030/31.

The Council is also leading the development of a new countywide strategy and action plan which is being developed in partnership by a new carbon reduction steering group. We are currently planning a stakeholder engagement event in March to invite partners to further support the development of this strategy which it is anticipated would be published later this year.

I would also welcome the support of the new climate emergency task and finish group which I understand is currently supporting the development of these plans.

Question 2

Councillor Nigel Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty Ward

To: leader of the council

The Marches LEP Board minutes for 26th November 2019 state that the Leader announced that he was giving an "in principle" agreement from Herefordshire Council to underwrite phase 2 of NMiTE and that he would take this offer to the Cabinet for approval on 19th December. This is now the second Cabinet meeting since the November LEP meeting and no such agenda item has yet been tabled. Following the comments made by Jesse Norman, Conservative MP for South Herefordshire in the House this week, will the Leader confirm that he has changed his mind and will not now be kowtowing to the LEP in that he will now not be asking this Council to further underwrite the LEP's funding to NMiTE by a further £5m?

Response

The Council is involved in high level discussions with Government, NMiTE and the Marches LEP and, with the support of our local MP, I am hopeful that the arrangements for releasing the funding of Phase 2 to NMiTE can be agreed in the very near future. I will update Members on this as soon as I am able.

Supplementary Question

All are in favour of NMiTE, the new university or college as I understand we are now to call them. To persuade the LEP that the council is fully behind the project the council has lent £300k on favourable terms, bought them the old National College for the Blind campus to share with the arts college at a cost of £6m, is building student accommodation in Station Approach which the council have underwritten and have underwritten the first LEP grant to the tune of £850k. I think

what the people of Herefordshire want to know is whether you are minded to increase further the council's risk on what the treasury calls a 'novel and contentious project' in further offering the LEP council guarantees to underwrite the next £5.7m of funding, an action that Jesse Norman seems to think is unnecessary.

Response

Negotiations are continuing. They are of a commercial and confidential nature. We had discussions this afternoon, are moving towards a conclusion and hopefully quite soon we will be able to announce something concrete on this.



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	27 February 2020
Title of report:	Quarter 3 2019/20 corporate budget and performance report
Report by:	Cabinet member finance and corporate services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To review performance for quarter 3 2019/20 and the budget outturn.

To provide assurance that progress is being made towards achievement of the agreed revenue budget and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for major variances or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the cabinet's satisfaction.

The 2019/20 outturn is £51k overspend as at the end of December 2019. It is anticipated that this will be addressed within the directorates.

The proportion of performance measures showing an improvement, or remaining the same compared to the same period last year is 70%. This is an improvement on the same period last year.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) Cabinet review performance and financial outturn for quarter 3 2019/20, as set out in appendices A - G, and identifies any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvement.

Alternative options

1. Cabinet may choose to review financial and operational performance more or less frequently; or request alternative actions to address any identified areas of under-performance, including referral to the relevant scrutiny committee.

Key considerations

Revenue outturn

2. The projected 2019/20 outturn is £51k overspend as at the end of December 2019. It is anticipated that this will be addressed within the directorates by the end of the financial year through management of resources.
3. The table below sets out the directorate position at the end of December. Further service detail is available in appendix 1.

Projected revenue outturn 2019/20 (as at the end of December)

Directorate net budget	Gross budget	Net budget	Outturn	Variance over / (under)spend
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Communities	93,981	57,365	55,414	(1,951)
Children & Families	160,224	30,773	32,954	2,181
Economy & Place	49,503	31,118	31,411	293
Corporate	19,171	16,330	16,785	456
Directorate total	322,879	135,586	136,564	862
Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves	62,877	15,506	14,578	(928)
TOTAL	385,756	151,092	151,142	51

4. The outturn position reflects an initial review of the current spend vs the budget set in February 2019. The overspend in Children & families reflects an increase in the average annual cost of placements since budget setting and an increase in external supported

accommodation. The underspend in Adults and communities reflects a reduction in both the number and cost of community care packages, along with staff vacancies within the operational teams. The overspend in Children & families reflects an increase in the costs of placements since budget setting and an increase in the use of external supported accommodation for young people with care experience. The overspend in Economy and Place is due to the recent severe flooding and school transport costs including the impact of Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations. Staffing difficulties and a reliance on interims within Legal Services is responsible for an overspend in Corporate Services.

Capital outturn

5. The capital Budget for 19/20 has been revised to £89.433m, which is £0.487m more than last report due to movements in capital grants, the summary breakdown for each project is shown in appendix 2, table b. The estimated forecast is £43.664m, equivalent to 49%.
6. This forecast underspend of £45.769m consists of a number of projects that are anticipated to deliver later than planned, below the project budget or have yet to secure the grant to fund the project. Full details of the forecast spend and variance by project is included in appendix 2 table a, this demonstrates the underspend is consistent over a number of projects, the largest of which are Fastershire and Development Partnership budgets. These projects are expected to require a similar level of capital funding but this will be spent later than originally planned, this contributes toward the capital financing underspend in the table above. There are four projects that have completed so far, in this financial year and all are within the budget provision approved.

Corporate performance

7. Council approved the corporate plan 2016/17-2019/20 in February 2016, framed around the key priorities to:
 - enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives;
 - keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life;
 - support the growth of our economy; and
 - secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
8. In February 2019 Council approved the 2019/20 budget. The annual delivery plan was agreed by Cabinet in February 2019. This plan sets out the activities for the 2019/20 year which will meet the overarching outcomes defined in our Corporate Plan.
9. Progress towards delivering the activities within the delivery plan can be found in appendix e. At the end of the third quarter, two thirds of actions identified as already complete or on track for completion within planned timescales.
10. The impact of the delivery plan is supported by a number of agreed performance measures. These have been selected because they demonstrate progress towards achievement of the council's priorities and also provide an overview of the council's performance from a resident's perspective. The databooks are available in appendix 6 and contain the latest performance outturns available. Where monitoring information is only available annually, these measures will be reported at the point it becomes available.
11. The proportion of performance measures showing an improvement, or remaining the same compared to the same period last year is 70%. This is an improvement on the same period last year.

Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives

12. The Herefordshire Better Care Fund and Integration plan 2019/20 has been approved by the national and regional assurance process, confirmation was received in January. The council officers are working with health partners to continue to embed the jointly agreed plans and the planning guidance for 2020/21 has yet to be published.
13. The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) has recently been reviewed with support from the Local Government Association (LGA) to consider the future working, membership, priorities and deliverables in light of the landscape changes for health and social care. The review recommendations are due to be presented at the HWBB in February with recommendations to audit and governance and any changes will need to be approved by full Council in May.
14. The Peer Review final report has been received and overall this was a positive experience. The Peer Review team identified five opportunities that it felt the council might want to consider going forward:
 - Capitalise on the council's clear commitment to improving health and well-being outcomes for the residents of Herefordshire by ensuring the 'Talk Community' programme is defined in a manner that makes the delivery expectations understood by those responsible for delivering the programme. In terms of delivery it is important to then match the transformation resources to programme workstreams and expectations in order to deliver all of the component parts and measure impact on communities including those who have complex needs.
 - The nature of the existing care market is heavily dominated by small providers with seemingly limited capacity to diversify to meet the future aspirations of the council and its partners. The business and economy directorate of the local authority could make a real contribution in developing the skills of local business leaders to support them with this challenge.
 - There are strategic commissioning intentions to develop alternatives to residential care, translating these intentions into clear delivery plans is required to achieve the intended benefits.
 - Consideration of the role of carers in the delivery of 'Talk Community' and how carers are supported in Herefordshire to continue in their caring role. In doing this the team suggests that the views of carers and other stakeholders are actively sought, including those who support self funders to see if a refresh of the process and commissioning plans to support carers is required.
 - There is an opportunity to review the relationships and processes between practitioners and community brokers and the approval processes within Herefordshire in order to further develop strengths-based practice. It is timely to do this now as the current mechanisms have been in place for a while and it is likely to really help you to make/progress on the cultural and practice changes required to deliver your aspirations.
15. Adult Social Care has realigned locality boundaries to match those of the Primary Care Network (PCN's) and community health footprint. As part of the boundary changes Herefordshire Council will look to identify opportunities to work closer with health to improve the outcomes for individuals. The networks will also include developing the community resilience by working with the communities and voluntary sector to build on the strengths based model already in place for adult social care. This is the first stage of working closer with health and social care professionals, further work is being undertaken to include

additional services within, which could include brokerage, community broker and commissioned services.

16. Adults and Communities maintains a strong budget position in operations. Reviews of social care clients is the highest in reportable memory at the end of Q3 (67.3%). DTOC continues to be managed and very low numbers of social care delays are currently being reported. The HomeFirst service is reporting the highest numbers of people accessing the service since it began and there are no waiting lists for Care Act assessments for new people coming into the service.
17. All Ages Commissioning continue to successfully deliver against the 2019/20 plan. In the past quarter the Department has tendered and awarded the Integrated Equipment Store Service and Young People's Accommodation contracts. The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Dementia Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November and support has been provided to the Dementia Action Alliance a new dedicated resource which will work with the Council, Clinical Commissioning Group and local organisations to deliver against the outcomes within the strategy. All Ages Commissioning have also worked closely with finance colleagues and external providers to begin to assess the impact of the new increased National Living Wage to support fee setting for care services in 2020/21.
18. 412 individuals have been received the flu vaccination through the Council's workplace programme, which is 95 more than last year. External funding has been secured to develop a Physical Activity Strategy. Alcohol Needs Assessment and Oral Health Needs Assessment are complete and plans being drawn up to support implementation of the recommendations. Winter Health Campaign has been delivered. Wellbeing in All Decisions priorities have been agreed through management board and are in the process of being delivered. Application has been submitted to secure funding to tackle food poverty as party of the Sustainable Food County Programme of work and for Suicide Prevention work as part of an STP application.

Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

19. The Children's Integrated Needs Assessment (ChINA) and the Oral Health Needs Assessment have both highlighted the importance of action to address the relatively high levels of tooth decay and obesity of Herefordshire children. An action plan has been drafted, including measures to increase the number of children accessing fluoride varnish and enabling targeted, supervised tooth brushing as well as encouraging parents to take their child to the dentist. Results from the dental survey of 5 year olds has been delayed to February 2020. A dental survey of 3 year olds will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2020 and this will underpin a drive to work further upstream in terms of prevention.
20. A significant improvement in educational outcomes has taken place in Herefordshire over the past 5 years. Validated data received in quarter three confirmed results for primary schools in Herefordshire and indicates that the county is performing in either the top or second quartile of all local authorities in the vast majority of performance indicators. Data to show performance of secondary schools against other councils is un-validated. Key Stage 4 un-validated 4 data for Herefordshire schools shows that attainment has fallen slightly in 2019. Areas that are now being targeted by local authority officers are improving outcomes in the Attainment 8, Progress 8 and English and Maths measures at the end of Year 11 and securing higher attainment for disadvantaged groups, particularly pupils eligible for free school meals. Herefordshire is currently ranked 9th.
21. On 18 and 19 December 2019 Ofsted carried out a focused visit. The focus of the visit was arrangements for children in need and those children subject to a child protection plan, and

a particular focus on contextual safeguarding, particularly those issues relating to peer on peer abuse. Ofsted have published their report and further information has been provided to the executive. No children seen were identified at risk of significant harm and all were receiving interventions. There was positive recognition of the work of the children with disabilities team, the work on contextual safeguarding, peer on peer abuse, the stabilisation of the workforce through the recruitment and retention strategy and the planned investment. However, as the council recognises little progress has been made in improving the quality of practice for child in need and child protection and the challenge in this area is heightened by difficulties in recruitment and staff turnover. Further work to address these issues is contained in the safeguarding improvement plan that is reviewed on a quarterly basis by children and young people's scrutiny committee.

22. The first Signs of Safety workshop took place in December 2019 and work is progressing towards implementation of Signs of Safety, an approach to underpin practice with a strengths based model working with families.
23. At the end of quarter 3 a number of performance indicators for safeguarding and family support had shown some improvement. However, a number of key indicators including visits and supervision remain overall below targets; there has however been an overall improvement since the start of the financial year with some teams making more improvement than others. Performance information is subject to weekly and monthly review by managers.
24. There were 1,790 contacts received in quarter 3; which is a reduction against the number of contacts received in quarter 2 which was 1,853. The conversion rate of contacts to referrals has also seen a slight decrease from 24% in quarter 2 to 21% in quarter 3. Contacts completed within a 1 day timescale (year to date) at the end of quarter 2 was 89% and at the end of quarter 3 was 88%. However, we are moving to contacts being dealt with in a 24 hours period as we move forward on improving the service provision. We have seen a drop in the quarter in the assessments being completed in timescales from 79% in quarter 2 to 73% in quarter 3; with the year to date outturn decreasing from 84% to 80%.
25. At the end of quarter 3 there were 358 looked after children, 87 have been looked after for less than 12 months. 78 children are long term matched with their foster carer. 22 children are placed with parents. 12 children are placed with prospective adopters. 48 children have potential care plans of special guardianship orders; decision regarding these are taken on a case by case basis. Work is continuing to reflect on the most appropriate long term plan for other children within the overall number of 358, including reunification with families. This work is reviewed on a monthly basis and also reported to children and families scrutiny committee.
26. Recruitment continues to be supported by taking on an agency specifically tasked with recruiting social workers for Herefordshire and a bespoke microsite has been developed. Retention has been supported through a variety of enhancements, but filling vacant posts, keeping caseloads down and managing the work across the service remains a challenge.

Support the growth of our economy

27. In support of the economic growth of the county, located on the Enterprise Zone construction of the Cyber Quarter - Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, a £9m Joint Venture between the council and the University of Wolverhampton is underway and due to be completed in summer 2020. Construction is progressing very well, with the wooden structure of the building now in place with the building due to open in the summer 2020. The Cyber Security Centre will provide a range of specialist facilities to enable the start-up

and growth of businesses in this rapidly growing global market. Also located on the Enterprise Zone, construction work is progressing on the £7m redevelopment of the World War One Shell Store will establish the first business incubation space available in the county. Due to open in summer this year, the Shell Store will provide an opportunity for higher education institutions, such as NMiTE, and businesses to work in partnership. Visits have been undertaken to a number of incubation centres to inform the occupier procurement.

28. At the extraordinary LEP meeting on the 6 November the Board approved a further £5.66 million of funding to NMiTE to build a Centre for Timber Technology, Centre for Automated Manufacturing and a Centre for Future Skills on the Hereford Enterprise Zone. These developments will establish the future teaching space NMiTE will require to become fully operational and self-sustaining in future years. They will also add significant value to the strategic development of the Enterprise Zone, located on a site next to the Shell Store business incubation space mentioned above. The council is currently involved in high level discussions with Government, NMiTe and the Marches LEP and, with the support of our local MP, regarding the release of the funding to NMiTe.
29. On 2 December the tourism portfolio holders for Shropshire, Telford and Herefordshire met to explore opportunities for joint working in the future. The visitor economy is a very important part of Herefordshire's economy, in terms of employment and generating spend across the county. It is also a critical enabling sector, which helps promote our county and its outstanding natural assets and quality of life offer as a great place to live, learn, work, invest as well as visit.
30. On the 21 January a Marches Tourism Forum was held at the Green Dragon in Hereford, organised by the Green Dragon, Eat Sleep Live Herefordshire and Rural Media. Over 100 people from across the Marches area attended the conference, which heard from an impressive range of speakers. Following the conference we are working with a range of tourism partners to consider how we can work better together in the future to support the growth of an important local sector.
31. On 6 December we submitted our draft Leominster Heritage Action Zone delivery plan to Historic England, which has been jointly developed with Leominster town council. Earlier in the year the council successfully applied for £2m of Heritage Action Zone funding for Leominster. The draft plan identifies a range of activities to support the conservation of the town's heritage, as well as improve opportunities for tourism and public realm.
32. Appreciating that flooding has affected many people and businesses in the county, the council took an urgent decision to provide hardship schemes to residents and businesses whose homes or businesses have been flooded. This includes a Community Flood Recovery Grant worth £500 for each affected household to apply for. In order to qualify for the assistance, flood water must have entered the habitable areas of their property, or the residence has been considered unliveable for any period of time due to flooding. Alongside this is a Business Flood Recovery Grant, which will provide up to £2,500 per eligible small and medium-sized business. To qualify, businesses must be able to demonstrate that they have directly impacted or have directly suffered a loss of trade as a result of the flooding that cannot be recovered from insurance. For more information and to apply online, visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/floods
33. The Lugg catchment phosphate moratorium on development was considered at a meeting between council officers with Welsh Water and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on 6 December. The Nutrient Management Board met on the 29 January, when the Board considered and agreed to explore proposals scoped by the TAG to strengthen the Nutrient

Management Plan. It also agreed to commission a Memorandum of Understanding so that all regulatory bodies responsible for the quality of water within the Lugg catchment are consistent in their approach. A task and finish group was established to deliver this with a further board meeting scheduled for 24 April.

34. In October 2019 the cabinet member for infrastructure and transportation made a decision that confirmed that a review of the southern link road and bypass schemes would go ahead and officers were delegated to develop a scope for the review for consideration in a further governance report by end of that year. Where a number of assessments and reports had already been started for the bypass project the decision confirmed that these would be completed. Both the Hereford and South Wye Transport Packages also include improvements to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure in the City and the decision confirmed work would continue on these improvements.
35. The decision also set out that alternative options would be looked at as part of the review to ensure a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for the whole of Herefordshire is developed.

Work on the review commenced at the end of January. The review will include work to better understand existing and future road conditions, alternative transport options and the changing national policy context, particularly the declared climate emergency, alongside an independent peer assessment of the southern link road and bypass road schemes. It will also consider options that could deliver improvements more quickly, including the possibility of an eastern link road and river crossing, removal of traffic lights on key routes, emergency response arrangements to remove breakdowns on A49, an electric bus fleet for the urban bus network and improvements that provide safer routes to school. During this review the views of residents, commuters and local businesses will be invited. While the review is being carried out work will continue towards the implementation of agreed improvements to encourage walking and cycling in Hereford, subject to funding being available.

36. Listed building planning consent has been applied for to undertake capital works at the Museum, Library and Art Gallery at Broad Street in Hereford. This will enable additional space on the library mezzanine to be brought into public use for the first time and will provide a space that can be used flexibly for a number of purposes. It is expected that work will commence early in 2020/21 once the planning and tendering processes are complete.
37. The Travellers' Sites Development Plan Document, which sets out the council's planning policies and proposals to ensure the accommodation needs of the traveller community are met, was adopted at Council on 11th October.
38. The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 19 December 2019. The Strategy aims to continue the successful work in preventing people from becoming homeless, but also give more focus to the reduction of rough sleeping, initially through the strengthening of the Rough Sleeper Outreach and Resettlement Team to offer support to rough sleepers, and those at risk, with mental health issues, substance misuse or offending histories.

Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

39. Fastershire as a Herefordshire Council programme has been named **Best Public Sector Impact project** that demonstrates an exemplary approach to supporting the deployment of new digital infrastructure. The Independent Networks Co-operative Association (INCA) has recognised the project's approach in breaking down barriers to make progress in the deployment of broadband, using innovative ways of creating a step change in digital

connectivity in a very rural area. At the end of quarter 3, 90% of the county has access to superfast broadband, compared to only 0.6% in 2012.

40. Businesses in Herefordshire have been able to benefit from a bespoke programme to be connected with fibre broadband. Called the Marches and Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant (MGBG) Herefordshire Council is the lead through the Fastershire programme and has supported 48 businesses in Herefordshire and an additional 14 business in the pipeline – these are businesses in addition to the existing fibre broadband programme that covers businesses and households. The programme is fully funded by an EU grant. Also this year, as part of the Fastershire programme, 31 businesses in Herefordshire have received one to one advice on how to make best use of faster broadband connection and 83 business representatives have attending training in a range of digital skills.
41. The online phase of the budget consultation closed on the 4 December with 269 responses, which were combined with the face-to-face consultation that look place for the budget and the corporate plan. Views were sought on the proposed corporate priorities which sets out the ambitions for the next four years, following engagement with more than 1,500 people. The budget and corporate plan will be presented to Council on 14 February.

Corporate Risk

42. The Corporate Risk Register holds the most significant risks for the council and is attached at appendix 7. Since the last quarter, there have been a number of changes to the risks held within the register. The following risks have been removed from the corporate risk register
 - Delayed Transfer of Care (DTCO): This risk has been removed following a sustained period of improved performance. At the time the risk was added Herefordshire was highlighted as one of the poorer performing authorities nationally, however improvements within the directorate, including investment in the HomeFirst service and a trusted assessor to support with discharge to care homes, evidence clear improvement.
 - Integration (One Herefordshire): This risk has been removed. This is an agreed programme of work, which has an approved governance structure in place. The management of the integration agenda is now moved in to business as usual within the adults and communities directorate.
 - Information Governance (IG) Toolkit: this risk has been stepped down from the corporate risk register. The IG toolkit has now been successfully completed since 2012/13. The current toolkit is being updated and confidence of delivery is monitored monthly at the IG Steering Group.
43. The following risk has increased during the last quarter
 - Information Governance: Risk score has increased in the last quarter following review. Despite robust processes for sharing of information and a good record in this area, there are an average of 8-10 data breaches across the council in a month. There is additional training which increases awareness to report incidents. Whilst the majority of these are low level, there have been recent examples of breaches being referred to the Information Commissioner which have resulted in fines.
44. Five new risks have escalated on to the corporate risk register during the last quarter;

- Three risks regarding the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP): these are surrounding finances already committed to the project by the Marches LEP.
 - Phosphate Pollution in Lugg Catchment: This risk has been added to the Corporate Risk Register (CRR.35) due to the strategic implications for development in the county.
 - Hillside (former NHS Community Hospital): due to the possibility of a legal charge being invoked should there be a change of use of the building. This continues to be progressed through involvement of politicians and NHSE.
45. The safeguarding work to support the police investigation risk (from Children & Families) has been closed following the completion of the police investigation. This has been replaced by a new risk regarding the response to the police investigation (CRR.34).

Community impact

46. In accordance with the adopted 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. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting on actions completed and outcomes achieved, and ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner.
47. Regularly reviewing performance with a view to identifying actions which will deliver further improvement in outcomes or efficiencies helps ensure the council achieves its corporate plan priorities.

Equality duty

48. 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.
49. 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 part of the decision making processes, individual directorates and service areas assess the potential impact of any proposed project, leading to fairer, transparent and informed decisions being made.

Resource implications

50. The recommendations have no direct financial implications, however cabinet may wish to revise how money is utilised in order to meet the council's objectives.

Legal implications

51. None.

Risk management

52. The risks associated with the councils business, and any delivery plan objectives or projects are entered onto the relevant service or directorate risk register and escalated as appropriate. The corporate risk register is found in appendix 7.

Consultees

53. None in relation to this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Revenue forecast
Appendix 2	Capital outturn
Appendix 3	Treasury management forecast
Appendix 4	Savings performance reports
Appendix 5	Delivery Plan Progress
Appendix 6	Corporate Plan Performance Metrics
Appendix 7	Corporate Risk Register

Background papers

None

Revenue Budget Position 2019/20 as at December 2019

Summary Appendix A Statement

	Gross Budget	Net Budget	Outturn	Variance Overspend /(underspend)	Movement since last quarter
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adults & Communities	93,981	57,365	55,414	(1,951)	(1,020)
Children & Families	160,224	30,773	32,954	2,181	800
Economy & Place	49,503	31,118	31,411	293	181
Corporate	19,171	16,330	16,785	456	156
Directorates	322,879	135,586	136,564	979	117
Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves	62,877	15,506	14,578	(928)	(212)
Total Revenue	385,756	151,092	151,142	51	(95)

Movement in Net Budget:**Adults & Communities:**

Transfer from Childrens to adult contracts £15k, drawdown from reserves £500k of rural monies.

Childrens & Families:

Draw downs from reserves £3,183k, transfer of budget for two posts to Corporate Services (£80k) and (£15k) to Adults for contract costs

Economy & Place:

Draw downs from reserves £2,762k, transfer of budget to Corporate Services (£206k), transfer of budget to Central for capital financing (£32k)

Adults and Communities: Revenue Budget Position 2019/20 as at December 2019

	Gross Budget	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance	Movement since last quarter
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Learning Disabilities	24,118	20,478	20,561	83	(234)
Memory & Cognition	3,323	2,472	2,379	(93)	76
Mental Health	4,329	3,600	3,446	(154)	(27)
Physical Support	33,075	24,464	23,914	(550)	(196)
Sensory Support	532	435	378	(57)	(50)
Client Sub-Total	65,377	51,449	50,678	(771)	(431)
Care Operations & Commissioning	9,130	9,112	8,271	(841)	(552)
Commissioned Services	4,854	3,688	3,675	(13)	(3)
Transformation & Improvement	834	834	753	(81)	(35)
Prevention & Wellbeing	4,159	3,060	3,077	17	42
Directorate Management	593	(10,778)	(11,040)	(262)	(41)
Public Health	9,034	0	0	0	0
Adults & Communities	93,981	57,365	55,414	(1,951)	(1,020)

The key variances are:

Learning Disabilities – reduction in the forecast during the qtr is mainly due to a high cost residential package transferring to another authority.

Physical Support – reduction in the forecast is due to a decrease in the number of community care packages and nursing placements, partially offset by an increase in residential placements.

Care Operations & Commissioning – reduction in forecast is due to vacancies within the operational teams.

Directorate Management – this underspend reflects the receipt of rural monies being passed over to Adults & Communities during the reserves review, net of the re-alignment of BCF schemes in line with the approved plan.

Children and Families: Revenue Budget Position 2019/20 as at December 2019

	Gross Budget	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance	Movement since last quarter
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children's Commissioning	807	570	573	3	0
Directorate	412	391	408	17	13
Directorate	1,219	961	981	20	13
Additional Needs	2,345	2,301	2,229	(72)	(45)
Commissioning Management	3,449	434	438	4	4
Development and Sufficiency	1,790	998	1,013	15	14
Early Help	1,468	937	883	(54)	0
Early Years	446	436	436	0	0
Education Improvement	706	320	306	(14)	1
DSG	121,829	0	0	0	0
Education & Commissioning	132,033	5,426	5,305	(121)	(26)
Safeguarding and Review	1,308	1,051	1,071	20	(1)
Children in Need	3,297	3,196	3,164	(32)	(22)
Looked After Children	20,772	17,901	20,240	2,339	848
Safeguarding Development	336	306	282	(24)	(24)
Safeguarding & Early Help Management	1,932	1,932	1,911	(21)	12
Safeguarding & Family Support	27,645	24,386	26,668	2,282	813
Children & Families	160,897	30,773	32,954	2,181	800

The key variances are:

Looked After Children – placements have caused increased pressure this quarter due to an increase in numbers and level of support required

Economy and Place: Revenue Budget Position 2019/20 as at December 2019

	Gross Budget	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance	Movement since last quarter
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Economic Growth	1,171	875	866	(9)	1
Highways & Transport	20,206	16,985	17,381	396	515
Housing and Growth	3,102	2,251	2,263	12	41
Management	127	127	138	11	19
Regulatory, Environment & Waste	22,759	15,806	15,820	14	(322)
Technical Services	8,153	(4,926)	(5,057)	(131)	(73)
Economy & Place	55,518	31,118	31,411	293	181

The key variances are:

Highways & Transport – the Highways and Transport service area has had to respond to recent severe flooding events which has placed additional pressure on the service. In addition, £539k pressure in school transport of which £475k relates to the level of demand for SEN transport and £73k impact of Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations. Budgets have been managed to reduce the impact of the transport pressures.

Regulatory, Environment & Waste - income in relation to planning has seen some improvement but there is £340k under recovery of planning income, which may in part be due to economic conditions relating to current uncertainty in the development market. This is currently being offset by over performance on energy and waste budgets

Technical Services – building control £153k underspend due to a vacancy and one off increased income generation due to reduced competition in the market

Corporate: Revenue Budget Position 2019/20 as at December 2019

	Gross Budget	Working Net Budget	Full Year Outturn	Full Year Variance	Movement since last period
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Support Services	8,677	5,810	5,713	(97)	(97)
Finance, Legal & Governance	8,568	8,361	8,684	323	23
People & Performance	1,926	2,159	2,389	230	230
Corporate	19,171	16,330	16,785	456	156

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The key variances are:

Finance, Legal & Governance - Legal services has significant vacancies and is reliant on interims to provide support to the council.

Table A - 2019/20 Capital Budget Forecast

Adjustments include reprofiling to future years and additional grants allocations	2019/20 Budgets £000s	Adjustments in Year £000s	2019/20		
			Budget £000s	Forecast £000s	Variance £000s
Adults and Communities					
Disabled facilities grant	1,853	146	1,999	1,999	-
Hillside	2,300	250	2,550	-	(2,550)
Single Capital Pot	541	378	919	-	(919)
Private sector housing improvements	-	199	199	-	(199)
Total Adults & Communities	4,694	973	5,667	1,999	(3,668)
Corporate					
Fastershire Broadband	11,420	(1,268)	10,152	5,366	(4,786)
PC Replacement	374	(156)	218	233	15
Children Centre Changes	60	203	263	173	(90)
Total Corporate	11,854	(1,221)	10,633	5,772	(4,861)
Children's and Families					
Colwall Primary School	-	85	85	40	(45)
Schools Capital Maintenance Grant	1,700	452	2,152	1,800	(352)
Peterchurch Primary School	493	-	493	-	(493)
Expansion for Marlbrook school	5,538	(1,924)	3,614	850	(2,764)
SEN & DDA school improvements	710	(710)	-	-	-
Brookfield School Improvements	1,298	1,279	2,577	50	(2,527)
C&F's S106	604	311	915	500	(415)
Special Provision Capital Fund	333	(333)	-	-	-
Healthy Pupils	99	-	99	99	-
Individual Pupil Needs	120	(1)	119	75	(44)
Short Breaks Capital	118	-	118	118	-
Blackmarston SEN	-	54	54	54	-
Replacement Leominster Primary	-	36	36	25	(11)
Basic Needs Funding	2,058	(2,058)	-	-	-
2 Year Old Capital Funding	-	31	31	31	-
Preliminary works to inform key investment	1,815	195	2,010	100	(1,910)
Temporary school accommodation replacement	450	65	515	365	(150)
Total Children's & Families	15,336	(2,518)	12,818	4,107	(8,711)
Economy and Place					
Hereford City Centre Transport Package	1,550	(919)	631	877	246
South Wye Transport Package (detailed below)	17,067	(12,349)	4,718	1,174	(3,544)
<i>South Wye Transport Package - Construction</i>	-	-	2,606	44	-
<i>South Wye Transport Package – Professional Fees</i>	-	-	708	462	-
<i>South Wye Transport Package – Land Costs</i>	-	-	1,298	668	-
<i>South Wye Transport Package - ATM</i>	-	-	106	-	-
Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)	1,500	-	1,500	90	(1,410)
Hereford Transport Package (detailed below)	3,500	202	3,702	1,059	(2,643)
Hereford Transport Package – Professional Fees	-	-	3,702	1,059	-

Hereford Transport Package - ATM	-	-	-	-	-
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	12,272	(527)	11,745	11,745	-
E & P's S106	-	1,441	1,441	1,441	-
Highway asset management	4,858	(1,015)	3,843	2,093	(1,750)
Hereford Enterprise Zone	2,924	476	3,400	2,095	(1,305)
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone Shell Store	5,816	119	5,935	4,000	(1,935)
Ross Enterprise Park (Model Farm)	6,270	(3,893)	2,377	350	(2,027)
Marches business improvement grants	788	835	1,623	635	(988)
Marches Renewable Energy Grant		88	88	88	-
Marches Business Investment Programme		99	99	99	-
Affordable Housing Grant	800	799	1,599	1,142	(457)
Community Housing Fund	-	141	141	141	-
Revolving Loans	-	55	55	55	-
Development Partnership activities	35,000	(25,442)	9,558	292	(9,266)
Property Estate Enhancement Works	500	999	1,499	987	(512)
Corporate Accommodation	-	331	331	331	-
Leisure Centres	-	368	368	150	(218)
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	1,511	(1,456)	55	4	(51)
SEPUBU Grant	354	381	734	120	(614)
LED street lighting	-	177	177	80	(97)
Estates Capital Programme 2019/22	1,150	200	1,350	777	(573)
Three Elms Trading Estate	358	22	380	380	-
Customer Services and Library	-	21	21	21	-
Energy Efficiency	65	(11)	54	31	(23)
Warm Homes Fund	397	-	397	397	-
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch development	579	331	910	30	(880)
Leominster cemetery extension	-	45	45	45	-
Tarsmill Court, Rotherwas	-	59	59	59	-
Car Parking Strategy	-	169	169	121	(48)
Car Park Re-Surfacing	-	116	116	2	(114)
Office and Car Park Lighting Replacement	165	(1)	164	34	(130)
Upgrade of Herefordshire CCTV	48	-	48	48	
Schools Transport Route Planning	30	-	30	50	20
Corporate Fleet Procurement	738	-	738	738	-
Hereford Library	-	213	213	5	(208)
Total Economy and Place	98,240	(38,412)	60,315	31,786	(28,529)
Total	130,124	(40,691)	89,433	43,664	(45,769)

Table B – Capital Programme position Dec 2019/20

Scheme Name	Prior Years £000	2019/20 budget £000	2020/21 budget £000	2021/22 budget £000	2022/23 budget £000	Total scheme budget £000
Economy & Place						
Hereford City Centre Transport Package	33,166	631	1,500	5,353	-	40,651
South Wye Transport Package	6,984	4,718	14,795	6,422	2,081	35,000
Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)	-	1,500	2,000	2,000	-	5,500
Hereford Transport Package	2,908	3,702	-	-	-	6,610
Local Transport Plan (LTP)	-	11,745	12,272	-	-	24,017
E & P's S106	-	1,441	-	-	-	1,441
Highway asset management	-	3,843	3,750	4,250	-	11,843
Hereford Enterprise Zone	10,769	3,400	1,831	-	-	16,000
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone Shell Store	83	5,935	1,298	-	-	7,316
Ross Enterprise Park (Model Farm)	11	2,377	4,174	508	-	7,070
Marches business improvement grants	877	1,623	-	-	-	2,500
Marches Renewable Energy Grant	-	88	764	336	-	1,188
Marches Business Investment Prog.	-	99	1,125	1,336	440	3,000
Affordable Housing Grant	35	1,599	800	-	-	2,434
Community Housing Fund	9	141	-	-	-	150
Revolving Loans	145	55	-	-	-	200
Development Partnership activities	6,042	9,558	25,000	-	-	40,600
Property Estate Enhancement Works	1,241	1,499	-	-	-	2,740
Corporate Accommodation	2,540	331	-	-	-	2,871
Leisure Centres	9,684	368	-	-	-	10,052
Solar Photovoltaic Panels	606	55	1,473	-	-	2,134
SEPUBU Grant	-	734	-	-	-	734
LED street lighting	5,478	177	-	-	-	5,655
Estates Capital Programme 2019/22	-	1,350	2,095	1,390	-	4,835
Three Elms Trading Estate	95	380	-	-	-	475
Customer Services and Library	112	21	-	-	-	133
Energy Efficiency	-	54	46	-	-	100
Warm Homes Fund	-	397	397	165	-	960
Gypsy & Traveller Pitch development	29	910	899	39	-	1,877
Leominster cemetery extension	148	45	-	-	-	193
Tarsmill Court, Rotherwas	341	59	-	-	-	400
Car Parking Strategy	77	169	-	-	-	246
Car Park Re-Surfacing	-	116	-	-	-	116
Office and Car Park Lighting Replacement	79	164	58	-	-	300
Upgrade of Herefordshire CCTV	-	48	136	-	-	184
Schools Transport Route Planning	-	30	30	30	-	90
Courtyard Development	-	-	611	-	-	611
Corporate Fleet Procurement	-	738	-	-	-	738
Hereford Library	132	213	-	-	-	345
Total E & P Capital Projects	81,589	60,315	75,054	21,831	2,521	241,308

Corporate						
Fastershire Broadband	16,979	10,152	8,607	-	-	35,738
PC Replacement	261	218	641	397	-	1,516
Children centre changes	167	263	-	-	-	430
Total Corporate Capital Projects	17,407	10,633	9,247	397	0	37,684
Children and Families						
Colwall Primary School	6,665	85	-	-	-	6,750
Schools Capital Maintenance Grant	-	2,152	1,200	1,200	-	4,552
Peterchurch Primary School	7	493	5,000	-	-	5,500
Expansion for Marlbrook school	527	3,614	2,000	-	-	6,141
SEN & DDA school improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brookfield School Improvements	6	2,577	167	-	-	2,750
C & F's S106	-	915	-	-	-	915
Special Provision Capital Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-
Healthy Pupils	-	99	-	-	-	99
Individual Pupil Needs	152	119	-	-	-	271
Short Breaks Capital	-	118	-	-	-	118
Blackmarston SEN	30	54	-	-	-	84
Replacement Leominster Primary	6	36	-	-	-	42
Basic Needs Funding	-	-	8,891	-	-	8,891
2 Year Old Capital Funding	75	31	-	-	-	106
Preliminary works to inform key investment need throughout the county	5	2,010	-	-	-	2,015
Temporary school accommodation replacement	85	515	300	-	-	900
Total C & F Capital Projects	7,558	12,819	17,558	1,200	0	39,135
Adults and Communities						
Disabled facilities grant	-	1,999	1,853	1,853	-	5,705
Hillside	-	2,550	-	-	-	2,550
Single Capital Pot (Inc Waverley House)	164	919	-	-	-	1,083
Private sector housing improvements	57	199	-	-	-	256
Total A & C Capital Projects	222	5,667	1,853	1,853	-	9,594
Total	106,776	89,433	103,712	25,279	2,521	327,721

	2019/20 Budget £'000	2020/21 Budget £'000	2021/22 Budget £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	Total
February 2019 Council Approved Budget	130,124	54,780	11,521	-	196,425
Reprofiled	(61,210)	47,043	12,086	2,081	-
18/19 Carry Forwards	19,435	-	-	-	19,435
Additional Grants	1,084	1,889	1,672	440	5,085
Revised Capital Budget	89,433	103,712	25,279	2,521	220,945

Grant Additions since February Council

	£000
Special Provision Capital Fund Increase	349
LTP additional grant	603
LTP grant income to SWTP	(1,078)
LTP grant income to SWTP	(53)
E&P S106	242
Disabled Facilities Grant	146
Brookfield Estimated Grant	(113)
Marches Renewable Energy Grant	1,188
Marches Business Investment Programme	3,000
S106 Additional Draw Down	800
	<u>5,085</u>



Treasury Management Interim Report (31 December 2019)

This report ensures the council demonstrates best practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations in their Code of Practice for Treasury Management, by keeping members informed of treasury management activity.

1. The UK Economy

- 1.1. Year-on-year growth in the three months to the end of September slowed to 1% from 1.3% in the second quarter, some of this was thought to be as the result of using the stockpiles which had been held in preparation for an EU exit earlier in the year.
- The Bank of England maintained the base rate at 0.75% following their December meeting.
 - The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) was 1.5% in November 2019, unchanged from October and remained below the 2% target set by the Bank of England.

2. The Council's Investments

- 2.1 At 31 December 2019 the council held the following investments:

Investment	Term	Maturity Date	Interest Rate	Amount £m
<u>Instant access bank accounts:</u>				
Handlesbanken	N/A	N/A	0.68%	5.00
<u>Instant Access Money Market Funds:</u>				
Aberdeen Standard	N/A	N/A	0.73%	5.00
CCLA	N/A	N/A	0.73%	2.50
Deutsche	N/A	N/A	0.57%	2.46
Federated	N/A	N/A	0.73%	5.00
Insight	N/A	N/A	0.67%	5.00
Invesco	N/A	N/A	0.72%	4.64
Morgan Stanley	N/A	N/A	0.64%	3.21
<u>95 Day Notice Bank Accounts:</u>				
Santander	N/A	N/A	1.50%	5.00
<u>Fixed Term Deposits:</u>				
Coventry Building Society	186 days	03/02/20	0.85%	5.00
Total			0.80%	42.81

- 2.2 The council continues to select counterparties suitable for investment based on the credit worthiness service provided by their treasury advisors, Link Asset Services. The service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies. The modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system to which Capita Asset Services allocate a series of

colour coded bands with suggested maximum durations for investments as shown below;

- Yellow 5 years
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or part nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days
- No colour not to be used

2.3 The council has earned interest on its investments as follows:

Month	Average amount invested		Average rate of interest earned		Amount of interest earned / Forecast £000	Budget £000	(Surplus) /Deficit £'000
	Actual / Forecast £m	Budget £m	Actual / Forecast %	Budget %			
Apr-19	37.6	30	0.89	0.67	27	17	(10)
May-19	40.6	30	0.87	0.67	29	17	(12)
Jun-19	39.1	30	0.87	0.67	28	16	(12)
Jul-19	46.3	30	0.83	0.67	33	17	(16)
Aug-19	45.3	30	0.83	0.67	31	17	(14)
Sep-19	42.0	30	0.81	0.67	28	16	(12)
Oct-19	44.3	30	0.80	0.67	30	17	(13)
Nov-19	45.6	30	0.80	0.67	30	17	(13)
Dec-19	43.7	30	0.81	0.67	30	16	(14)
Jan-20	40.0	30	0.80	0.67	27	17	(10)
Feb-20	35.0	30	0.80	0.67	23	17	(6)
Mar-20	30.0	30	0.80	0.67	20	16	(4)
Total					336	200	(136)

2.4 Interest income earned has been higher than expected as the interest rate earned on investments has been slightly higher than budgeted and the average amount available for investment has been higher than anticipated, reflecting low actual capital spend to date and higher capital receipt balances held.

2.5 In addition to investment income the council earns interest on the provision of loan finance to the waste disposal PFI provider, this is expected to generate loan interest payable to us of £2.3m in 2019/20, this will be recharged through the waste disposal PFI arrangement.

3. The Council's borrowing

Short-term borrowing

3.1 The council is continuing its policy of using short-term borrowing (if required) from other local authorities for short-term liquidity needs. These short-term interest rates are significantly below levels available from other sources avoiding a large cost of carry when comparing fixed interest debt to current (variable) investment rates.

3.2 The council can only borrow up to its Capital Financing Requirement, which represents the need to borrow for capital spend, and cannot borrow beyond this limit to finance the revenue budget. This is approved at budget setting in the Treasury Management Policy.

3.3 At the end of December 2019 there were no short-term loans outstanding.

Long-term borrowing

3.4 At 31 December 2019 the council held long term borrowing of £133.9m, no new long term borrowing has been secured. Rates are monitored and discussed with our treasury advisors to determine the optimum timing of securing any new long term borrowing.

3.5 The current capital financing budget position is summarised below:

Summary of Borrowing Budget	Budget	Forecast	(Surplus) /Deficit
	£m	£m	£m
Minimum revenue provision	6.9	6.5	(0.4)
Interest payable on all loans	5.7	5.4	(0.3)
Total	12.6	11.9	(0.7)

4. Summary of forecast outturn

4.1 The current net treasury forecast outturn is expected to be a surplus (underspend) of £0.8m, the main reason being the delayed need to borrow and higher investment balances being maintained. This follows lower cash capital investment spend to date compared to the capital investment budget approved in February.

The savings identified in the 2019-20 Budget setting of £8m over the next 3 years are set out below. The red, amber and green represent the understood risk about achieving the saving.

	19-20 £000	20-21 £000	21-22 £000	Total £000
Adults & Communities	700	600	500	1,800
Childrens & Families	200	300	650	1,150
Economy & Place	2,223	873	273	3,369
Corporate	359	77	77	513
Centrally held budgets	200	500	500	1,200
Total	3,682	2,350	2,000	8,032

The directorates continue to review the savings plans through the year, to identify risks and slippage, to ensure mitigation can be identified. The table below sets out the savings plans for each directorate in further detail.

	19-20 £000	20-21 £000	21-22 £000	Total £000
Adults & Communities				
Workforce and Service delivery	600			600
Reducing the need for formal care		600	500	1,100
Income from client contributions	100			100
Childrens & Families				
Inflation and contract efficiencies	200	300	450	950
Workforce restructure			200	200
Economy & Place				
Efficiency savings	507	273	273	1,053
Accommodation efficiencies	250	150		400
Car Parking	150			150
Growth Programme	67			67
Public & School/College Transport	109			109
Waste & Sustainability	30	200		230
Museums & Archives		250		250
Accommodation Strategy	360			360
Waste Disposal - WCC	650			650
Public Realm efficiencies	100			100
Corporate				
Efficiency savings	73	77	77	227
Workforce redesign	66			66
Budget realignment	220			220
Centrally held budgets				
Workforce redesign	200			200
Council Tax Reduction scheme		100		100
Pension Deficit		400		400
Treasury Management			500	500
Total	3,682	2,350	2,000	8,032

* Museums and Archives no longer required to make £250k savings in 2020/21; these will be made across the directorate.

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives	Develop and increase the uptake of a range of activities aimed at identifying early risk factors and improve the overall health and wellbeing of Herefordshire residents such as NHS Health checks	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	In 2019/20, 41% of invited people have completed their NHS Health Check. Of these patients, 40% required referral to their GP due to identified health issues most commonly cholesterol and blood pressure. We continue to support the NDPP through participation in the Board.
	Develop and embed effective community hubs across the county (referred to as the Talk Community programme) which can demonstrate impact on health, wellbeing and independence of local residents	Ongoing	31/03/2021	Green	A project management team has been recruited to start in September 2019. This has not delayed work the lead project manager and project lead have been commencing work. This sits within the Directorates communities workstream.
	Implement a new housing allocation policy and system through which residents in housing need are nominated for affordable housing in Herefordshire	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Amber	Revised project delivery plan completed in light of impact of technical difficulties and revised policy guidance. Alternative ICT solution design and housing allocations policy proposals to be subject to Cabinet report for delivery of go-live no later than 1/4/2020.
	Maximise the use of the disabled facilities grant to support people to remain in their own home with appropriate advice, equipment, adaptations, technology and essential repairs	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	A project and lead have been assigned and are working towards this project. This sits within the Directorates Communities workstream.
	Increase the functionality of the council website and WISH (wellbeing information and signposting) portal to aid people's easy access to information and advice, along with conducting services online	Ongoing	31/10/2019	Green	This sits within the Directorates Communities workstream.
	Increase the quality of information that is published, and provide more information in accessible formats for openness and transparency	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	Progress continues to ensure that WISH data is up to date and accurate. This has resulted in increases in the activity on the WISH website.
	Increase the coverage of superfast broadband across the county through the Fastershire programme	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	90% of premises in Herefordshire have a superfast broadband services, plus over national average for ultrafast broadband. Revised broadband strategy agreed for further broadband deployment up to 2023.
	Support people to access technology and increase their ability to use technology to enhance daily living and overall wellbeing	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	There are 3 projects within this that are all in the early stages of planning. These are:1) Long range wide area network pilot. 2)Technology enabled living pilot. 3)Digital catapult pilot. This sits within the Directorates Communities workstream.
	Continue the support and delivery of the armed forces covenant in Herefordshire to help the armed forces community (including family and carers), shaping and supporting access to advice and services	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	The Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (HAFCP) are embracing the new streamlined group with topic leads getting to grips with their new roles in delivering their area of work to meet the needs of the armed forces community within Herefordshire. Successful activities to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covenant Signatories event held in October saw 45 of the 63 signatories and representatives of the original signing for Herefordshire with attendees engaging with and developing new working relationships with a request to do a repeat for 2020; • The Veteran's Support Centre in West Street, has had a soft opening since 11th November and planning is in train for an official opening at the end of March; • Training programme developed to deliver to frontline services on the understanding and awareness of the armed forces and additional support and services available to meet their needs; • Results of Veteran survey being fed into the Armed Forces Needs document which is nearing completion which will continue to support the wider work of the Partnership but will feed into the subgroups of the Operations Group for caseworkers, targeting support to all other topic areas of housing, health, mental health, etc. The main areas for 2020 include securing the veteran centre as a stand alone charity, clear and measured delivery of the armed forces needs document, awareness raising through training for the other frontline services, maximising the opportunity of partnership working with agencies o achieve the best results and shape service delivery, increase in signatories to the covenant.
	Explore new models of delivery for high demand services such as nursing provision for people with dementia	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Dementia Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November and support has been provided to the Dementia Action Alliance a new dedicated resource which will work with the Council, Clinical Commissioning Group and local organisations to deliver against the outcomes within the strategy. The Council is considering the options for constructing and/or purchasing care homes to enhance its position as both provider and commissioner.

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
	Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the urgent care system to avoid admission or enable people to leave hospital earlier	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	The local authority continues to be strategic partner in the health and care system and leading on key areas of work and improvements. This has led to a number of integrated services, such as the Integrated Hospital Discharge Team, and pathways resulting in a reduction in delayed transfers of care and the local authority proposing to lead on a number of commissioning areas.
	Redesign social care resources to align better within the locality based community health services	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	Workforce consultation completed and operational teams are now aligned through the case management system. This continues to be embedded operationally.
	Enable accessibility between communities and services through transport networks	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	The ongoing growth in demand for SEN transport is placing pressure on the delivery of all public transport; plans are in development to address these pressures in year.
52 a great start in life	Develop and implement a care leavers covenant that sets out the council's commitment to care leavers as part of our corporate parenting role	Not Started	TBC	Red	Plan is to use the national covenant approach and have been encouraged by central government to express interest in being a "trailblazer" local authority. Expression of interest completed and waiting to hear from government.
	Increase early help resources through effective targeting of commissioned services and increase in direct family support workers	Completed	07/10/2019	Blue	The internal Early Help resources have been increased by family support workers and early years support workers. This increase in resource has led to an increase in the number of children and their families who receive specialist support from 147 families (including 298 children) April 2019 to 185 families (404 children) December 2019. It has also increased the number of families who achieve sustainable change - Troubled Families data Qtr 2, 52% conversion rate. The governments Troubled Families programme has been extended for 2020/21 allowing for a one year procurement to be undertaken to continue existing commissioned serves. New contracts are expected to be awarded imminently. Long-term government funding remains uncertain. Commissioned services are valued at £160k per year (£100k Troubled Families plus £60k Council). It is expected that during 2020/21 a re-energised Early Help Strategy Group will consider the long-term need and funding for commissioned early help services.
	Implement new model for social care to ensure consistency and quality of practice so that children and families are supported effectively within the right part of the system	Ongoing	30/09/2021	Amber	Signs of safety is being implemented over the coming months and first signs of safety workshop with lead consultant has taken place on the 17 December 2019. Governance and reporting arrangements report being finalised. The consultant is providing the necessary training and support to enable us to implement the new social model.
	Develop and implement an enhanced support offer to those families who are at risk of escalation to higher levels of intervention from social care	Ongoing	TBC	Amber	Business case completed and received cabinet member approval Jan 2020. Now moving to implementation phase which begins with advertising roles.
	Deliver Herefordshire's school capital investment strategy to ensure that demand for school placements can be met and that agreed refurbishment work on schools is completed	Ongoing	TBC	Amber	Discussions have taken place with all potentially affected secondary schools and options generated in terms of locations for additional places. Feasibility studies are due to start to further identify the exact costs associated with the expansions. A review of primary school provision will take place in Autumn / Winter 2019/20. The process has been delayed by the lack of appointment of a key staff member (now resolved) - and has been overtaken by the request by cabinet for a full briefing on the sufficiency plan - now in train. This is also impacted by the new financial requirements procedures - although the majority of projects are proceeding well they remain high profile and some are in need of further agreement.
	Undertake a mental health needs analysis for young people	Not Started	31/03/2020	Amber	Scoping has identified the value of focussing this needs analysis on mental health and wellbeing of all ages, rather than solely focussing on children. A childrens survey commissioned for spring/summer will allow a further focus on mental health. The current agreed intention is to deliver a profile/assessment of mental wellbeing in Herefordshire based on primary prevention; including mapping of the prevalence of MH conditions across the county aligning to PCNs, identification of the extent of protective and risk factors for mental wellbeing, current service provision.

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
Keep children and young people safe and give	Support and challenge early years settings, schools and colleges to continue to improve the outcomes for children and young people to achieve our aim of having education outcomes in the top 25%	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	Targets have been set for schools (GLD, Phonics, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4). All schools have been risk assessed (RAG rated) Standards visits have been completed and follow up visits to monitor progress towards actions will take place this term. Support is being provided through a variety of means including school to school support (8 schools supported through this) and Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership projects (Raising the attainment of boys in English at GCSE). Use of National Leads in Education and Teaching Schools to support and challenge schools.
	Develop and implement a strategy to tackle the growing issue of childhood obesity and dental health in Herefordshire	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Amber	An oral health action plan has been drafted which includes a targeted approach to tooth brushing and options to increase the numbers of children accessing fluoride varnish. Actions for a comprehensive and consistent approach for services and settings for under fives have been identified in relation to healthy eating, oral health and physical activity. The actions include multi-disciplinary training, building on the Solihull parenting training, ensuring consistent messages and guidance around appropriate resources. This approach will be taken to the Children & Young People's Partnership Board for consideration
	Develop new models of housing and accommodation to support vulnerable young people	Ongoing	30/11/2020	Green	The council is currently procuring a new support service for Care Leavers with complex needs within accommodation acquired by the council for the purpose. This service will be mobilised by May 2020. Accommodation pathways for Care Leavers and vulnerable young people have been revised and detailed proposals for a procurement framework for young peoples accommodation and support are being finalised. The council is also reviewing options for the re-commissioning of housing related support for vulnerable young people.
	Enhance information and support to parents	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Amber	The Early Help page on the website has been updated and is more user friendly. The page comes up more readily when using the search engine. Since June 2019 when the Early Years Community & Family Connectors came into post the total number of community assets identified for children and their families is 198 of which 80 agreed for their details to go on WISH. With the increased investment in Early Help 4 more Early Help Family Support Workers and 3 more Early Years Support Workers were recruited. Early Help Family Support have increased support to families from 147 families including 298 children in April 2019 to 185 families including 404 children in December 2019. Recruitment of Early Years Support workers has taken more time due to the reorganisation of the service in the summer to become fully integrated into the Early Help offer. In December 2019 the team were completing targeted support work with 109 families with children under 5 years and have taken over the delivery of Solihull Parenting courses
	Develop speech and language skills of under 5's through education and training in early years settings	Ongoing	31/03/2021	Green	Solid Roots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elklan speech and language project – communication friendly settings accreditation, communication champions within settings. Training for parents via 'let's talk' courses. • Solihull Approach • Training for EYFS professionals and home learning environment initiatives, such as library membership for under 5s and associated activity, including dual language books and information for parents; home learning environment bursaries for settings to engage parents in their children's learning at home; translated leaflets to encourage use of home language to develop good communication skills for children with EAL; signing courses for practitioners and settings to support communication

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
54 rowth of our economy	Commence construction of the southern link road and continue development of proposals for walking, cycling and public space improvements in the South Wye area as part of the South Wye Transport Package	Ongoing	TBC	Amber	In October 2019 the cabinet member for infrastructure and transportation made a decision that confirmed that a review of the southern link road and bypass schemes would go ahead and officers were delegated to develop a scope for the review for consideration in a further governance report by end of that year. Where a number of assessments and reports had already been started for the bypass project the decision confirmed that these would be completed. Both the Hereford and South Wye Transport Packages also include improvements to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure in the City and the decision confirmed work would continue on these improvements. The decision also set out that alternative options would be looked at as part of the review to ensure a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for the whole of Herefordshire is developed. Work on the review commenced at the end of January. The review will include work to better understand existing and future road conditions, alternative transport options and the changing national policy context, particularly the declared climate emergency, alongside an independent peer assessment of the southern link road and bypass road schemes. It will also consider options that could deliver improvements more quickly, including the possibility of an eastern link road and river crossing, removal of traffic lights on key routes, emergency response arrangements to remove breakdowns on A49, an electric bus fleet for the urban bus network and improvements that provide safer routes to school. During this review the views of residents, commuters and local businesses will be invited. While the review is being carried out work will continue towards the implementation of agreed improvements to encourage walking and cycling in Hereford, subject to funding being available.
	Develop the Hereford Transport Package including proposals for walking, cycling, buses and public realm and undertaking detailed design of the preferred route for the Hereford bypass to inform the submission of a planning application	Ongoing	TBC	Amber	
	Develop proposals for a transport hub at the train station and improvements on Commercial Road, Blueschool and Newmarket Street as part of the Hereford City Centre Transport Package	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Amber	Work on the project continues and consultation is due to commence in February with key stakeholders and afterwards with the public using commonplace consultation to develop the design of the transport hub and public realm schemes. Following consultation a further cabinet member report will be drafted setting out the design approach for sign off and approval. Further stages include completion of preliminary design and planning application.
	Progress developments within Hereford City, including improvements to the Edgar Street ground, bring forward sites for development within the urban village area and progress a city centre multi-storey car park	Ongoing	There are multiple elements to this action with differing timescales. Please see comments	Green	Football Ground - A stage 1 feasibility study into the possible redevelopment of the Blackfriars St stand has been completed. Study suggests there is potential to develop circa 100 bedroom student accommodation. Over the last couple of months the cabinet has held discussions with NMiTE about the property strategy required to support their growth. Urban Village - a One Public Estate masterplan has been commissioned to consider the possible redevelopment of sites along the City Link road. The study is due to be completed at start of 2020.
	Undertake major investment in maintaining the county highway assets to fix roads and bridges, particularly those that are strategically important for trade and the resilience of the county's economy	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Amber	The annual plan has had to be adjusted to support changes in the delivery of the South Wye Transport Package; this has reduced the funding that is available to support this action from the Local Transport Plan Capital funding.
	Deliver the Hereford Enterprise Zone delivery plan, including the Shell Store incubation centre and the cyber security centre	Ongoing	Summer 2020	Green	Both the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security and the Shell Store incubation space are being constructed at present, and are on track to be completed in the summer 2020.
	Support Higher Education provision in Herefordshire through enabling development of student accommodation.	Ongoing	On-going	Green	As above - the cabinet have held a number of meetings with NMiTE to consider short to medium term student accommodation needs. The Football Club project will seek approval to move to detailed design stage. Other possible projects are continuing to be reviewed in Feb 2020. A feasibility study options for the College Road Campus site will be commissioned in the near future..

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
Support the g	Commence development of student accommodation for those in higher education in the city with a first scheme at Station Approach to commence construction during 2019/20	Ongoing	01/09/2020	Green	Construction of the Station Approach 178 bedroom student accommodation has commenced and is on track to be completed in September 2020. Sod cutting event to be held on 6th November.
	Use the Development and Regeneration Partnership to identify and develop proposals for the regeneration of sites in council ownership that can support economic growth, including key worker housing	Ongoing	On-going	Green	As above, an urban village study has been commissioned to consider the possible use of council owned sites along the city link road. The economic development opportunities in the wider city and market towns are also being reviewed.
	Continue to develop the detailed planning policies to support housing and economic growth; including progressing the development of the Hereford Area Plan and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan for submission to the Secretary of State, the adoption of the Travellers sites Development Plan Document and increasing the number of adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan Documents to 60	Ongoing	Rolling programme	Amber	Development work on HAP is paused awaiting outcome of review of Western By-Pass and is likely to be stopped to prioritise the update of the Herefordshire Core Strategy. MWLP is progressing towards submission and the TSDPD was adopted in October 2019. NDP delivery progress performance still exemplar. There are 69 NPD adopted with a further 3 awaiting referendum at the end of January 2020.
	Commence first phase of development of the Ross Enterprise Park	Ongoing	Start on site mid 2020	Amber	The design stage is nearing completion which will enable the finalisation of development costs for assessment prior to taking the project forward.
	Develop the countywide economic master plan to deliver our Invest Herefordshire vision to ensure a vibrant and successful local economy	Ongoing	TBC	Green	Some initial work has commenced on developing a high level masterplan for Hereford. Following recent workshop sessions with the cabinet to identify priorities, this work can now be accelerated in the spring 2020. Monthly programme of workshops to be established with the cabinet considering Hereford and the Market Towns. Hereford Town Board to be established to take forward the Stronger Towns allocation of up to £25m for future economic development of the city.
	Seek to acquire new sites to encourage new housing development within the county and commence development of the former depot site at Bromyard to deliver 45 new homes.	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Red	Bromyard housing site held up pending Tribunal decision on possession proceedings necessary to implement planning approval.
ES	Continue significant development of affordable and social housing through planning gain and the Development and Regeneration Partnership, also contributing to accommodation for vulnerable people and analysis of projection of population and demographic changes	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	Delivery of affordable homes to exceed target of 210 for 2019/20 including accessible bungalows and general needs housing with floating support for looked after children and other vulnerable needs including homelessness and Gypsies and Travellers. Analysis underway.
	Run a series of training, seminars and one to one advice sessions for businesses to increase the adoption and exploitation of superfast broadband	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	121 people attending Fastershire business seminars in Herefordshire, 45 one to one business reviews for county businesses, 7 funding vouchers to make investment from the business reviews.
	Operate the Marches & Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant to provide bespoke connectivity to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) not covered by the main Fastershire programme	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	52 businesses in Herefordshire benefitting from awards to date, and a further 67 in progress.
	Support the delivery and administration of grants and programmes that provide improvements in the built environment, housing, energy efficiency and all aspects of the regeneration and growth of the county	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	The following schemes are being supported: ERDF - Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings (SePuBu); ERDF - Marches Broadband; ESF - Social Inclusion; ERDF Marches Renewables fund; Community Housing; OPE (One Public Estate); OPE Wave 7 funding; OPE (Land Release Fund); Travel Fund (part of above Access Fund); Heat Networks Distribution Unit (HNDU); Community Safety Partnership; Women's Aid; Museum Transition Project; Herefordshire Young Drivers Safety Project; MOD Strengthening Local Covenant delivery; Natural Flood Management Project; MOD Remembrance & Reconciliation; Sport England - Bridge Street Sports Park, Ledbury & Hereford Leisure Centre; Section 106 - Art funding (Pomona Place); Section 106 - Withies Road, Biodiversity; Public Green Spaces; Young Carers Grant; Talk Community Hubs; Community Transport; Capital Grant - Children's fund and Flood Grants. We are also looking to bid for further funding as required, specifically Wave 8 for OPE programme.

Theme	Action	Status	Anticipated Delivery Date	RAG	Comments
Secure better services, quality of life and value for money	Make better use of children centre facilities through sharing space, community involvement and income generation	Ongoing	01/03/2020	Green	Majority of work is now completed. Relocation of children centre in Leominster into share site with MAO freeing the old site for a nursery to generate an income. Redevelopment of Widemarsh Centre in Hereford as a retained key site now completed including space for private nursery generating an income. Relocation of children centre at Ross with shared space at the Library and use of the Old Chapel next door with MAO (freeing the Ryefield Centre for alternative use). Ledbury children centre retained and due for additional MAO space. Other sites transferred use and operation to schools and nurseries to meet local need.
	Reconfigure space at central and satellite offices so that employees can work flexibly and the council can maximise its facilities and resources	Ongoing	Leominster 1/8/2020. Ross and Plough Lane subject to governance. Estimate March 2020 for approval.	Amber	Children services have been moved out of the Ryefield Centre and relocated in part of the Old Chapel (Ross) and Ross Library. However, a locality team is still based at the Ryefield Centre. A completed options paper with a recommendation is going to Management Board mid-February. Once Ross is resolved, this will enable increased capacity at Ledbury MAO. Refurbishment of the MAO at Leominster by 31/7/20 to allow the relocation of the Adults locality team based in the Old Priory and to move them in and share the MAO. The installation of the new fire escape for Plough Lane is due to be completed by 29/2/20. This will allow Plough Lane to be populated with more staff as part of the BWOW project (subject to Cabinet Approval 27/2/20). Investigating a possible MAO at Belmont.
	Improve the council's engagement with residents, its standards and communication approach with employee wide training on good customer services	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	Updated and revised engagement standards agreed for formal decision on 10th February 2020. Training on Unconscious Bias available for staff.
	Prepare for a second round of community governance reviews consulting with parish councils and their communities to develop outline terms of reference on possible governance alterations	Ongoing	01/10/2021	Green	Plan to start inviting expressions of interest from Feb to March 2020. We have undertaken some initial consultation with some parishes, via the parish summit and via parishes themselves contacting us directly.
	Optimise the use of the property assets held by the authority, ensuring assets are in the right location and fit for purpose, considering shared and dual use as well as maximising income	Ongoing	On-going	Amber	High Level Corporate Accommodation plan drafted and due to be reviewed by Associate Director and Director before being submitted to Management Board by 1/3/20. Corporate Estate Strategy 2020-2024 currently a work in progress. Draft to complete by 1/3/20.
	Effectively deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), and implement change to the Capital Budget process to improve transparency and accountability	Ongoing	29/02/2020	Green	
	Further improve commissioning and procurement to deliver greater revenue efficiencies and savings	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	On schedule to complete all procurement training for 2019/20 and developed new contract management training module rolled out in October 2019. In progress is activity to mature Social Value with a view to establishing desired council outcomes to incorporate into new contracts. New contract templates in place and in use –incorporating relevant legislation and policies e.g. data protection, modern slavery.
	Implement a workforce strategy that ensures there is an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the changing needs and demands of the council	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	A draft has been agreed by the cabinet member. The draft will now be placed on modern.gov for formal consultation and approval.
	Contribute to the wider workforce challenges in the care sector through a targeted local campaign and resources to support the recruitment and retention of key workers across the sector	Completed	30/06/2019	Blue	This has moved to business as usual within the Directorates Commissioning workstream and within the workforce development team.
	Ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities in relation to data protection, elections and cyber security	Ongoing	01/04/2020	Green	Data protection / IG are on track to have the toolkit in place by March and as for cyber security we are testing the organisation systems and staff members to ensure compliance on an on-going basis.
	Support evidence based decision making through a refreshed Understanding Herefordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website, and make it easier to find key information about a topic or local area	Completed	30/09/2019	Blue	The understanding Herefordshire website is now live.
	Further develop the council website including WISH to communicate with residents and increase the ability to access services on-line, with streamlined services making the most of technology to create an improve customer experience	Ongoing	31/03/2020	Green	This sits within the Directorates Communities workstream.

Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives

Performance Measure	Outturn				Frequency	Polarity	Direction of Travel (same point last year)
	2018/19 (Year end)	2019/20					
		End of May	Q2	Q3			
<i>Reduce the rate of younger adults needing permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes (aged 18-64)</i>	15.54 (19 people)	0.91 (1 person)	5.49 (6 people)	10.97 (12 people)	Monthly	Smaller is better	◀▶
<i>Reduce the rate of older people needing permanent placements in residential and nursing care homes (aged 65+)</i>	657.2 (303 people)	74.24 (34 people)	304.6 (142 people)	431.1 (201 people)	Monthly	Smaller is Better	▲
The number of Delayed Transfers of Care (delayed days) from hospital attributable to social care	171	168	102 (August)	103 (November)	Monthly	Smaller is better	▲
Increase the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services	73.4% (293/399)	74.7% (62/83)	68.7% (184/268)	72.3% (282/390)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▲
Increase the number of affordable housing units delivered	203	51	120	189	Monthly	Bigger is better	n/a
Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	48	44	40	36	Monthly	Smaller is better	▲
Improve the overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	73%				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a
Increase the number of community hubs throughout the county	-	7	8	8	Monthly	Bigger is better	n/a
Increase the take up of the NHS Health Checks from the most "at risk" population groups	39.2% (4,013/10,241)	36.75% (584/1,589)	41.87% (2,028/4,843)	43.4% (October) (2,478/5,712)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▲

*Measures in italic text above are cumulative measures

Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life

Performance Measure		Outturn				Frequency	Polarity	Direction of Travel (same point last year)
		2018/19 (Year end)	2019/20					
			End of May	Q2	Q3			
Reduce the attainment gap at age 16 between free school meal pupils and their peers		Local GAP 18.2 National GAP 13.9			Indicative 2019 data: National GAP - 13.7 Local GAP - 14.4	Annual	Smaller is better	▲
Increase the proportion of pupils attending a school and or setting that is good or outstanding	Primary	93.5% (12,926/13,825)	93.5% (12,926/13825)	97.1% (13,355/13,754)	97.1% (13,355/13,754)	Monthly	Bigger is better	◀▶
	Secondary	77.6% (7,214/9,296)	77.6% (7,214/9,296)	78.3% (7,406/9,459)	78.3% (7,406/9,459)	Monthly	Bigger is better	◀▶
Herefordshire young people meeting or exceed - the national average indicator for attainment (attainment 8) - the national progress measure (progress 8)	Attainment 8	Attainment 8 Herefordshire 45.9 England (all schools) 44.3			Attainment 8 Herefordshire 44.6 England (all schools) 44.5	Annual	Bigger is better	▼
	Progress 8	Progress 8 Herefordshire -0.04 England (state-funded sector) -0.02			Progress 8 Herefordshire 0.18 England (state-funded sector) -0.03	Annual	Bigger is better	▼
Improve education outcomes at age 5 (Ensuring they reach a good level of development)		74.1%		75.40%		Annual	Bigger is better	▲
Improve health outcomes for: 0-5 year olds (Percentage of 2 to 2.5 year olds completing a developmental health review)		-		81.7%		Annual	Bigger is better	n/a
Improve health outcomes for: 5-19 year olds (Percentage of Year 6 children who are overweight or obese)		<i>Herefordshire: Yr6 pupils overweight or obese: 34.5%</i> <i>England: Yr6 pupils overweight or obese: 34.3%</i>		34.7%		Annual	Smaller is better	◀▶
Reduce the number of children being referred to children's social care for a service		3,432 contacts 598 referrals		3,406 contacts 811 referrals	5,196 contacts 1,192 referrals	Quarterly	Smaller is better	n/a

Performance Measure	Outturn				Frequency	Polarity	Direction of Travel <small>(same point last year)</small>
	2018/19 (Year end)	2019/20					
		End of May	Q2	Q3			
Reduce the number of children looked after by the local authority	334	331	340	358	Monthly	Smaller is better	▼
Reduce the use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness			TBC	TBC	Quarterly	Smaller is better	n/a
Increase the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds participating and training (including apprenticeships and work based learning)	89.9% (3,127/3,480)	89.9% (3,131 young people)	87.6%	87.3%	Monthly	Bigger is better	▼
Reduce the number of children subject to child protection plans	111	117	153	173	Monthly	N/A	n/a

Support the growth of our economy

Performance Measure	Outturn				Frequency	Polarity	Direction of Travel (same point last year)	
	2018/19 (Year end)	2019/20						
		End of May	Q2	Q3				
Reduce the amount of household waste per person (kg) per year	391.65kg	71kg (updated from provisional data of 65.78kg previously reported)	210.19kg (updated from provisional data of 212.05kg previously reported)	299.91kg (provisional)	Monthly	Smaller is better	▲	
Minimise the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions in Herefordshire (3 year rolling average)	94.33 (2016-18 avg) (94 recorded in calendar year)	94.7 (37 recorded KSIs in first 5 months)	96.7 (78 recorded in first 9 months)	96.7 (95 recorded in calendar year)	Monthly (based on calendar year)	Smaller is better	▲	
Percentage of Category 1 defects (immediate or imminent hazard) and 2a defects made safe/dealt with within target times	Cat 1	99.93% (2,808/2,810)	100% (279/279)	99.78% (922/924)	99.81% (1,585/1,588)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▼
	Cat 2a	90.5% (14,552/16,079)	92.26% (2,265/2,455)	92.26% (2,265/2,455)	94.93% (7,507/7,908)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▲
Improvement in the overall condition of roads and bridges	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a	
Improve the proportion of strategically important routes that are in good condition and the proportion that are in need of maintenance	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a	
Improve average journey time in Hereford in morning week-day period	-				Annual	Smaller is better	n/a	
Percentage of Major planning applications dealt with within 13 weeks (24 month rolling)	87.1% (149/171)	86.6% (142/164)	86.1% (142/165)	84.1% (132/157)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▼	
Percentage of Non-major planning applications (minors/others) dealt with within 8 weeks (24 month rolling)	78.2% (3,220/4,117)	78.95% (3,166/4,010)	80.8% (3,803/3,813)	81.4% (2,930/3,600)	Monthly	Bigger is better	▲	
% of county premises with access to Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband	86.80%		89.5%	90%	Quarterly	Bigger is better	▲	
Supply of ready to develop housing sites	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a	
% reduction in Herefordshire Annual Domestic Energy Consumption (reduce fuel poverty)	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a	

Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

Performance Measure	Outturn				Frequency	Polarity	Direction of Travel (same point last year)
	2018/19 (Year end)	2019/20					
		End of May	Q2	Q3			
Increase in number of people interacting with council services on-line	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a
Website satisfaction: percentage of visitors that confirm that they were able to do what they set out to do in a satisfaction survey	64.74%	59%	69.59% (103/148)		Monthly	Bigger is better	▲
Reduce sickness absence (12 month rolling)	8.24 days	8.59 days	8.76 days	9.04 days	Monthly	Smaller is better	▼
Rateable value of new business rates registrations	£48,641k	£48,424k	£48,731k	£48,516	Monthly	Bigger is better	▼
Spend to the council's revenue budget	£595k underspend	£16k underspend	£146k overspend	£51k overspend	Monthly	Smaller is better	▲
Progress against delivery of savings targets	£11,683k	£2,113k	£3,682	£3,682	Quarterly	Bigger is better	n/a
Increase completion rates of mandatory training	-	3.90%	>95%	>95%	Annual	Bigger is better	▲
Increase flu vaccination uptake for Herefordshire Council staff and other defined staff groups	-				Annual	Bigger is better	n/a

Corporate Risk Register - December 2019

Ref	Risk Description	Opened	Risk score before controls (LxC)	Existing Controls in Place	Risk score after controls (LxC)	Risk Appetite	Further actions required	Residual Risk trend (6 months)	Risk Owner
CRR.01	Children's Operational Staffing / Workforce IF/AS: We are unable to recruit and maintain a stable, experienced social care workforce THEN: Caseloads for social workers will be higher than wanted and may affect the quality of casework for children	Oct-17	25 (5x5)	A recruitment and retention plan has been implemented and specific actions taken to reduce turnover and improve the attractiveness of our offer to experienced staff. We have commissioned an agency to undertake a search process under the 'urgent to rural' banner. We are actively engaging with regional colleagues to influence wider work and to reduce reward package escalation. We have engaged a number of agency workers as a result of regional collaboration which has provided additional capacity. Grow our own activity has been agreed and has been progressed during 2019-20	20 (4x5)	Further mitigation required	Cabinet have approved an additional £1.6m to support reducing caseloads by recruiting to social work posts, we have in place a number of initiatives to recruit social workers into the organisation; including for example ASYE offer; Urban to Rural and through the apprenticeship scheme to train new staff to achieve their social work qualification.	_____	Director Children & Families
CRR.02	Market workforce economy IF: the current limited capacity within the social care workforce continues THEN: will there will be an impact on availability of services - this is particularly true of Registered Managers and Nurses	Mar-17	25 (5x5)	External market workforce project launched - the care heroes campaign to attract and retain more people into care and support providers with recruitment & training costs. Fees have been increased to dom care providers with a steer that front line staff should benefit. Monthly provider forums with commissioning services and close monitoring of market capacity and responses.	16 (4x4)	Further mitigation required	Ensuring that the Adult Social Care agenda is high on priority list for other Directorates. Working with economic partners on master planning to shape the future market.	_____	Director Adults & Communities
CRR.03	Budget and Savings Plans - Children & Families IF/AS: The demand for placements for looked after children and care leavers exceeds that planned for when the budget was set THEN: the spend will be greater than the budget within children and families IF/AS: The savings plans across the directorate are not delivered with support from council services THEN: Resources and the MTFs across the council may be at risk	Apr-17	20 (4x5)	Budget is reviewed monthly DLT/SMT/Management Board and then informing Cabinet. Alternatives to care panel in place on a weekly basis to review cases that may be considered to be moving towards becoming looked after, chaired by the AD safeguarding and family support. Corporate contingency in place as part of 2019/2020 to cover any spend over planned budget	16 (4x4)	Further mitigation required	Business case for Edge of Care Service been developed with input from Staffordshire Council; cabinet agreed in principle to use of earmarked reserves in 2019/20 to start the edge of care service subject to cabinet member decision.	_____	Director Children & Families
CRR.04	Human Rights claims IF: a result of high court decisions regarding children's social care cases THEN: Herefordshire council may face Human Rights claims.	Dec-16	16 (4x4)	Case review work has been undertaken by children's social care and by legal services and submitted to court. Legal services have reviewed current cases to assess for potential human rights claims. Communications briefed on response from council, including training, audit of any cases with similar presenting features and action to address any recommendations from the judgement; communications to cabinet, children's scrutiny and all members; communication to chair of HSCB and also to regional lead for safeguarding with Ofsted. In light of court judgements, cases are reassessed. Practice improvements are identified through this work and steps taken to embed changes in day to day work.	16 (4x4)	Further mitigation required	Children's services and legal services reassess cases in light of court judgements. Practice improvements are identified through this work and steps taken to embed changes in day to day work.	_____	Director Children & Families
CRR.06	Council Redesign/Resources IF: Reducing resources in the form of grant, uncertainty and the requirement to deliver transformation at speed combine THEN: there will be an risk of failure to meet statutory and/or legal duties and powers.	Jun-15	25 (5x5)	Transformation programme within each directorate, corporate plan, refreshed governance and constitution, quarterly performance management reporting and director performance management through appraisal system.	12 (3x4)	Further mitigation required	Benefits realisation and review arrangements through quarterly performance management	_____	Chief Executive
CRR.07	Deprivation of Liberty IF: The authority does not meet the statutory requirements for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and individuals are unlawfully deprived of their liberty THEN: The authority faces a risk of being taken to the Court of protection, increasing the risk of Costs and Financial penalties for the Local Authority	Oct-14	20 (4x5)	Additional investment into DoL's has been made and will be maintained. Weekly performance management of waiting list is in place. Regular reporting and review up to Director Level and to Safeguarding Adults Executive Group. Recruitment of external Best Interest Assessors - although these are limited in availability due to national demand. The DoLS team check all referrals for DoLS against list of open safeguarding referrals to ensure these cases are prioritised. ADASS triage criteria are followed to identify cases where there is a high risk to the individual and a high risk to the Council of litigation. Three full time BIA posts have been created and a MCA DoLS team manager post has been created as part of the adults social care restructure. Further awareness training with staff and providers, additional legal support and constant review and prioritisation of cases waiting for assessment. Programme to train staff as BIAs in place. Independent BIA engagement plan ongoing two additional full time seconded posts created and filled. Multi agency MCA and DoLS policies completed. agency MCA and DoLS policies completed.	12 (3x4)	Accept		_____	Director Adults & Communities
CRR.08	Recruitment Strategy IF: the council is unable to recruit the level and scale of staff required to vacant posts across the organisation due to inability to attract and/or an unsustainable employable local demographic THEN: there will be insufficient staff to meet service demands; an inability to progress service development; and a financial implication of using agency staff/contractors.	Aug-18	16 (4x4)	Short term reductions in capacity are accommodated by prioritisation and reallocating work amongst staff. Analysis identifying posts which are hard to recruit to. Involvement in regional workforce development and agency market management. Recruitment and retention initiatives.	12 (3x4)	Accept		_____	Head of HR and Organisational Development
CRR.09	EU exit IF: following the EU exit there is uncertainty or policy decisions that impact the council THEN: there may be an impact on the economic and social programmes of the Council and its partners, including: interest rates and exchange rates impacting on the Affordability of the council's capital programme; and restriction on the free movement of people which could lead to skills gaps and adverse impact on the workforce.	Aug-18	16 (4x4)	Inclusion of an assessment of the risks associated with EU exit in our MTFs and Treasury Management Strategy, and our debt profile is monitored and managed to avoid exposure to interest rate fluctuations. The Capital Programme will include a risk assessment of the cost of borrowing, and it will be reviewed constantly to ensure its continued affordability.	12 (3x4)	Accept		_____	Chief Finance Officer
CRR.10	Failure of council employees to adhere to standing orders and policy IF: officers fail to adhere to standing orders (e.g. contract and finance procedure rules) and policies THEN: the number of internal disciplinary and/or exposure to legal challenge will increase, along with the likelihood of financial and reputational risk, resulting in claims being made and won against the Council with costs and reputational harm incurred.	Sep-17	16 (4x4)	Contract and finance procedure rules have been rewritten and published. Toolkits, guidance and training have been implemented. Schemes of delegation have been written as part of the new constitution. Governance training has been provided. Internal Control Improvement Board to oversee development and implementation of an improvement plan to ensure effective internal controls in respect of capital spend, project management and contract management are in place and complied with across the council.	12 (3x4)	Further mitigation required	Internal Control Improvement Board to oversee development and implementation of an improvement plan to ensure effective internal controls in respect of capital spend, project management and contract management are in place and complied with across the council.	_____	Solicitor to the Council
CRR.11	Emergency events IF: significant events happen (e.g. severe weather, major flooding, terrorism and/or influenza pandemic risks) THEN: there could be a significant cost implication to the Council and it may be necessitate staff redeployment to backfill and maintain critical services. Failing to respond effectively to major emergencies/incidents could result in a loss of public confidence through adverse publicity, loss of life to public or council employees, loss of service, economic damage or environmental impacts. Lack of trained staff (deployed or other) means we may not respond as quickly/effectively as we should.	Apr 11	16 (4x4)	Council and multi-agency plans reviewed as part of wider WM Local Resilience Forum objectives. Resilience Direct (cabinet officer system) to progress information sharing, planning and response mechanisms and data. Council Business Continuity Management System in place. Rest Centre training and provision for 200 people at Three Elms Unit. Gold and Silver officer training sessions and programme completed. BBLP tested new emergency road closure software, which will update the website automatically within the road closure map.	12 (4x3)	Accept		_____	Health Safety and Resilience Manager
CRR.12	Health & Safety IF: Herefordshire Council doesn't comply with Health and Safety legislation THEN: there is an increased risk of: employees injured through work activity; council prosecuted by HSE for breaches of legislation; increased insurance claims and insurance premiums; member of public, contractor or employee killed at work, possible corporate manslaughter, loss of reputation and financial costs to the council; sickness rates increase because of lack of compliance with good health, safety and wellbeing practice; increased employer/employee litigation through inconsistent approach to managing health and safety in the workplace; unable to defend H&S claims or disputes; and, fire damage and financial and reputational costs to the council through fire at a council owned building.	May 11	16 (4x4)	Strategy – Strategy/project plan in place to achieve full compliance with H&S legislation, prioritised by high risk activities; H&S policy current and reviewed each year. Cultural – Sharepoint H&S tool box available via front page of intranet; H&S and Fire Safety part of existing mandatory training; some improvement has been made in last period with wider engagement from employees with H&S systems (when things have gone wrong); employees consulted about H&S issues through 'house' meetings. Systems – Accident reporting/investigation and work based ill health in place; mandatory training; first aid/fire warden training in place; some systems updated (focused on high risk areas); employers liability insurance; Directorate H&S reps kept up to date with current risks and good practice control measures. Property Services buildings statutory compliance system in place.	12 (3x4)	Accept		_____	Health and Safety Advisor
CRR.13	Cyber attack IF: we do not protect against a potential cyber attack THEN: we could be at risk of losing data in breach of principle 7 of the Data Protection Act which would lead to potential fines from the Information Commissioner Office and reputational damage.	Apr-17	15 (3x5)	IT Supplier (Hoople Ltd) holders of ISO 27001:2013, and: Cyber Essentials Plus certificates – both in good standing. Implemented 'defence in depth' strategy covering: Administrative, Technical and Physical controls to maintain our security goals: Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability.	12 (3x4)	Further mitigation required	Greater links to disaster recovery and continuity within services.	_____	Assistant Director, Corporate Support
CRR.14	Development Regeneration Partnership - Keeppmoat IF: there is not an adequate pipeline of suitable residential development projects THEN: we will not be able to deliver the benefits through the contract	Feb-18	12 (3x4)	A pipeline of projects has been identified and discussed with the DRP Board. Work is underway to identify and bring forward suitable sites for inclusion in early phases of the programme, specifically relating to housing development, there are, however, limited opportunities that are immediately available. Draft pipeline of potential development sites being collated Jun 18: A pipeline of projects has been identified and discussed with the DRP Board Business case to cover the life of the partnership being developed in conjunction with each development partner and the council's Finance department. Jan 19: Early phase pipeline is current focus. Release of Merton Meadow for mixed development will provide opportunities for housing development. Mar 19: DRP Housing Strategy and pipeline drafted seeking approval in June 2019.	12 (3x4)	Further mitigation required	Amended pipeline to be reviewed.	_____	Programme Director, Housing and Growth
CRR.15	Workplace / Accommodation Programme IF: The Programme is not managed to time and budget and does not include BWoW principles THEN: there will be significant risks to service delivery, savings plans and the life cycle of buildings.	Mar 16	12 (3x4)	Corporate Property Board. Escalation of high risk items to EP management team and to members for political consideration of priorities. Jun 18: Paper for Cabinet being prepared for July 2018. Cancelled as directive that CWB need to complete service review post OFSTED report - also impacts on BWOW. Aug 18: Undertaking a programme of condition surveys on a cyclical basis will provide detail on scale of backlog maintenance. A programme is being developed for commencement in 2018-19. CWB internal review post-Ofsted needs to be completed before a strategic property review is completed including BWoW. This is likely to be post May 2019. CPB wound up - Outline future estates strategy options to go to Corporate Property Strategy Board in January 2019. March; No Directorate business plans received to underpin estate strategy.	12 (3x4)	Further mitigation required	Data collected and information being prepared for updated strategy for next period; this will update the accommodation plan. Draft for February 2020 will incorporate BWOW principles.	_____	Strategic Property Services Manager

Ref	Risk Description	Opened	Risk score before controls (LxC)	Existing Controls in Place	Risk score after controls (LxC)	Risk Appetite	Further actions required	Residual Risk trend (6 months)	Risk Owner
CRR.17	Demographic Pressures IF: due to increasing financial and demographic pressures, the council is unable to meet its statutory obligations and assess clients in a timely manner and annually review all long-term packages of care THEN: clients might not receive the timely interventions required and we might miss the opportunity to maximise independence	Oct-14	16 (4x4)	New pathway implemented with evidence of improved outcomes for people and reduced amount people requiring social care intervention. In addition, implemented a SAS team to focus on re-assessment work, and an external provider to undertake reassessments and reviews allied to cohorts of service users where review is required. Controlled waiting list, proactive front door, proactive reablement response, regular reporting to monitor any changes. Strengthened commissioning approach to market developments and client need.	9 (3x3)	Further mitigation required	Further embedding the strengths based ethos within the directorate as well as partners. Developing a review dashboard. Pilot scheme being implemented to boost capacity to undertake assessments.		Director Adults & Communities
CRR.18	Capital Programme IF: we are unable to implement the strategic corporate and CWB capital programmes within budget and timescale THEN: operating costs will increase, assets will deteriorate, service delivery could be impacted and opportunities to realise value and benefits could be missed. Strategic change will not be implemented.	Feb-18	16 (4x4)	Corporate Property Strategy Board and CWB Capital Programme Board comprising senior Directors; ongoing monitoring of programme and projects; escalation of high risk items to Directors. Additional project management is being sourced as the previous additional project management resource is committed to the work around property services review. Looking at using framework agreements to backfill design capacity due to further loss in staffing resources which is adding to more pressure in the ability to delivering projects in suitable time frames. Corporate capital programme for 2019/20 is being progressed and delivered on site. The recruitment of a Programme Manager to commence 1/7/19 will help to deliver the CWB capital programme, however staff resources are well under capacity and funding to permit further recruiting allied to the use of framework contracts is still recommended to reduce the time-pressures that currently exist to deliver these programmes. Consultation completed to transfer the administration and responsibilities of the 'helpdesk' over to the provider BBLP to free up and enable the property services technical team to concentrate on delivering corporate and other services capital projects. Operational detail being finalised. Given the late start to the program due to the election purdah and governance process we are reviewing what can be delivered in the programme this year given the resource available, after taking account of the possibility of commissioning project management services. Nov 19: 9 of 11 corporate capital schemes for 2018/19 are forecast to be completed by end of 2019 financial year; 7 of 11 corporate capital schemes for 2019/20 are due to be started and in some cases completed before end of the 2019 financial year; 45 condition surveys completed on schools.	9 (3x3)	Further mitigation required	Support arrangements will be tailored to approved capital programmes for school works in 2020/21.		Strategic Property Services Manager
CRR.19	NMITE University IF: there is a lack of critical infrastructure such as teaching space and student accommodation to meet NMITE's forecast growth THEN: would be unable to reach the critical mass of student numbers to become self-sustaining.	Aug-18	12 (3x4)	The council is working closely with NMITE to plan for the development of critical teaching space and student accommodation. For example, the council has enabled the development of a 178 bedroom purpose build student accommodation at station approach where 50% of rooms are likely to be available for NMITE students for three years from September 2020. The council has agreed to underwrite up to £850,000 of a Local Enterprise Partnership grant funding to develop teaching accommodation at NMITE's Blackfriars Street site. We are commencing feasibility studies to identify opportunities for student accommodation provision at sites such as College Road Campus, and the along the City Link Road, and the council is due to consider a decision to undertake detailed design stage works (including seeking planning approval) for student accommodation to be developed at the football ground (behind the Blackfriars Street Stand) in February. However, there remains a significant gap between NMITE's growth forecasts and the provision of student accommodation within the city over the next few years.	9 (3x3)	Further mitigation required	Jan 2020 seeking to agree nominations contract for provision of 89 student rooms for 3 years to NMITE in the Station Approach development. Feb 2020 Decision on the detailed design stage of the Football Club Student accommodation project Feb 2020 Decision on potential underwrite of second phase LEP grant for additional teaching facilities on the Hereford Enterprise Zone. July 2020 conclude feasibility of options for student accommodation to be developed at College Road Campus.		Head of Economic Development
CRR.20	Good decision-making IF: officers and members do not uphold the principles of good decision-making THEN: the Council may make poor decisions which either result in lost opportunities or increased costs.	Apr-17	12 (3x4)	Decision reports are subject to a quality assurance process which includes review by risk, legal, finance, governance, equality, procurement and the lead director. A programme of training and development has been developed to support implementation of the new constitution. This will include report writing and decision making as appropriate. Internal Audit report commissioned to review quality of information in reports; report received and being actioned.	9 (3x3)	Accept			Solicitor to the Council
CRR.21	Economic Resilience IF: the Invest Herefordshire Economic Vision is not supported by key stakeholders and does not deliver initiatives which address economic growth prospects and local economic concerns and meet local need THEN: there will be a fall in indigenous and new business investment within Herefordshire engagement with the council which could affect large business retention, business rates income, productivity, employment and wage rates, and wider resilience in the local economy.	Jun 15	16 (4x4)	Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy. Economic Masterplan adopted. Delivery of the Fastershire project. Delivering and promoting the Local Development Framework. Implementing the delivery of the Enterprise Zone. Securing external funding. Full approval for Ross Enterprise Park and in the process of contracting Delivery of Hereford Centre for Cyber Security. Joint Venture agreed and start on site commenced	8 (2x4)	Accept			Head of Economic Development
CRR.23	Good internal controls protect against fraud and error IF: good internal controls aren't in place and followed to protect against the potential of fraud, corruption, financial management, malpractice or error THEN: this produces a heightened risk of fraud, corruption and/or poor value for money with the consequent negative reputational impact.	Nov-17	16 (4x4)	Follow-up on SWAP audit recommendations so that they are all dealt with fully so that systems, processes and compliance are improved. EE code of conduct - should be issued with contract of employment. Recruitment process which ensures appropriate background checks. Induction programme. Fraud, bribery and corruption policies. Whistleblowing Policy. Finance procedure rules. Contract procedure rules. Agresso workflow. Governance processes.	8 (2x4)	Accept			Head of corporate finance
CRR.24	Medium Term Financial Strategy IF: we do not have a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan THEN: we will not achieve a balanced budget, risk serious service failure	Aug 12	20 (4x5)	MTFS to 19/20 approved by Council in February. All savings RAG rated and reviewed. MTFS linked to Corporate Priorities. Monthly financial reports to Management team and Cabinet; Performance Challenge meetings. Base budget review exercise completed. Prudent levels of reserves in place. Regular reviews by Cabinet of reserves and assumptions around inflation.	6 (2x3)	Accept			Chief Finance Officer
CRR.25	ICT Platforms IF: the ICT application /systems/platforms are not appropriate or used to their full effect THEN: we fail to manage our services and cost the organisation more money	Apr 14	16 (4x4)	Programme Boards for major systems e.g. Mosaic for adults and childrens social care. Measures are in place to ensure that access to systems/tech. is in place and will be progressed through a number of initiatives. SWAP audits and related training.	6 (2x3)	Further mitigation required	Applications audit underway; future consideration of transformation of services using ICT linked to the priorities of the Digital Strategy.		Assistant Director, Corporate Support
CRR.26	Partnerships IF: the partnerships that the council's involved in are not developed / fail to operate effectively / or fail entirely THEN: the strategic objectives / priorities may not be achieved.	Aug-18	12 (3x4)	Partnership governance protocol. Updated process for review and publication of partnership. Contractual and partnering agreements.	6 (2x3)	Accept			Head of Corporate Governance
CRR.27	Development Regeneration Partnership - Engie IF: the length of time that regeneration projects take to bring forward leads to a perception that the programme is not delivering THEN: confidence will be reduced	Feb-18	9 (3x3)	A pipeline of regeneration projects has been identified and discussed with the DRP Board. Work is underway to bring these projects into the programme; however, the feasibility, design and approval process does take time. Investment in project management structures and capacity to improve the delivery of the DRP	6 (2x3)	Accept			Head of Economic Development
CRR.29	Information governance IF: staff do not treat the information they access appropriately THEN: this may lead to the risk of referral to the Information Commissioner and/or legal challenge with resultant unbudgeted costs and reputational damage for the Council.	Feb 14	16 (4x4)	A series of mandatory online training modules have been introduced (including Data Protection, Environmental Information Regulations, Freedom of Information, Information Security). All employees must also complete a staff confidentiality agreement in order to acknowledge that they agree to abide by the council's information governance policies. DSP Toolkit completed for 2018 and 2019 being worked on. Mandatory training has been refreshed for 2019	6 (2x3)	Accept			Assistant Director, Corporate Support
CRR.30	Litigation IF: disputes with contractors arise there is potential exposure to litigation THEN: the Council may lose and be liable for costs in excess of £M (affecting budget position) and incurring reputational harm.	Jun 13	16 (4x4)	In house and external legal teams in place dealing with adjudications and litigation. I respect of the current contract dispute, formal mediation has been undertaken and matters resolved through dispute resolution procedures. A Counter claim raised by former provider and response provided by the council.	4 (2x2)	Further mitigation required	The Council will escalate matters through formal dispute resolution processes as required. The timing of these next steps will be set in response to circumstances.		Solicitor to the Council
CRR.31	South Wye Transport Package IF: scheme costs increase as a result of changes to programme THEN: they will exceed current approved budget and it will significantly affect ability to drawdown grant funding within funding window.	Jun-19	16 (4x4)	Continue to review cost forecasts and estimates as programme is revised. Report forecasts each month at MIBD to support decision making.	20 (4x5)	Further Mitigation Required	Following the Cabinet Member decision taken 22 October 2019 to review SWTP, discussions ongoing with funding providers. If costs increase consideration will need to be given to additional funding sources.		Director Economy & Place
CRR.32	South Wye Transport Package IF: The Marches LEP withdraw the existing growth funding THEN: the council will need to identify and seek alternative funding sources to deliver the scheme	Nov-19	25 (5x5)	Ongoing discussions with Marches LEP regarding existing funding, and opportunities to make adjustments to the existing profile. Prepare expressions of interest for Marches LEP call for projects to include SWTP preferred ATM packages.	20 (4x5)	Further Mitigation Required	Further discussions with Marches LEP regarding existing funding allocation. Marches LEP to be informed of decision regarding scope of review for the scheme in January 2020.		Director Economy & Place
CRR.33	South Wye Transport Package IF: The Marches LEP require existing growth funding to be repayed based on any change in approach to the SWTP THEN: Funding will need to be allocated for repayment of the growth funding, impacting on other budgets.	Nov-19	20 (4x5)	Ongoing discussions with Marches LEP regarding existing funding, and opportunities to make adjustments to the existing profile. Prepare expressions of interest for Marches LEP call for projects to include SWTP preferred ATM packages.	15 (3x5)	Further Mitigation Required	Further discussions with Marches LEP regarding existing funding allocation.		Director Economy & Place
CRR.34	Response to police investigation IF: there is an uncoordinated response THEN: there may be disruptions to casework, unsettled staff and service users and the council may not respond effectively to the outcome of the investigation.	Dec-19	16 (4x4)	Interim senior management was put in place to provide additional capacity during the investigation which has now concluded. Staff communicated with and support was put in place. Outcome of police investigation still to be concluded. Risks to current service delivery assessed to be low.	8 (2x4)	Accept			Director Children & Families

Ref	Risk Description	Opened	Risk score before controls (LxC)	Existing Controls in Place	Risk score after controls (LxC)	Risk Appetite	Further actions required	Residual Risk trend (6 months)	Risk Owner
CRR.35	Phosphate Pollution in Lugg Catchment IF/AS: A way forward cannot be found in relation to the moratorium on housing development in the River Lugg catchment arising from elevated phosphate levels THEN: the 5 Year Housing Land Supply figure will fall further which will have a severe impact upon the weight of Neighbourhood Development Plans and the outcome of planning appeals, leading to an increased potential for unplanned development in areas of the county not affected by the phosphate issue.	Dec-19	25 (5x5)	A Nutrient Management Board (NMB) oversees the protection of the Rivers Wye and Lugg and a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) has been adopted jointly with the Environment Agency and Natural England (NE), with the aim of enhancing the water quality within these catchments. Because of the recent action by Natural England to resist development in the Lugg catchment, the Board is seeking to strengthen the NMP with a view to providing certainty to NE so that they will no longer resist development.	15 (3x5)	Further mitigation required	The Board will be meeting more frequently and has tasked a Technical Advisory Group to explore how the river catchments can be better protected. This is likely to include physical measures that will either reduce phosphate pollution from sewage treatment works or by from diffuse agricultural sources. Once specific proposals have been identified the council will need to consider how these are delivered and funded.		Director Economy & Place
CRR.36	Hillside (former NHS Community Hospital) IF: The Council changes the use of the building and/or takes back occupation due to the ending of the current tenancy agreement (with the NHS) THEN: NHS England may/could insist on implementing the historic Legal Charge on the Building (which is invoked through a change of use) and this could lead to a cost to the Council of a minimum of £1.8million and a maximum (to date) of £2.9 million. The higher figure being subject to ongoing RPI increases.	Dec-19	20 (4x5)	Detailed discussions have been undertaken and continue with NHSE to establish the conditions under which the Legal Charge can be revoked and/or neutralised for the benefit of the H&SC system in Herefordshire. It is believed that at least a % of the potential cost can be negotiated should the Council reach that stage.	16 (4x4)	Further Mitigation Required	Further detailed and politically supported discussions will continue with NHSE to establish the conditions under which the Legal Charge can be revoked and/or neutralised for the benefit of the H&SC system in Herefordshire.		Director A&C and S151 Officer

Likelihood	Consequence				
	1 Insignificant Impact / Benefit	2 Minor Impact / Benefit	3 Moderate Impact / Benefit	4 Major Impact / Benefit	5 Significant Impact / Benefit
5 Certain	5	10	15	20	25
4 Likely	4	8	12	16	20
3 Possible	3	6	9	12	15
2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
1 Rare	1	2	3	4	5



Meeting:	Cabinet
Meeting date:	Thursday, 27 February 2020
Title of report:	Revised Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020
Report by:	Cabinet member housing, regulatory services, and community safety

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To approve the Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020.

Under Part VI Housing Act 1996 (as amended) the council is required to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and providing information on all aspects of the allocation process. This is required even though Herefordshire Council does not have its own social housing stock because it does have nomination rights to a proportion of the properties owned by registered providers (RPs) in the county that become vacant and available for letting.

A housing allocation policy was approved by Cabinet in April 2018 but this has not been implemented due to issues around the required IT support which are identified below. The delay has enabled review and revision of the 2018 policy in the light of further guidance, notably in respect of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the change in procedures arising from the reversion to a choice based lettings (CBL) scheme.

The amendments to the 2018 policy include some changes to the banding criteria, improved clarity on additional preference for armed forces personnel and a band for existing tenants and general applicants. The latter band will not be assessed by the council's housing register team but will provide a means by which the Registered Providers (RP) can let the percentage of their vacant properties which are not subject to the percentages detailed in the nomination agreements with the RPs. Exclusion and reduced preference has been replaced with suspension from bidding, in the light of recent legal advice. The majority of the amendments however relate to the revision of procedures to reflect the maintenance of a choice based lettings scheme rather than the proposed data transfer and manual nomination process envisaged in the 2018 policy.

In order to support the maintenance of a choice based lettings system and to enable implementation of the revised housing allocation scheme it is necessary to upgrade the IT system procured as part of the service redesign process, in particular to have an improved advertising module with better connectivity and more features to improve the information available to prospective tenants.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The revised Housing Allocation Scheme at Appendix 1 is approved;**
- (b) Any minor amendments to the scheme necessary to enable implementation are delegated to the Cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety.**

Alternative options

1. Not to approve the revised allocation policy and continue to operate the 2014 policy. This option is not recommended as it would not allow the council to comply with allocation law and would not address some of the issues around unmet housing need or low demand properties.
2. Not to approve the revised allocation policy but implement the 2018 policy without amendment. This option is not recommended as it would not reflect current guidance and would not fully support the statutory requirement to provide information on all aspects of the allocation process.

Key considerations

3. The allocation of social housing is governed by Part 6 Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Although the council is not a social housing stock holder, it must adopt and operate an allocation scheme.
4. As the strategic housing authority, Herefordshire Council must publish an allocation scheme which is required to set out how social housing will be allocated to local people in

housing need. It sets out how national priorities are to be addressed locally, including qualification for the register and provision for the five statutory 'reasonable preference' categories. It identifies local priorities and how they will be implemented so as not to undermine the reasonable preference categories. The scheme also details the procedure by which people can apply for social housing. The scope of an allocation scheme means that it requires revision if there are significant changes in national policy, local priorities or operational arrangements.

5. An allocation policy was approved by Cabinet in April 2018. This policy addressed issues that had arisen from the operation of the Housing Allocation Policy for Herefordshire since 2014. Notably it increased the criteria used to identify housing need. The 2018 policy was linked to the intention to change the arrangements for the allocation of social housing and it therefore detailed procedures needed to use the data transfer and manual nominations processes.
6. The Revised Housing Allocation Scheme was amended primarily due to the identification of procedural and operational limitations in the emerging IT solution and generally it reflects the approach taken in the 2018 policy excepting the procedural and operational aspects. It has however provided the opportunity to review and update the policy in the light of published guidance and local experience of implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act. It has also benefited from further legal advice in other areas of housing allocation law, including in respect of the use of suspension in place of exclusion and reduced preference. The policy recognises local priorities to encourage the best use of existing stock, maintain sustainable communities and provide routes into social housing which should support the prevention of homelessness.
7. Consequently the following elements remain from the 2018 policy:
 - Changes around overcrowding and sharing of accommodation to increase the number of people in concealed households able to access the register
 - Extension of the waiver of local connection for military personnel to ex-partners and ex-spouses
 - Broader application of the reasonable preference categories including to disabled people and those with mental health needs
 - An affordability criteria for those struggling with rent payments
 - A relaxation of limitations on capital assets for older people needing sheltered accommodation
 - More detailed banding criteria to reflect up to date statutory requirements around reasonable preference

There are revisions to the policy notably:

- The change of banding positions for prevention of homelessness cases (from band C to band B) and the relief of homelessness (from band B to band C)
- The deletion of sharing siblings from the banding criteria
- The addition of Band E for existing tenants and general applicants who do not have a housing need identified in the council's banding criteria
- Amendments to the additional preference criteria for military personnel to improve clarity
- The introduction of a suspension process for unacceptable behaviour, breaches of tenancy or other agreements, and housing related debt
- Applicants will be able to bid on two properties at any one time
- Operational arrangements

8. The wider benefits of the revised scheme are difficult to predict due to the lack of data currently available and it will therefore be crucial to review the impact of its operation. It will however enable people with a greater range of housing needs to access the register and should enable the Registered Providers (RPs) to let their properties more efficiently. It will also ensure that Herefordshire is compliant with national policy and up to date guidance, and that the risk of legal challenge is reduced.
9. There are currently about 725 households on the housing register, with an average of about 60 households joining the register each month. In the last 12 months approximately 600 properties became available for letting. The size, type and location of properties available do not necessarily match the needs of those on the register. It is not possible to estimate the additional number of households who may apply if the new criteria are implemented but it is not anticipated that the number on the council assessed register will increase to more than 2500 over time within Bands A-D.
10. From 2002 Herefordshire Council was the lead partner in the integrated countywide choice based lettings partnership known as Home Point which managed the housing register and the council's role in the allocation of social housing. The majority of RP's participated in the partnership, including all the large providers in the county.
11. In August 2016 the major providers advised the council that they intended to withdraw from the scheme to allocate their housing stock using an alternative software provider. They expressed a reduced confidence in the ability of the model to ensure their properties were let expeditiously while meeting housing need. There was also an issue about the capacity of the model to advertise adequately the increased range of tenure types being introduced by the providers and concerns about the dated look and feel of the online system. The council accepted that some of these concerns were fair and indicated a willingness to work to improve or change arrangements but the providers affirmed their intention to leave the Home Point partnership while being committed to working with the council to ensure that a new process met all party's needs.
12. After a period of negotiation a solution was devised that would have provided the council with assurance that its statutory duties in respect of the homeless and those in housing need were being met. This proposed service redesign, which was predicated on the establishment of robust data transfer arrangements between the council's IT provider and the RP's provider, was approved by Cabinet in April 2018.
13. Following a protracted procurement process, the IT contract was awarded in September 2018 and detailed development work began in December 2018. This progressed to late March 2019 at which point the housing register IT system was ready for user acceptance testing the following month. However, the data transfer arrangements had not progressed, in part due to there having been a change in personnel at the RP's IT provider. At a meeting in late March, the RP's IT provider was not able to guarantee provision of the data transfer system within the agreed timescale. More significantly it was uncertain that the company could fulfil the requirements because of the impact on the other users of their platform. This was contrary to statements made at an earlier meetings with the company at which council officers were present. The RPs confirmed that it was contrary to their earlier discussions with their IT provider.
14. Further discussion with the RPs confirmed that they did not have confidence in taking forward the data transfer proposal. It was therefore not possible to continue to work

towards the implementation of the service redesign proposals and a review of options was required.

15. Without re-working the design of the service, which had taken considerable time and effort at this point, there were limited options and it was agreed in the early summer to maintain and update the choice based lettings scheme. However, the council's procurement process had not included an advertising module and consequently it had not addressed some of the shortcomings felt by the RPs in this area.
16. Discussions therefore took place with the RPs and the council's IT provider to identify features that were required to provide an updated and improved CBL process, including the addition of an advertising module that had a more modern look and feel, providing better information to potential tenants, and to ensure that it was available on mobile devices. In addition to this discussion took place about devising arrangements that would enable existing tenants and general applicants to have a presence in the system so that they could bid for properties which are outside the proportion of properties let to applicants from the council's housing register.
17. These discussions have been concluded and it has been confirmed that the advertising process can be implemented relatively straightforwardly while meeting most of the aspirations for improvements to the functionality of the system, including improvement of the customer experience including features to aid both customers and staff. There will be better access from mobile devices. It has been confirmed that the changes to the system could be implemented in April 2020, subject to the approval of the revised housing allocation scheme in January 2020.

Community impact

18. The social housing allocation process contributes to the council's priority to build communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together. It plays a significant role in addressing the housing needs of low income people, providing them with secure, safe and affordable housing.
19. The register currently holds applications from approximately 900 households requiring social housing. This reflects housing need including homelessness and other needs relating to quality, affordability and availability of suitable housing.
20. The impact of the proposed changes on the council's role as corporate parent is likely to be limited. The council's intention, as expressed in the accommodation strategy for vulnerable young people, is that the needs of looked after children and care leavers should increasingly be met by the provision of targeted and supported housing. Nevertheless, individuals from these groups may apply through the housing register and be housed through the scheme. The proposed changes are not likely to affect the options of this group of applicants.
21. There are no direct implications for health and safety arising from these proposals which do not involve significant changes to the council's operations of public facing services directly. The housing providers, as independent organisations, have responsibility to ensure that appropriate health and safety provisions are in place for their housing stock and for the operation of their services.

Equality duty

22. 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.
23. The various specific policy changes with the revised allocation scheme are not expected to have a particular impact on groups of people with protected characteristics. However there are minor changes which may benefit disabled people such as improving access for disabled people requiring a move to receive care of support to gain a priority banding on the register. The provision of a more modern customer housing portal designed to improve accessibility should also improve the experience for some people with the protected characteristics.
24. No negative impact of the revised scheme has been identified for any groups of people with protected characteristics. However, as the council does not have its own stock, specific decisions about offering tenancies to people are made by housing providers and whilst they are bound in principle by the allocation scheme, they also apply their own lettings policies, which may include exclusion criteria. This may affect disabled people, including those with mental health needs who may have a greater propensity to exclusion due to and-social behaviour or be more susceptible to falling into debt, or other groups of people with protected characteristics.
25. The upgrade of the IT software, and in particular, the customer housing portal will improve the customer experience for all applicants. The Customer Housing Portal has been designed and developed with accessibility as a primary focus, combined with the aim of providing the best possible functionality for customers. The site conforms to the Web Accessibility Guidelines.

Resource implications

26. There are no specific implications for staffing resources arising from the proposed new allocations scheme. The scheme helps shape how the resources of the housing providers are utilised but the council has no direct control over those resources. The new scheme has no direct impact on the council's staff who support the allocation process.
27. A budget of up to £200,000 was allocated for the procurement of an IT system to develop, host, maintain and support the housing allocations system for a five year period. To date £51,214 has been spent and the project is expected to remain within the budget.
28. Discussions are taking place with the housing providers for contributions towards the cost of advertising, including any day advertising, the development of the process for Band E

applicants and ongoing maintenance and support. Any additional cost to the council, assuming a contribution in the region of 50%, can be funded from existing budgets.

Legal implications

29. The allocation of housing by local housing authorities is regulated by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Section 159(1) of the 1996 Act provides that a local housing authority must comply with the provisions of Part 6 when allocating housing accommodation. However, subject to this compliance, councils may otherwise allocate housing in any manner they consider appropriate (section 159(7) Housing Act 1996).
30. Section 166A(1) of the 1996 Act provides that every local housing authority must have an allocation scheme for determining priorities between qualifying persons. In formulating or amending its allocation scheme, a local housing authority must have regard to its current homelessness strategy under section 1 Homelessness Act 2002. An allocation scheme may be framed to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people (section 166A(5) Housing Act 1996). However, a local housing authority must not allocate housing accommodation except in accordance with its allocation scheme
31. As a result of changes made by the Localism Act 2011, with effect from 18 June 2012, local housing authorities have been able to decide who “qualifies” for an allocation. Accommodation can therefore only be allocated to someone who qualifies under those local criteria (secion 160ZA Housing Act 1996). Who qualifies is largely a matter for the local housing authority. The Secretary of State has power to prescribe classes of persons who are, or are not, to be treated as qualifying persons.
32. The proposed changes are in accordance with the current legal position and incorporating the changes minimises the risk of any potential legal challenge to the council.

Risk management

33. The key risks arising from the proposed changes to the allocations policy are to be reviewed by the council’s strategic housing service on a scheduled and systematic basis. The risks include:
 - a Specific policy changes within the allocations policy is likely to have the effect of increasing numbers on the register overall without any corresponding increase in social housing availability. However, this is likely to be mitigated by the current availability of some properties which providers find difficult to let.
 - b Although the policy allows for suspension for unacceptable behaviour there is potential conflict between the inclusion on the council’s housing register and some providers’ policies which may exclude people for longer. Whilst not arising directly from the policy, this potential conflict could lead to legal challenge to the council and providers alike. The council seeks to mitigate this risk by working with providers to introduce more flexibility and discretion into their access to housing policies.
 - c Possible increase in demand for temporary accommodation. In order to mitigate this risk, the council is reviewing current provision for temporary accommodation with a view to increasing supply to meet any rising demand.

- d Possible increase in demand on the operational team due to issues and queries arising from the introduction of Band E. Although the process will direct these applicants to the housing providers, there is a risk that applicants will 'band hunt' i.e. make a series of applications to try to achieve a higher banding which would impact on the team.
- 34. The policy will be reviewed in 12 months or earlier if there are significant issues arising from it operationally.
- 35. The key risk of not implementing the proposed changes to the scheme is that the council's allocation policy does not adequately reflect the requirements of the HRA and could be viewed as being in breach of its statutory duties in respect of some potential applicants whose housing need relates to the reasonable preference categories. It could therefore be open to challenge.
- 36. The delicate agreement in place with the RPs is unlikely to be maintained if the IT solution does not support improvement in areas of the system, such as the quality of adverts that led in part to the initial decision by the larger RPs to withdraw from the Home Point partnership. This would have a detrimental effect on the working relationships and potentially adversely affect applicants on the housing register.

Consultees

- 37. Consultation has taken place with the RP's with stock in Herefordshire, as required by statute. The revised draft scheme has been circulated recently in addition to the meetings held where the potential content of the revised scheme and its foundation on the 2018 policy was discussed.
- 38. Consultation with political groups has taken place with no comments received. Members will be given the opportunity to receive a demonstration/overview of the improved Home Point customer interface nearer to go-live date.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Revised Housing Allocation Scheme

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

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Housing Allocation Scheme for Herefordshire 2020

January 2020

VERSION CONTROL
SUMMARY OF CHANGES MADE TO ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Version	Paragraph No.s	Summary of changes	Date
1		Original document	December 2019
1.1	Below 8.3.2	Clarification of Band E	January 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Housing Act 1996 requires every local authority to develop and publish an allocations policy for determining the priorities and detailing the procedures to be followed in allocating social housing. Recent legislation has allowed local authorities more freedom to determine policies that best meet local circumstances and priorities, within the constraints set out in the Housing Act 1996, as amended (“the 1996 Act”). This is Herefordshire Council’s Housing Allocation Policy.

1.2 Herefordshire Council does not own any housing stock. It works in partnership with housing associations operating in the county to address housing need through the allocation of social housing.

1.3 This policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the local authority and the housing associations, and the legal responsibilities of each for delivering the local authority’s statutory duties in relation to the allocation of housing. It details the arrangements for applying to register for social, intermediate and affordable rented housing (hereafter referred to as ‘social housing’), and the process by which it is let in Herefordshire.

1.4 Herefordshire Council has nomination agreements with the main housing associations in the county. These are listed in Appendix A. The council addresses housing need through these agreements which specify the percentage of vacant properties that will be offered to applicants on the council’s register who have been assessed and banded by the Home Point Service i.e. those in bands A - D. The percentages vary from 60% to 75%, depending on the association, the property location and type.

1.5 This policy sets out:

- The aims of the policy;
- Who can register;
- Roles and responsibilities of council staff;
- How an applicant’s housing needs are assessed;
- How the housing register operates;
- How social rented homes across the county are let.

Acceptance on to the register is not an immediate housing solution and does not guarantee that an offer of accommodation will be made.

2. AIMS

2.1 The key aims of this policy are to:

- ensure that the housing allocation process is transparent to applicants

- meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing
- provide choice of social rental homes to meet applicants needs
- support better use of existing housing stock within the county
- help to prevent homelessness and minimise the use of temporary accommodation
- ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing the council's
- contribute to the development of sustainable communities

2.2 We will deliver these aims by:

- Operating a housing allocation scheme where applicants are placed in bands according to their level of need;
- Providing support and advice for customers when they need it;
- Providing applicants with information on supply and demand;
- Ensuring that every application for the housing register is dealt with fairly and consistently, so promoting equality of opportunity;
- Supporting and encouraging applications from all applicants who may qualify for the register;
- Facilitating mobility where doing so will meet household needs.

3.SCOPE

This scheme applies to people seeking social, intermediate and affordable rented housing (hereafter referred to as 'social housing') in Herefordshire, and the process by which it is let in the county.

What is an allocation?

If a council, as is the case in Herefordshire, does not have its own social housing stock, the allocation process occurs when the council 'nominates' a person to be a tenant of housing accommodation held by a housing association.

Where a choice based lettings system is in place, as in Herefordshire, the local authority recognises in principle where an applicant bids for a property, and is successful in obtaining a tenancy, the offer of that property to applicants in shortlist order is a nomination and complies with the nomination agreement.

Individual housing associations have their own lettings policies, including exclusion criteria, and will review the bids against these before making an offer of accommodation. Applicants therefore should read the policies which can be viewed on individual housing association's websites and the Home Point website.

Exempt Allocations

The following are not subject to the banding scheme or the nomination agreements:

- Succession to a tenancy under s.17 of the Housing Act 1988;
- A mutual exchange with another tenant;
- Assignment of a tenancy;
- Transfer of a tenancy in accordance with a court order under Family Law provisions or under the Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- A starter tenant becoming an assured tenant;
- Any provision of temporary accommodation.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The primary legislation governing the allocation of social housing is Part 6 Housing Act 1996, (as amended), and the associated statutory codes of guidance and statutory instruments.

This legislative framework applies to Herefordshire Council directly and requires housing associations to 'cooperate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's scheme'.

The Allocation policy has been developed to be compatible with other relevant legislation and guidance including, but not restricted to:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Localism Act 2011
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018

A summary of this policy is available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy. It is available on the Council's website. This document is the full version of the policy and is also available on Herefordshire Council's website. If requested a hard copy can be provided on payment of a reasonable fee (to be confirmed at time of request).

4.1 Equality statement

Herefordshire Council is committed to equality and dignity for all members of the community, and supports the principles of the council's Equality Policy 2017-19, including promoting acceptable behaviour, making fair and equitable decisions and providing accessible services.

The allocation scheme is designed to ensure that it is compatible with the council's equality duties including the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics are age, race, disability, sex, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment.

The policy ensures that each applicant is assessed on the basis of individual need. In addition, the assessment will seek to identify, and meet, any special requirements and to provide support to vulnerable applicants.

Herefordshire Council expects all housing associations to ensure that they comply with the Equality Act 2010 and have their own Equality policies available.

4.2 Statement on choice and constraint

Herefordshire Council is committed to enabling applicants to play an active role in choosing where and the type of property they want to live in, whilst continuing to house those people in the greatest need. Applicants can indicate their areas of choice through expressing an interest (also known as 'bidding') on advertised properties.

It is important to know, however, that the demand for accommodation is higher for some types of property and is greater in some areas than others. In making a decision about the choices available, applicants need to consider the urgency of their housing need and the availability of properties in any given area.

Whilst the policy offers applicants choice, there will be a number of instances where this may not be possible, for example:

- the applicant does not meet the criteria for the housing scheme or the empty property
- there is a legal agreement restricting who can be offered the property
- there is a local lettings plan in place
- the applicant has been accepted under the full homeless duty
- there are few properties of the size or type in the chosen area

Applicants should note that the decision to make an offer of a property is made by the housing association, **not** the Home Point.

4.3 Confidentiality, data protection & information sharing

All information processed by the council in respect of housing applications is done so in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. Information you provide in support of the application will only be shared with partner agencies who provide social and affordable housing and are part of the data sharing agreement.

Details about how your information will be used can be found on Herefordshire Council's website.

Details relating to a person's application will not be disclosed to any other third party without the express permission of the applicant to do so unless it relates to crime prevention or detection.

An applicant has the right to request details of the information held about them. This can be done via the Access to Information page on the Herefordshire Council website.

5. ROLES OF OFFICERS: DECISION MAKING AND BENEFICIAL INTERESTS

5.1 Officer responsibilities

Home Point administers the housing register. It does not make offers of housing. These are made by the housing associations.

Certain functions within the scheme can only be undertaken by a senior officer or manager and, where this is the case, it has been identified in the allocation policy.

Whilst the council aims to achieve clarity and transparency for the public, there is discretion to vary qualification, priority and property size rules to provide a degree of flexibility in the implementation of the policy when considering individual cases. Any use of this flexibility will be subject to determination and confirmation by the Housing Services Manager (HSM). The HSM will take into account all relevant circumstances when making the decision.

Any officer who is related to, or knows an applicant, personally will not be involved in any aspect of the application.

5.2 Councillors, board members, employees and their close relatives

This scheme is designed to ensure that Herefordshire Council is transparent and equitable. Applicants who work for the council, a registered provider, a board member of a registered provider or is a member of the council must disclose any such relationship when applying for housing. Failure to disclose so may result in the application being cancelled.

The Allocation scheme is open to any qualifying applicant and there are stringent checks in place that all applicants must follow. Staff, Council or board members and their relatives are treated as any other applicant and must not gain any advantage or any preferential treatment in the course of their application: nor shall they be disadvantaged.

6. ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

The council acknowledges that this Allocation scheme requires the active participation of housing applicants and to reflect this, the council aims to provide advice and assistance as required by s.166(1) and s.168(1) of the Housing Act 1996.

6.1 General information about the scheme will be made available as follows:

- information about the procedures for applying
- how it works
- information about how applicants are banded

6.2 Applicants will also be provided with information regarding their own application which will include:

- what information they need to supply to complete registration and the **timescales** for providing the information
- if they do not qualify to register, Housing Solutions can provide information on what other options are available
- what band they have been awarded under this policy
- what size properties they are entitled to
- effective date of registration

6.3 Applicants who have difficulty reading or understanding this scheme may benefit from the following services:

- an interpretation service if their first language is not English
- signing if speech or hearing is impaired
- provision of documents in large print if an applicant is visually impaired
- information about where independent advice is available

6.4 Home Point can also provide information about other housing options.

This will include:

- advice on housing associations operating in the county
- assistance in making an application to the housing register

The council's Housing Solutions team can provide:

- advice and help on renting in the private sector.
- Advice and assistance if homeless or threatened with homelessness

Advice is also available through the Housing Advice Questionnaire, a self-help tool available online at the Home Point website.

Existing tenants can also contact their own landlords regarding neighbourhood nuisance etc. and Environmental Health re poor condition of property and landlord issues. More information can be found on the Landlord and Tenants responsibilities page on the council's website or through the Housing Advice Questionnaire.

7.WHO CAN APPLY?

Applicants must be eligible and must qualify to be accepted on to the council's register. Home Point undertake the process of eligibility and qualification assessment for acceptance on to bands A- D of the housing register.

7.1 ELIGIBILITY

Parliament sets the criteria for eligibility in respect of access to housing in the UK. Herefordshire council is then required to determine whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance under UK immigration and nationality regulations.

Herefordshire Council will ensure compliance with the statutory provisions for eligibility, as amended from time to time by central government.

7.2 Ineligible households

Certain people are not eligible for admission to the housing register by law.

7.3 Applicants who are currently not eligible to go on the housing register include the following:

- a) People who are subject to immigration control; unless they have refugee status or exceptional leave to remain, or have been in the UK more than five years and their former sponsor is no longer living;
- b) The following are not eligible for inclusion on the housing register even though they are not subject to immigration control:
 - Those who are not habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland;
 - Those whose only right to reside in the UK is derived from their status as a jobseeker or the family member of a jobseeker;
 - Those whose only right to reside is the initial right to reside for a period not exceeding three months under Regulation 13 of the European Economic Area regulations;
 - Those whose only right to reside is as the parent of a UK citizen child who has no other rights to reside in the UK.
- c) Any other person as prescribed by the Secretary of State.

It is not practical to define precisely all the circumstances in which restrictions may apply. The guidance above is an overview of eligibility at the time of approval of the policy. Anyone unsure of their status should seek detailed advice from Home Point.

If there is any uncertainty about an applicant's immigration status the council will contact the UK Border Agency to check the position.

Applicants who are ineligible to be accepted on to the register will be notified in writing of the decision. These applicants are also not eligible for social housing provided by the housing associations.

The eligibility provisions do not apply to applicants who are already secure or introductory tenants or assured tenants of a housing association if considered to have a reasonable preference for an allocation.

7.4 QUALIFICATION

All applicants eligible to join the council's housing register will be considered, provided that the application is made in accordance with this policy.

7.5 Local connection

To qualify to join the housing register applicants should have a local connection to the county

Local connection in this context means that the applicant meets at least **one** of the following criteria:

- a) Currently living in the county (in settled accommodation or accommodation of choice) for at least 2 years continuously or for 3 years out of last 5 years at the point of application;
- b) Have close relatives living in the county (parents, adult children, brothers or sisters) who have done so for at least the last 5 years at the point of application;
- c) Be employed and have worked in the county for at least 12 months and the work has been, and is, for more than 16 hours a week, or has an offer of permanent employment for more than 16 hours a week with a confirmed start date and the applicant continues to work in that job while the applicant is on the register;
- d) Is a Herefordshire looked after child or care leaver, or is a care leaver under the age of 21 who has lived in the county for at least two years, including some time before turning 16.
- e) Exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Housing Services Manager (HSM) in consultation with statutory agencies e.g. the police, Children's services, Adults and Communities.

For the purposes of determining qualification on residency grounds, living in the county shall not include the following:

- Occupation of a mobile home, caravan, motor caravan or houseboat where it is not their only or principal home;
- Occupation of a holiday letting for the purposes of a holiday;
- Occupation in student accommodation where it is not their principal home;
- Occupation of temporary accommodation when placed there by other local housing authorities;
- In-patient of a hospital or similar settings where the applicant has a connection elsewhere.

Under some exceptional circumstances, such as where there may be an overriding housing need to be met or a duty to a statutorily homeless person, the qualification rules may be waived by the Housing Services Manager.

Applicants without a local connection to the county who have a housing need in one of the reasonable preference categories will be placed in the reduced preference band (i.e. Band D).

7.6 Local Connection for Armed Forces Personnel

Local connection requirements will not apply to the following applicants:

- members of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge;
- bereaved spouses, unmarried and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner;
- serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- divorced or separated spouses, separated unmarried and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces who have lived in Services Family Accommodation for a minimum of two years and are required to vacate the Services Family Accommodation following a relationship breakdown.

Armed Forces personnel should also refer to section 8.3 below.

7.7 Right to Move

The government introduced the Right to Move in 2015. This means that local connection criteria may not be applied to existing social tenants seeking to move from another local authority district in England who:

- have a reasonable preference because of a need to move to the council's district to avoid hardship, **and**
- need to move because the tenant works in the district, **or**
- need to move to take up an offer of work

7.8 Those who do not qualify

An applicant will **not** be accepted on to the council's housing register for social housing if at the point of application: -

- i) They have sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need. Applicants without dependents with a **gross** annual **household** income of £35,000 or above or applicants with dependents with a combined **gross** annual **household** income of £45,000 or above will not normally qualify to join the housing register. Gross household income includes any benefits received excluding DLA/PIP or carer's allowance.
- ii) Those with household capital, savings or assets of £50,000 (under 50 years of age) or £100,000 (aged 50 or over) will not normally qualify to join the housing register.
- iii) When making the financial assessment, where capital/savings are available for specific reasons these may be disregarded if there are exceptional circumstances. For example, it is standard practice to disregard any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service.
- iv) Applicants over 60 years of age with capital, savings or assets worth up to £150,000 may be accepted on to the register for older people's housing schemes **only** where they have a need for it. Housing associations generally assess the need for this type of housing scheme prior to an offer being made.

7.8.1 Suspended applications

There are some circumstances where an application may be suspended from bidding for properties for a specified period of times. Suspended applicants will not be eligible for a direct let.

An applicant is likely to be suspended for the following reasons:

- a) the applicant has refused three suitable offers of accommodation in 12 months which were upheld following a review or where no review was requested (see refusal of offers paragraph 12.2 page 34) .
- b) the applicant is offered a property pursuant to s193 full housing duty and refuses the offer of accommodation; their application will be suspended pending a review of suitability if requested.

- c) the applicant has engaged in anti-social behaviour or other housing related conduct which would render her/him an unsuitable tenant
- d) the applicant has a housing related debt
- e) the applicant has deliberately given false or misleading information

7.8.1.1 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Where Home Point is satisfied that the applicant (or a member of their household) has carried out acts of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant the applicant will be suspended from bidding, unless statutory duties in respect of the applicant and their household apply.

Behaviour that is considered to be unacceptable will include instances where the landlord has commenced legal proceedings in respect of the tenancy due to unacceptable behaviour or where the landlord would have been entitled to possession of the property, due to the applicant's, or a member of her/his household's, unacceptable behaviour had the applicant been a social tenant at the time. This may include instances where legal proceedings had been undertaken e.g. Possession Order, Tenancy demotion, Noise Abatement Notice or where the provider has applied for an anti-social behaviour injunction whether or not the applicant has given an undertaking to desist from such conduct. There is no need for the applicant to have been a social tenant. Unacceptable behaviour will include significant rent arrears or other housing debt and serious anti-social behaviour, for example, violence or conviction for the supply of drugs. This list is not exhaustive

7.8.1.2 An applicant may also be suspended if:

- The applicant or a member of the household has engaged in anti-social behaviour that would not be sufficiently serious to entitle the landlord to seek possession of their home or pursue legal proceedings such as an injunction but it has nonetheless caused other people distress or annoyance or has been persistent and there is evidence to support this decision. In instances where tenants are asked to sign an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, applications will be suspended until such time as the Housing Services Manager is satisfied that a tenant has complied with the terms of the contract.
- The applicant has housing related debts and has failed to make or keep to an arrangement to clear the debt.
 - Examples of the type of debt include: outstanding arrears from a current or previous tenancy to a social landlord; outstanding arrears of rent and other charges from stays in temporary accommodation; rechargeable repair debts; 'use and occupation' charges (mesne profits); arrears on repayments due to deposits,

loans etc. provided through previous interventions by the council's housing service.

- Council Tax, Housing Benefit overpayments and any other 'non-property' debt will not be considered under this scheme. This also includes property related debts that are covered by a bankruptcy order.
 - In the case of suspension for arrears the council will take into account any delays in regular payments of Housing Benefit that has resulted in arrears. Tenants who have accrued arrears solely as a result of the under occupancy charge or benefit cap may not be suspended if they are downsizing to a property which will negate or mitigate the imposition of the under occupancy charge or they are proactive in working with their landlord to resolve the problem.
 - Debts of under £200 will not lead to suspension from the register providing there is a repayment plan in place which is being adhered to.
- The applicant has deliberately worsened their housing circumstances, by act or omission.

7.8.2 Each case will be assessed on its own merits.

- An applicant suspended because of housing related debt will be suspended until the debt is reduced to £200 or less, or there is a repayment plan in place that has been maintained for at least 13 consecutive weekly payments or at least 3 consecutive monthly payments. Applicants will be required to sign and keep to a written agreement to repay the debt. If there is compliance with the above requirements and the suspension is lifted, if the debt is still outstanding the applicant will be expected to continue to make repayments. If the repayments cease or the debt increases, the applicant may be suspended from bidding for another 3 month period. This decision will be taken by the Housing Services Manager.
- Applicants will be required to provide proof of payment to Home Point. It is the responsibility of the applicant to request a review of their suspension when the above requirements are met. Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to suspend their application due to rent arrears. Details of the review procedure are contained in Appendix C (p50) of this scheme.
- An applicant suspended because of their behaviour or that of a member of the household, will remain suspended until such times as they can demonstrate that their behaviour has improved. A suspension from the register is not intended to be permanent. Reinstatement will be sooner if the applicant takes personal responsibility and addresses the reason for suspension. Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision to suspend their application due to anti-social behaviour. Details of the review procedure are contained in Appendix C (p50) of this scheme.

7.8.3. Suspension criteria may be waived when for instance there is an urgent need to move because of a critical medical or welfare need including situations where there are serious safeguarding implications. This decision will be taken by the Housing Services Manager.

7.8.4 These provisions may not apply to those owed a statutory duty as they do not over-ride the council's duties under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, as amended.

7.9 Young people aged 16- 18 years old

The register is normally open to applicants from the age of 18 and above. In exceptional circumstances such as proven threat of serious harm, applicants from the age of 16 may be accepted on to the register unless they are specifically ineligible or do not meet the qualification requirements and there is a referral and supporting evidence from a known agency.

7.9.1 Applicants under the age of 18 should be aware that tenancies are normally only granted by housing associations to applicants over the age of 18. Most housing associations will only consider granting a tenancy to applicants under the age of 18 where an adult or organisation acts as a trustee to hold the tenancy in trust for the applicant until they reach the age of 18. There may also be a requirement for the applicant to obtain a rent guarantor. The decision on granting a tenancy to an under 18 year old will be taken by the individual housing association.

7.9.3 Applicants may be accepted on to the register where one or more of the following apply:

- where a referral for assistance has been made by Social Services authorities under Section 27 of the Children Act 1989;
- a young person who is deemed a relevant or eligible child or a former relevant or qualifying care leaver under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 as amended.

In each case, an assessment of the applicant's housing, care and support needs will be undertaken by the council's Children's and Families directorate to ensure that adequate support is available to support the applicant to maintain a tenancy.

8. ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED

In order to assess housing needs applicants must complete an online form which will be assessed by Home Point for those who have a housing need identified in bands A-D of this policy and may lead to further enquiries where information is required from a third party to clarify the applicant's circumstances.

Home Point will require applicants to provide supporting documentation for all household members and will check the accuracy of all of the information submitted in support of the

application. This is to deter and detect fraud and ensure that housing is allocated to those who are entitled to it.

It is expected that permission will be given by applicants to share or obtain information, relevant to their housing assessment. If permission is refused it is not possible to complete the assessment and will impact on qualification for the register.

8.1 Banding scheme

Home Point operates the banding scheme described below. The table (Appendix B) is arranged to reflect identified housing need in descending order of urgency. Applicants in band A have been assessed as having the most urgent need. Band B also reflects an urgent housing need.

All eligible and qualifying applicants are placed in bands A – D according to their housing application assessment. Band E applicants are those who do not have a housing need identified in this policy but who wish to apply to the local housing associations for social housing. Further information about each band and the assessment of each criterion is available in Appendix B.

Band E applicants are not assessed by Home Point. These are applicants who do not have a housing need recognised in this policy. Any assessment will be undertaken by the relevant housing association if the applicant is being considered for an offer of a property for which the council does not have nomination rights.

Applications are assessed by bedroom need and prioritised by band, and, within that band, by effective date. For details of bedroom need assessment see Appendix C.

Where an application has more than one housing need which appear in different bands it will always be placed in the higher band, unless subject to the reduced preference criteria.

8.2 Time limited banding

All Band A awards are subject to time-limited banding.

Applicants awarded time limited bands are given a period of time before their application is reviewed. The timescales given reflect the urgency of their situation, both for the applicant and for the council.

Applicants are expected to bid for any suitable properties advertised by the housing associations.

Towards the end of the stated time limit an application will be reviewed and a decision will be made as to whether:

- The applicant should remain in the band until a further review.
- Auto bidding should be organised
- A direct offer of accommodation should be made

- The applicant needs more support to obtain the appropriate housing
- The applicant's banding should be amended as the circumstances under which they were placed in the band no longer apply.

This is not an exhaustive list of potential outcomes

In conducting the review the following will be taken into consideration, where appropriate:

- Have there been any properties advertised that would have met the applicant's need?
- If so, have they bid for them?
- Why have they been unsuccessful?
- Have the applicant's circumstances remained the same?

If the applicants require help with bidding Home Point or the housing association may be able to help.

Applicants must consider bidding for all suitable property types for their household size and composition. This means that applicants may need to compromise on their ideal choice of housing in order to achieve the urgent move they need. It will not always be possible to meet all aspirations.

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of the review in writing. If there has been a change to the banding applicants have the right to review. See Appendix D.

8.2 Reasonable Preference

Herefordshire Council is required to determine the relative priority that housing applicants are awarded.

The law requires that reasonable preference for housing must be given to those in the categories set out in s.166A (3) Housing Act 1996 (as amended). These categories are:

- (a) People who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act, as amended;
- (b) People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under s.192(3), as amended;
- (c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability;
- (e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the local authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

This does not mean that households who fall into the reasonable preference categories are necessarily entitled to priority over all other applicants in all circumstances.

8.3 Additional Preference

8.3.1. The award of additional preference must be given to the following applicants who fall within one of the reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs:

- Serving members of the regular armed forces who need to move because they are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their military service
- Former members of the regular armed forces
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of the regular forces who have left or will be leaving services accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to their military service
- Serving or former members of the reserve forces who need to move because they are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to their military service.

8.3.2 Applicants who require urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping domestic abuse such that the facts and circumstances demonstrate to the council that the threat is immediate and it is not safe for the applicant / household to remain in their present accommodation, may be awarded additional preference by means of backdating the effective date by six calendar months. The assessment will be based upon verification by officers within the police or other agencies, as necessary, in conjunction with an assessment by the council's Housing Solutions Team.

Urgent need is indicated by an award in Bands A and B.

Additional preference will be provided by backdating the effective date by six calendar months.

For example, a qualifying applicant awarded priority within one of the reasonable preference categories on 1st December 2019 will have their effective date backdated to 1st June 2019.

NOTE: The Housing Allocation scheme consists of 4 bands A- D with band E available for applicants who do not qualify under the scheme but may qualify for housing association properties that are not part of the nomination arrangements. For detailed information see Appendix B.

9. HOW TO APPLY TO THE HOUSING REGISTER

Applicants must be eligible and must qualify to make an application to the council's housing register. Applicants should note that this section primarily applies to those applicants with a housing need identified in Bands A to D (See Appendix B).

Applicants who do not have a housing need identified in Bands A-D can apply for Band E. Applicants in Band E will only be considered for properties which are not governed by the nomination agreements or where there are no applicants from the council's housing register for available properties. Band E applicants will not be assessed by Home Point.

9. Registration process

The Housing Register (referred to as 'the register' hereafter) is a key part of the allocation scheme.

- 9.1 Applicants are strongly advised to consider whether they have a need for social housing before applying to go on the register. Acceptance on to the register does not guarantee an offer of housing. Other housing options may provide quicker or more appropriate accommodation. The Housing Advice Questionnaire offers personal advice on a range of housing options that might be more appropriate and can be viewed online.
- 9.2 All applicants for Bands A- D must complete the application process to be considered for social housing through the council's housing register. This includes providing the supporting evidence required to assess the application. Failure to provide the supporting documents within the required timescales will prevent the application from becoming 'live' and may lead to closure of the application. Applicants can apply to join the register by completing an on-line form. Paper application forms can be sent to applicants who have no access to the internet, live in a rural area, are unable to read/write and/or are in need of assistance. Band E applicants will be asked for supporting evidence by the relevant housing association at the point an offer is being considered.
- 9.3 Information on how to complete the form is available online as is the list of the evidence that needs to be supplied in support of the application. There is guidance to help complete the form as you follow it through online.

9.5 Joint applications

Joint applications can be made as long as at least one applicant is eligible. However, if only one party is eligible, should an offer be made by a housing association, only the eligible applicant will be offered a tenancy.

If a joint application is received where both are eligible but only one party qualifies under this policy, a sole tenancy should be offered to the qualifying tenant only.

Joint applicants can only make one application. In the case where two sole applicants wish to become joint applicants one of the applications must be withdrawn and the other amended to reflect the joint circumstances.

If both applicants are eligible and qualify then any offer made will usually be for a joint tenancy.

9.6 Multiple applications

Multiple applications are not permitted.

If an applicant is already registered the applicant must decide which application they want to retain. The applicant will need to contact Home Point for assistance to retain the correct application reference. The other application will be closed. This will also apply to people who are registered as a joint applicant on more than one application.

9.7 Applicants currently serving a custodial sentence

Applicants who are offenders, are currently detained and serving a custodial sentence, will have to have satisfied a local connection criterion prior to their sentencing to be accepted on to the register.

Applicants can request and complete a paper application form and can do so up to 2 months before their scheduled release.

Probation services will provide the completed form to Home Point and the application is then assessed and set as suspended until supporting documents are supplied. Supporting documents must be supplied within two weeks of release to retain the original registration date as the effective date for the application.

Applicants may be required to provide additional evidence to support the assessment process.

9.8 Who can be included in the application?

The application can include the following household members:

- a) spouses or civil partners where the applicant lives with and/or intends to live with their spouse or civil partner
- b) partners where the applicant is cohabiting with a member of the same or opposite sex
- c) children who reside with, and are dependent on, the applicant. Children are defined as a young person under the age of 18 or in full time education. In respect of Children's and Families referrals only, children will be included where it has been agreed by the council that they will live with the applicant
- e) adult household members who are currently living with the applicant

f) any other adult at the discretion of the Home Point Lead and reasons for the decision noted on the application

9.9 Providing information and documentation

9.9.1 During the application process, applicants will be asked to provide supporting evidence to verify their identity and personal circumstances e.g. their National Insurance number, proof of residency for themselves and anyone applying to be housed with them and up to date financial information. A list of documents which can be used to support an application is available online.

Without supporting evidence the application will not be assessed. This means that the applicant will not be able to bid for any properties that are advertised.

Failure to respond to a request for information within 28 calendar days, as part of the registration or verification process, will normally lead to closure of the application.

9.9.2 Additional information and documentation must be provided if requested. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the information / documentation within the specified timescale. Failure to do so means that you are unlikely to be considered for an offer of housing through the nomination arrangements with the housing associations and your application may be closed.

9.9.3 Once an application is received, all applicants are assessed for any factors that establish a housing need. A financial assessment will be carried out as part of the assessment.

9.10 Verification and assessment

Home Point will take the necessary steps to verify information provided for the application to ensure an accurate assessment and to prevent fraud.

During any verification/review, additional information may be requested from household members to confirm situations or clarify aspects of the information provided during the registration stage. The additional information requested will need to be provided within 14 days to ensure the initial information does not become out of date.

9.10.1 Verification may be carried out at the point of application, at notification of a change of circumstances, during a time limited band review or as part of the annual review process.

9.10.2 Applications are held on a computer system which holds all data relating to the application. Data is held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data

Protection Regulation and will be shared with partners according to the sharing agreement.

9.10.3 With exception of Band E applicants, all other applicants are assessed by a member of the Home Point team under the direction of the Home Point Team Lead and the Housing Services Manager (or their successor posts). Band E applications will be assessed by the Housing Association at the point an offer is being considered.

9.10.4 The Home Point team carries out all other assessments to ensure the applicant and members of the prospective household are eligible and qualify to be admitted on to the register, ascertain the banding they should receive and to take into consideration any other factors that might affect their application.

9.10.5 All applicants and members of their prospective households will be required to disclose any unspent criminal convictions or pending court cases.

9.11 Medical assessment

9.11.1 Medical banding will be awarded according to the extent to which the health or welfare of one or more members of the applicant's household is affected by their housing conditions and the expected benefits of providing suitable alternative settled housing. Medical awards may occur when there are mobility problems arising from a long term condition or illness and the applicant lives above the ground floor.

9.11.2 There are many conditions and illnesses for which medical banding is unlikely to be granted because moving house will not lead to a clear improvement in the health of the household member.

9.11.3 Where conditions in a property or the behaviour of neighbours are causing a problem the most likely action will be to refer the matter to the landlord for resolution.

9.11.4 Medical assessments are considered by in-house staff and referrals made to independent medical professional services for more in depth review of cases, where appropriate. Any medical or health/welfare condition must be current, ongoing and evidence provided by health professionals if requested.

9.11.5 The council will not normally consider information that is more than 12 months old. In cases where information is more than 12 months old, applicants may be required to obtain a review of their health/welfare situation by a health professional. The council will not pay for any reports or other evidence and it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence in all cases where required.

9.12 Effective date

Position within bands is determined by the length of time the applicant has been placed in the band. This may be either the date of assessment and acceptance on to the register or the date of entry to a higher band than the original assessment band. Applicants remaining in the same band or moving to a lower band after a change of circumstances will retain the date of registration as their effective date for determining time in a band. Applicants moving to a higher band will have as their effective date the date on which the new band has been awarded.

9.13 Giving false information or deliberately withholding information

The council takes its responsibility to make proper use of public resources very seriously. Applications for the register are investigated to ensure assessments and decisions are accurate. The council will therefore be required to verify the information you have provided in your application.

We are required to participate with other councils in the National Fraud Initiative.

This policy falls within the provisions of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Section 171 of the Act states:

- (1) A person commits an offence if, in connection with the exercise by a local housing authority of their functions under this Part –
 - s/he knowingly or recklessly makes a statement which is false in material particular, or
 - s/he knowingly withholds information which the authority has reasonably required him to give in connection with the exercise of those functions

Where section 171 applies, Herefordshire Council may consider bringing a prosecution in accordance with its prosecution policy.

Ground 17 in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988 enables a housing association to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting at the tenant's encouragement.

9.14 Confirming registration

Applicants will receive written confirmation from Home Point that their application has been registered together with:

- their confirmation of registration/effective date;
- the band they have been awarded;
- confirmation of their bedroom eligibility;
- if the applicant is only eligible for certain types of properties;
- their unique reference number for use in accessing their application online;

- how to bid;
- right to appeal a decision.

Applicants must check the accuracy of this information as it will impact on their potential to be made an offer of housing.

Confirmation of registration should be supplied to the applicant within 28 calendar days of the provision of all the required information in support of the application. Applicants will be advised by Home Point if an extension of this timescale is required and the reason for the extension.

9.15 Change of Circumstances

Applicants should ensure that their contact details (e.g. mobile number, email address) are kept up to date at all times.

a) Applicants **must** inform Home Point if their personal circumstances change and it may be expected to have an effect on their housing register application. This includes any change to their address or household composition. Other examples include:

- Marriage/ civil partnership
- Pregnancy
- Significant household income changes
- Change in health

This is not an exhaustive list.

b) Changes in circumstances that lead to re-banding will be dealt with in accordance with this scheme. The Home Point service will re-assess an application where there has been a change of circumstances and the relevant information has been received to confirm the changes. The applicant will be notified of the outcome in writing.

c) Where this has led to a change in banding applicants will be informed in writing stating the reasons, any time limits in the new banding, any change to the effective date and the right to request a review of the decision.

9.16 Annual Review

9.16.1 Home Point undertake an annual review of applicants in Bands A-D. This helps to ensure that those on the register still retain a housing need. It is expected that all active applicants will bid for appropriate properties when advertised.

9.16.2 Each applicant will be contacted, in writing, close to the anniversary of their application to ascertain if they still retain a housing need. Should there be no response to this **within 28 calendar days**, the application will be **suspended**. At this point the applicant will be

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unable to bid for any properties. Further written contact will be sent to the applicant notifying them their application is suspended and if they do not respond **within a further 14 days** their application will be closed.

9.16.3 Applicants who subsequently decide they wish to re-join the register will need to apply in the normal way and will have their current circumstances assessed. The application date will not be backdated under these circumstances.

9. 16.4 Applicants in Band E will be required to confirm they wish to continue with this option on an annual basis. If there is no response within 28 calendar days to the renewal notice on the applicants account the application will be closed.

9.17. Closure of Applications

Applications will be closed where:

- an applicant is housed including into supported accommodation;
- an applicant has failed to provide supporting evidence in the given time period of 28 calendar days (see above) or other time limits specified in correspondence;
- an applicant fails to respond to the annual review within the set timescale above;
- an applicant has moved and failed to notify the team;
- an applicant persistently fails to respond to communication or requests for information over a 42 day period;
- an applicant has made a request for the application to be closed.

Should an applicant subsequently wish to re-join the scheme then they will be required to complete a new application using the original registration number previously provided which will be processed accordingly based on their current circumstances and with a new registration date.

9.18. Right to review

Applicants have the right to request a review of the decision made in the registration process. These include applicants who;

- are not eligible to join the register;
- are not a qualifying applicant;
- have had their application closed;
- have had a banding withdrawn/changed;

The person carrying out the review will have had no prior involvement in the original decision. For further details see Appendix D.

9.19. Existing tenants and general applicants

Existing tenants of housing associations living in Herefordshire or people living in private sector housing who do not have a housing need identified in the bands A- D of the allocation scheme can apply online but their application will not be assessed by Home Point. These are identified in this scheme as Band E applicants.

These applicants will only be considered for properties for which there are no bidders from the main section of the register (Bands A – D) or for the percentage of properties for which the council does not have nomination rights. In these circumstances, the housing association will undertake assessment of the application at the point where the applicant is being considered for an offer and will manage all aspects of the application.

10. PROPERTY SIZE NEED

The table in Appendix C sets out the bedroom size of properties for which applicants will normally be nominated.

Below are circumstances in which the bedroom size may vary from that shown in the table in Appendix C.

10.1 Pregnancy

For applicants who are at least 25 weeks pregnant on receipt of the MAT B1 form by Home Point the unborn child will be classed as an infant for the purposes of property size eligibility only. Where a household already has another dependent child (other children) the unborn child will be classed as the same sex as the youngest child.

10.2 Extra room allowed for non-resident carers

Applicants with a disability or a long term health condition who have a non-resident carer may be entitled to an extra bedroom if they can provide evidence that:

- they reasonably require overnight care and that this care is provided;
- one or more persons regularly stay overnight to provide care;
- there is a need for an extra bedroom that is used by a carer or carers for overnight stays as part of caring for the applicant or a household member.

A 'person who may need overnight care is defined as someone who is:

- receiving Disability Living Allowance middle or higher rate care or who receives the Personal Independence payment (PIP) daily living component enhanced rate and/or the mobility enhanced rate or Attendance Allowance.

If not in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, PIP or Attendance Allowance evidence must be provided to show that the care is required e.g. letter of confirmation from a medical practitioner.

10.3 Children / access to children

For the purposes of this section of the policy a child is defined as someone who is either under the age of 18 or who is still dependent on the applicant e.g. due to continuing education.

Where parents who do not live together but have shared care of children apply, the children will be treated as living with the parent who provides their principal home and receives child benefit.

10.4 Fostering and adoption

Where a household has formal evidence that, subject to a suitable home becoming available, approval would be given to foster or adopt a child or children, they may be included in the bedroom entitlement calculation. Verification of fostering and/or adoption arrangements may be carried out by Home Point.

10.5 It is normal practice for ALL applicants to be subject to a financial assessment by the landlord housing association prior to being made any offer and, where they are being considered for a larger property than that to which they would normally be entitled, they will need to provide evidence that rent payments can be maintained over time.

11. HOW PROPERTIES ARE LET

Herefordshire Council operates a choice based lettings system in cooperation with the major housing associations working in the county.

11.1 Overview of system

The council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme process is as follows:

- a. available properties are advertised for a seven day period;
- b. applicants apply for properties that meet their housing need;
- c. applicants can apply for up to two properties at any one time;
- d. when the advertising cycle is complete shortlists are created from those who have expressed an interest ('bid') and sorted into a shortlist in banding and then effective date order (as defined in the allocation scheme – see Appendix B);
- e. the successful applicant is made an offer by the housing association, subject to meeting the association's criteria;
- f. the applicant accepts or rejects the offer;
- g. the results of shortlisting are published on the Home Point website.

11.2 Property Adverts

All properties that are advertised through the Home Point website may be made live and available for 'bidding' on any given weekday.

The first day of advertising will be the day on which an advert goes live, provided it goes live before midday; and will otherwise be the day afterwards. The advert will then remain live for a minimum of seven days, closing at one minute to midnight on the final day.

Applicants should check for property adverts on a regular basis, possibly at least every three days to avoid missing opportunities to bid.

The housing associations endeavour to ensure that all advertisements are as comprehensive as possible to promote informed choice and guide applicants to bid for properties they can realistically expect to be considered for if at or near the top of the shortlist when it closes. Advertisements will include as many of the following as possible:

- location;
- property type, size and floor level;
- nature of tenancy on offer;
- what type of heating it has and whether it has a heating charge payable that is not covered by housing benefit;
- any restrictions such as s.106 schemes where there is a requirement for a local connection to specified parishes or wards;
- whether such things as a garden or parking are available with the property;
- the amount of rent and any other charges that are payable;
- photographs of the property and links to guides about the local area;
- lifts/adaptations e.g. wet room;
- any restrictions on pets;
- whether preference to own tenants.

11.3 What is restrictive advertising and how is it applied under this policy?

This refers to adverts for individual properties which are subject to specific restrictions on the types of households that will be considered for that property.

Restrictions that may apply include the following examples:

a) Age

Adverts will clearly state where properties are restricted to people over a certain age.

b) Property type e.g. scheme for older people

Certain types of properties are only available for specific types of households. Where bids will only be accepted from designated household types this will be clearly labelled on the advert. On some occasions the advert will indicate that preference will be given to a specific need e.g. those who need level access facilities.

c) Section 106 developments/Local Connection

Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between local planning authorities and developers which are linked to a planning approval to enable the development of affordable homes. Where these exist they normally grant priority for affordable housing initially to applicants with a local connection to the ward, parish or village. Applicants with a local connection to the area take precedence over all others on the register for these properties for an initial period. Properties governed by s106 agreements will be advertised as 'Local Connection Required'.

d) Local lettings plans

Local lettings plans are normally introduced to meet a particular local need or to address an issue affecting the local area. There are a number of these plans throughout the county. To be considered for a property within one of these plan areas the applicant would have to meet the criteria listed in the advert. For example, applicants may need to have children over a certain age.

e) Existing tenants

Properties withheld as part of the percentage available for existing tenants or Band E applicants will be marked as 'Band E applicants' or 'for existing tenants'.

11.4 Housing Association exclusion criteria or restricted access policies

Under this Allocation Scheme, the council operates qualification rules which suspend from bidding applicants whose prior behaviour has not met the standard required for prospective tenants.

Applicants should also be aware that individual housing associations have their own exclusion criteria which may adversely affect the likelihood that an applicant will receive an offer of accommodation. Exclusion criteria are usually contained within the lettings policy but in some instances there may be a standalone policy. These documents should be available on the individual housing association's website.

While the Council acknowledges the right of their housing association partners to formulate their own lettings policies, it is expected that these will be fair and reasonable, minimising the risk of exclusion from social housing by ensuring that they are applied to reflect the spirit of published allocation policies, including this overarching allocation policy. If a housing association is excluding an applicant on their criteria, they must inform the applicant of this decision.

The Council expects exclusion criteria to be flexible, with cases being considered on an individual basis. The following criteria should be applied:

- there must be reliable evidence of unacceptable behaviour;
- there should not be inflexible specific time periods as far as possible;
- Housing Associations should communicate effectively with the applicant and Home Point about exclusions;
- there should be provision for discretion;
- there should be a recognition where special circumstance arise e.g. people with learning disabilities, mental ill health issues, statutory homelessness duties arise.

Each case should be considered upon its own merits and subject to the spirit of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended, according to individual circumstances.

11.5 Bidding

Once the application is active, an applicant has to place a 'bid' to express an interest in an available property.

Applicants can place bids at any time during the advertising period via the following methods:

- by logging into their account and bidding online;
- by phone or email to the Home Point;
- using a bidding voucher available at Blueschool house

Some housing associations will help tenants place a bid.

Applicants can bid for up to 2 properties at any one time. Depending on their method of bidding, applicants can find out their position on the shortlist at the time they bid, together with the total number of bids already placed against the property. Position on the shortlist can change as additional bids are received. Registered applicants are able to see their queue position on current and historic bids via their online application account.

11.6 Shortlisting

At the end of the advertising period for each individual property the bidders are shortlisted by the respective housing association by band order. The housing association access the shortlist and review the bids, taking into account any specific requirements for the property. The housing association will also review bids in the light of their own lettings policy and exclusion criteria. Properties may not be immediately available for letting so there may be a delay between the shortlist closing and the housing association contacting applicants on the shortlist.

Shortlist position does not guarantee an offer from the housing association. However, in most cases, the property will be offered to the bidder in the highest band who has waited the longest, subject to meeting the housing association's lettings criteria. If this applicant is no longer interested, the property will normally be offered to the bidder in second place and so on.

A bid for a property will not be considered by the association if the applicant's household does not meet the size, age or other requirements for that property unless there are exceptional circumstances which should be taken into account.

A property may not always be offered to the applicant at the top of the shortlist if there are reasons to 'skip' the applicant. Skipping bids can be done in certain circumstances, such as no local connection, or where the household does not meet age requirements.

Housing associations may require further information from bidders before making a decision to offer the property. The bidder needs to respond to these requests within the required timescale.

Housing associations are entitled to carry out an affordability assessment to ensure that the tenancy is viable. Where the assessment shows that the tenancy would not be sustainable the landlord may withdraw the offer, advising the bidder of the outcome of the assessment. Withdrawal of the offer should only be done where the assessment has included reviewing the options to maximise the prospective tenant's income and to signpost applicants to alternative options.

12. OFFERS

Applicants should note that all offers of housing are made by the relevant housing association not Home Point. Queries about properties that are advertised or offers of properties should be made to the housing association not Home Point.

Further verification of circumstances by the housing association may be undertaken to ensure the applicant still qualifies for the property prior to an offer being made. Applicants will be required to provide information within a specified timescale.

Before offering a property to an applicant the housing association may make checks to ensure e.g.:

- The band award is correct;
- Circumstances have not changed;
- Household composition matches the property size;
- Any other restrictions placed upon the property or applicant would not prevent them from receiving an offer.

Offers may be made in writing (including by email), by phone or in person. Applicants should be made aware of the timescale in which they must respond. This should not be less than 2 working days.

Offers being made to discharge duty to a homeless household will be made in writing or confirmed in writing.

Applicants should be given at least 1 working day to respond to an offer after viewing the property.

Landlords are entitled to carry out an affordability assessment to ensure that the tenancy would be financially viable i.e. that the applicant can pay the rent. Where the assessment shows that the tenancy would not be sustainable the landlord may choose not proceed with an offer, advising the applicant of the outcome of the assessment but may advise on actions to address affordability to enable future potential offers to proceed.

Final decisions are made by the housing association which owns or manages the individual property not Home Point.

12.1 Skipping or overlooking bids

There are circumstances where housing associations will need to, or have the discretion to, skip a bidder.

Potential grounds for overlooking a bid include:

- The applicant does not meet the advertised requirements such as the age restriction, or local connection criteria for property;
- Outstanding housing related debt;
- There is no relevant support package in place, as required.

12.2 Refusals of offers

When an applicant refuses an offer, they will be expected to provide the reasons for the refusal. This information is necessary to identify why the property was not acceptable, whether the refusal was therefore reasonable and to ensure that future offers are more likely to be accepted.

Applicants who refuse more than 3 reasonable offers in a 12 month period may have their application reviewed and suspended for a 12 month period. Landlords should advise applicants at the time if they consider the refusal to be unreasonable and explain why. The review of reasonableness is undertaken by Home Point.

Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the review. If three refusals are found to be unreasonable the application will normally be suspended and the applicant will not be eligible to bid for 12 months from the date the application is suspended. Applicants have the right to request a review of this decision. For further details see Appendix D.

12.3 Withdrawal of Adverts and Offers

Occasionally, a housing association may be required to withdraw a property advert and subsequently any offer already made. Circumstances for this may include if:

- it becomes apparent that the property will be let through a direct offer in accordance with this policy ;
- the current tenant of the property being advertised has withdrawn their notice terminating their tenancy of that property, so the property is no longer available;
- property was advertised incorrectly and is required to be amended and re-advertised

In exceptional circumstances a senior officer of a partner housing association may authorise the withdrawal of an offer although the property remains available for letting. The housing association will contact the bidder to inform them that this has occurred. Circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- where it is clear that an applicant is not capable of understanding the responsibilities associated with being a tenant or they do not clearly understand what they are signing when asked to sign a tenancy agreement or associated paperwork;
- where an applicant has failed to respond to contact from a partner housing association after 2 working days.

12.4 Publishing feedback on let properties

Home Point will publish lettings results on the website and will include the following information:

- The street address;
- The number of bedrooms in the property;
- The closing date of the bidding cycle;
- The total number of bids made for the property;
- The successful applicant's priority band and date.

This feedback helps applicants understand the likelihood of success in obtaining housing when making future bids.

Individual applicants can view the outcome of their personal bids through the website.

Lettings are monitored by Herefordshire council to ensure that the council's statutory duties are being achieved and to provide information to support the council's strategic housing role.

12.5 Direct offers

Where possible all lets are made through the choice based lettings process. However, a very small number of applicants may meet a reasonable preference but their circumstances mean that they have an overridingly urgent need requiring a direct offer for a property.

The council reserves the right to negotiate a direct offer of accommodation to ensure the best use of the housing stock to meet the needs of an applicant. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- An urgent move is required because of violence or threat of violence;
- An applicant has been accepted as a homeless household by the council and has failed to bid or been unsuccessful in securing accommodation;
- Move on from supported or specialised accommodation;
- Needs an appropriately adapted property;
- Proven urgent need for an applicant to live close to another person or identified medical/support facility.

13. HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE OWED THE FULL HOMELESSNESS DUTY

13.1 Homelessness assessments are determined by a Housing Solutions Officer on behalf of Herefordshire Council. Full duty arises where the council accepts a statutory duty to provide secure accommodation, under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) s. 193(2), s 195(2) or other statutory duties.

13.1.1. Applicants accepted as homeless who are owed the full homelessness duty are expected to bid for suitable advertised properties

13.1.2 The bidding history of applicants accepted for full homelessness duty will be reviewed towards the end of the 12 week period, where the applicant has not secured an offer of accommodation (see Appendix B: Banding criteria). This will ensure that homeless applicants capitalise on their banding to be successful in obtaining an offer.

13.1.3 Applicants should not decline an offer made as a final discharge of the homelessness duty. If they do so Herefordshire Council may decide that its duty has been discharged and the household's banding will be re-assessed. The applicant retains the right to request a review of the suitability whether or not they accept the offer. For information on the review process please see Appendix D.

13.1.4 There are circumstances where households, accepted as homeless, may be made a direct offer. This would end the homeless duty. A direct offer may be arranged where households have failed to bid for properties that were available and suitable for their needs or have been unsuccessful in bidding for suitable properties.

13.3 Discharge of the Full Homelessness Duty to the Private Rented Sector

Where the homelessness duty is discharged to the Private Rented Sector, applicants who are subsequently given a section 21 notice to leave within two years of the offer being accepted,

where the applicant is eligible for assistance and not intentionally homeless, any homelessness duty to secure further suitable accommodation is revived. The duty revives even if the applicant no longer has a priority need, but it only applies to the first incidence of homelessness within the two year period.

14. MANAGING CHANGES

Managing Changes

The Council wishes to retain flexibility in operational processes and procedures in order to respond to changes arising from case law and regulatory changes, whilst still operating within the principles set out in this policy.

This policy is subject to regular review, and where the policy requires changes which are minor in nature, or where the changes are required urgently for legal reasons or changes in government policy and / or legislation, these changes will be approved by the Director of Economy and Place under the Council's scheme of delegation

All changes to this policy will be noted within the Version Control of this document and an updated document will be uploaded to Home Point web page.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: List of housing associations and contact details

Bromford	Citizen(formerly WM Housing)	Platform (formerly Fortis)	Guinness Partnership	Herefordshire Housing aka Connexus
1 Exchange Court Brabourne Ave Wolverhampton WV10 6AU 0330 1234 034 www.bromford.co.uk	4040 Lakeside Solihull Parkway Birmingham B37 7YN 0300 790 6531 www.citizen.co.uk	Progress House Midland Road Worcester 0300 123 0700 www.fortisliving.com	 08456 044 529 www.guinnesspartnership.com	Two Rivers Housing Rivers Meet Cleeve Mill Lane Newent GL18 1DS 0800 316 0897 www.tworivershousing.org.uk
Legion Way Hereford HR1 1LN 0300 777 4321 www.hhl.org.uk - -	Stonewater Suite C, Lancaster House Grange Business Park Enderby Rd Leicester LE8 6EP 01202 319 119 www.stonewater.org - -	Sanctuary Housing Marylebone House 2 Marylebone Liverpool L3 2BY 0300 123 3511 www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk - -	SSHA The G Auction Crave SY7 9 0300 www.ssha.org.uk - -	

APPENDIX B: Banding criteria detail

Band A – Time limited	
Major adaptations no longer required	<p>Tenants of housing associations who no longer require a property where major adaptations such as a stair lift or level access shower have been installed and this adaptation will remain in the property for use by an incoming tenant.</p> <p style="color: red;">Time limited to 6 months</p>
Statutory or severe overcrowding (reasonable preference)	<p>This is awarded where a household is either, by the room standard of Part X of the Housing Act 1985, severely overcrowded by at least two bed spaces, or fails the bedroom standard of the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System (HHSRS) by at least three bed spaces and has not deliberately worsened their housing situation.</p> <p>Applicants may need to provide bedroom sizes in order for household bedroom space requirements to be assessed.</p> <p>Applicants are expected to use space appropriately and no account is taken of possessions or furniture in the assessment of overcrowding.</p> <p>A room intended for use as a bedroom but used for another purpose will still be classified as a bedroom, subject to it meeting the space standards for bedrooms.</p> <p>Assessment of overcrowding in bedsitting rooms/studio apartments will be based on Herefordshire Council’s Amenity and Facility standards in a HMO, available at: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2075/amenity_and_facility_standards</p> <p>Discretion can be exercised by Home Point staff to adjust the number of bedrooms required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the bedrooms in the property are particularly large or small; • a couple need separate bedrooms due to disability; • a child requires their own bedroom due to disability. <p style="color: red;">Time limited to 6 months</p>
Serious state of disrepair (reasonable preference)	<p>Households will be placed in this band in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the hazard(s) are so severe or numerous that the most appropriate course of action would be to prohibit the property from residential use. <p>There is a process for the assessment of hazards under the HHSRS and applicants will be expected to work with the Council and landlords in complying with, and following, the actions that are required.</p> <p style="color: red;">Time limited to 6 months.</p>

<p>Homeless households who are owed a full housing duty (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households that have been accepted as homeless by Herefordshire Council under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and who are owed the 'full duty' under s. 193 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended.</p> <p>ONE SUITABLE OFFER ONLY</p> <p>Applicants have the right to a review that accommodation offered is suitable, if the accommodation is being offered to meet or end the 'main housing duty'. See Appendix D for more details.</p> <p>Time limited to 12 weeks</p>
<p>Hospital discharge (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Assessment by the Hospital Discharge Officer where a patient has no appropriate secure housing to return to and/or their housing cannot be made suitable through adaptations due to cost, structural difficulties or within a three month period to meet their needs.</p> <p>Applicants have the right to a review that accommodation offered is suitable, if the accommodation is being offered to meet or end the 'main housing duty'. See Appendix D for more details.</p> <p>Time limited to 6 months</p>
<p>Referral from Herefordshire Council's Adults and Wellbeing or Children's Wellbeing Directorates.</p>	<p>Households who require urgent alternative accommodation on safeguarding grounds. Referrals must be made formally and in writing and be approved by Safeguarding Lead or Operational Service Manager in Adults and Wellbeing or a Head of Service in Children's & Families Directorate. Award of this priority is subject to referral to, and agreement from, Head of Prevention and Support, Adults and Communities Directorate.</p> <p>Time limited to 6 months</p>
<p>BAND B</p>	
<p>Accessible home (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Current property cannot be made suitable through adaptations due to cost, structural difficulties or tenure issues. Must be assessed by an Occupational Therapist and a report provided.</p> <p>This may include, but is not limited to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants requiring wheelchair accessible accommodation. • Applicant's mobility is severely restricted.
<p>Care Leaver (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Referrals from Head of Service or Senior Practitioner in Children's and Families Directorate under s.27 Children Act 1989 or where the young person is deemed to be a relevant or eligible child or a former relevant or qualifying care leaver under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, as amended.</p> <p>The applicant will need to be ready for independent living and have an appropriate pathway plan and support package in place, as agreed between relevant organisations.</p>

<p>End of Agricultural or service tied tenancy</p>	<p>The Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 requires a local housing authority to use their best endeavours to provide accommodation for a qualifying displaced agricultural worker subject to the provisions of s.27. If the authority is satisfied that the applicant's case is substantiated, it is a duty to endeavour to provide suitable alternative accommodation for the displaced worker; Households in council service or related tenancies, or where occupancy of a council property is related to their employment, which is coming to an end.</p>
<p>Lacking facilities (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households who do not have access to a bathroom, kitchen or inside WC or whose accommodation lacks hot or cold water supplies, electricity supply or provision of sources of, or for, heating. Checks will be made with the landlord and through other resources to confirm the housing circumstances of the applicant.</p>
<p>Sharing facilities with non-family members (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households sharing a kitchen and bathroom/WC with non-family members who are not included on the application. Family members include parents, step parents, children, step-children, siblings and step siblings and grandparents. Checks will be made with the landlord and through other resources to confirm the housing circumstances of the applicant.</p>
<p>Move on from supported/ specialised accommodation (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Tenants/licensees of supported or specialised housing who have been there for a period of at least six months normally and have been assessed by their support provider as being ready to move into settled or alternative accommodation. Formal assessment and confirmation of that assessment will be required. For the purposes of this assessment, supported housing does NOT include crash pad type accommodation. The agreement between Herefordshire Council and the supported housing provider will require that, where appropriate, arrangements will be made for ongoing support in the new tenancy.</p>
<p>Overcrowding (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households where the property is by the room standard of Part X of the Housing Act 1985, overcrowded by at least one bed space, or fails the bedroom standard of the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System (HHSRS) by at least two bed spaces and the household has not deliberately worsened their housing situation. Applicants may need to provide bedroom sizes in order for household bedroom space requirements to be assessed. Applicants are expected to use space appropriately and no account is taken of possessions or furniture in the assessment of overcrowding. A room intended for use as a bedroom but used for another purpose will still be classified as a bedroom, subject to it meeting the space standards for bedrooms. Assessment of overcrowding in bedsitting rooms/studio apartments will be based on Herefordshire Council's Amenity and Facility standards in a HMO, available at: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2075/amenity_and_facility_standards</p>

	<p>Discretion can be exercised by Home Point staff to adjust the number of bedrooms required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the bedrooms in the property are particularly large or small; • a couple need separate bedrooms due to disability; • a child requires their own bedroom due to disability.
Right to move for social housing tenants	<p>In accordance with the Right to Move guidance 2015, this applies to a social housing tenant who works in the county or has the offer of work in the county but does not currently live in the county. The regulations only apply if work is not short-term or marginal in nature, nor ancillary to work in another district. Voluntary work is also excluded. A contract of employment that was intended to last for less than 12 months is considered to be short-term. Employment of less than 16 hours a week is too few hours to benefit from the Right to Move regulations.</p> <p>Assessment will follow the 'urgent need to move on hardship grounds' process used for those with a local connection to Herefordshire.</p>
Prevention of homelessness (reasonable preference)	Households where the council has accepted a duty under s.195 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
Sharing facilities : three generations (reasonable preference)	<p>Household sharing a kitchen and bathroom/WC with family members who are not on the application for housing where there are at least three generations living in the same home. Family members would include parents, step parents, children, step-children, siblings and step siblings and grandparents. Three generations mean, for example, child, parents and grandparents.</p> <p>Checks will be made with the landlord and through other resources to confirm the housing circumstances of the applicant.</p>
Under-occupation by a social housing tenant	<p>Social housing tenants not in a reasonable preference category but want to downsize and release at least one bedroom.</p> <p>Checks will be made with the relevant landlord to validate the application by reference to the housing association's own lettings criteria and to ensure that the property would be suitable for re-letting.</p>
Verified harassment/ witness intimidation/ domestic abuse	<p>Households where the police, or relevant agency, confirm that there is an urgent need for alternative accommodation to protect witnesses, whose actions in reporting crime led to them becoming unsafe in their own home, or to prevent severe harassment and, normally, where prosecution of the offender is intended. There must be a clear history and alternative solutions must have been explored and exhausted by the landlord.</p> <p>Applicants escaping domestic abuse where the police or relevant agency confirm that there is an urgent need for alternative accommodation to protect the household. Applicants identified through MARAC may be awarded this banding.</p>

<p>Verified urgent medical/welfare need (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households where there is an urgent need to move to prevent significant deterioration, or where a move could improve significantly, health or welfare of the household through the provision of a different type of accommodation. Rehousing must achieve a significant health gain. Medical evidence will be required and will be used to assess banding. This banding will not be awarded where the need is temporary as a result of injury or surgery.</p> <p>Welfare need includes moving to build a stable life such as that provided through the foster care or adoption process.</p> <p>Applicants identified through the MAPPA (the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel Arrangements) may be dealt with through this banding criterion, as determined by Herefordshire Council in partnership with West Mercia Probation and/ or West Mercia Police.</p>
<p>Verified urgent need to move to a particular area to avoid hardship (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households who need to move due to employment, education or training, or for another verified reason where the household has no access to a private vehicle OR the use of public transport is not available AND the journey, either by private or public transport, would take over 1.5 hours in each direction.</p> <p>Applicants who need to move urgently to give or receive support, such as in the case of elderly parents wishing to move closer to family, will need to provide confirmation of the support provision available, and a health and well-being assessment may be required to determine the most appropriate type of housing for the person's needs. The assessment may include typical travel time.</p>
	<p>Band C</p>
<p>Affordability</p>	<p>This applies to households where 30% or more of gross income is spent on rent, excluding child benefit, attendance allowance, DLA, PIP or carer's allowance (or successor benefits). Applicants will need to provide financial evidence.</p>
<p>Children aged 8 or under living above first floor (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>This applies to households where there is one child (or more) aged 8 or under. Households must live above the ground and first floor. This priority will cease when the youngest child reaches the age of 9.</p>
<p>Verified medical/welfare need (reasonable preference)</p>	<p>Households where there is a need to move to prevent deterioration, or where a move could improve the health or welfare of the household through the provision of a different type of accommodation. Rehousing must achieve a quantifiable health gain. Medical evidence will be required and will be used to assess banding. This banding will not be awarded where the need is temporary as a result of injury or surgery.</p> <p>Welfare need includes moving to build a stable life such as that provided through the foster care or adoption process.</p>

	A recommendation to be placed in this category is only likely to be made when options to improve the current accommodation have been exhausted.
Verified need to move to avoid hardship (reasonable preference)	Households who need to move due to employment, education or training, where the household has no access to a private vehicle OR the use of public transport is not available AND the journey would take over 1 hour in each direction. Applicants who need to move to give or receive support will need to provide confirmation of the support provision available, and a health and well-being assessment may be required to determine the most appropriate type of property for the person's needs. The assessment will include typical travel time and individual circumstances.
Relief of homelessness (reasonable preference)	Households where the council has accepted a duty under s.189B Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
Proven need for scheme for older people with assets up to £150K	Property owners or those with other assets over the age of 60 who can identify a need for housing for older people's schemes but whose ability to access open market provision is limited due to total capital assets and/or savings of under £150K. Applicants will need to provide evidence of assets, including the value of any property or assets owned or disposed of within the previous 5 year period. <i>There will be an assessment of the need for this type of scheme by housing associations before any offer is made.</i>
Relationship breakdown	This applies to the single partner who is leaving the family home where there are dependent children involved and insufficient financial resources to meet the housing needs of the person who will <u>not</u> be living with the children on a daily basis. Appropriate documentation must be submitted to confirm the arrangements for any children of the relationship and, where appropriate, that divorce or legal separation has been applied for, whether or not the sale or transfer of ownership of the property has been agreed and/ or completed. Any property that is to be sold must be put on sale prior to acceptance on to the register. Both partners will be required to submit financial information for the assessment of their resources and the partner applying to be rehoused will only be eligible for a property meeting their specific needs i.e. bedroom eligibility will normally not include provision for children.
Rural localities /s.106 local connection schemes	In order to promote sustainable communities, households that do not have a housing need under other criteria in this allocation scheme but have a local connection to a specific parish or ward may qualify for section 106 affordable housing developments in the parish or ward to which they have a local connection. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of their local connection to specific settlements and will only qualify for housing in the settlements to which they have the local connection as specified in the relevant s106 agreement. Bids to properties in places to which these applicants have no local connection will be skipped.

	Band D
Intentionally homeless (reasonable preference)	Have been found to be intentionally homeless under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 by the council's Housing Solutions team.
No local connection :	Applicants whose housing need is within the reasonable preference categories, but who do not have a local connection, as defined in this policy, to the county of Herefordshire.
	Band E
Existing housing association tenants	Tenants of a housing association who does not have a housing need identified in the bandings A-D
General applicants	Living in private sector housing who do not have a housing need identified in the bandings A-D

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APPENDIX C: Property size eligibility

1. Property Size

The table overleaf shows the size of properties that applicants are eligible for based on their household composition.

a) Households claiming benefits should be aware that there is a limit on their eligibility for housing benefit/ the housing element of universal credit based on the government's assessment of their household's bedroom need.

The rules restrict the amount of benefit based on the size of the accommodation and the number of people in the household.

When determining how many bedrooms needed, a set formula is used. One bedroom is allowed for each of the following:

- a single claimant or any adult couple
- any two children aged under 10
- any two children of the same sex aged 15 or under
- any other person aged 16 or over
- any other child
- a non-resident carer

Additional bedrooms can also be allowed in certain specific circumstances

Where an applicant is offered a property that is deemed larger than necessary by the housing benefit or Universal Credit regulations, the housing association will undertake a financial assessment with the applicant to ensure that the rent is affordable to the household.

b) Universal Credit is the name for the monthly combined payment that will eventually be paid to all working age residents who are on a low income or out of work. Universal Credit is made up of different amounts, called 'elements' depending on individual circumstances. The housing element of the Universal Credit payment helps tenants with their eligible rent and service charge costs. Further information is available on the website www.gov.uk.

c) A number of flats and bungalows are restricted to people over a specified age or on the basis of need /support to help applicants maintain their independence. It is sometimes possible in these schemes to offer a larger property than shown below, subject to an applicant being able to afford the rent.

d) Applicants for sheltered accommodation will be assessed as to whether they need this type of accommodation.

e) Pregnant applicants without other children will be eligible primarily for 2 bedroom 2 or 3 person accommodation to enable larger three or four person households requiring to be housed in the larger 2 bedroom 4 person bedroom properties.

f) In rural areas, where one bedroom general needs housing is very limited, under-occupation may be permitted in two bedroom properties, if the housing association is satisfied that the household can afford the rent.

g) There are very few larger properties in Herefordshire. By larger we mean those properties that are designed for households needing more than **FIVE** bed spaces.

h) Larger properties are normally offered to households that are in need of the number of bed spaces provided. Applicants should be aware that although they may be able to register an interest in a property which has more bed spaces than they need, **preference is generally given to those who need the full amount of bedrooms and bed spaces available.**

PROPERTY SIZE ELIGIBILITY						
Household size	Suitable property size for 1 and 2 Bedrooms					
	Bedsit/ studio	1 Bed 1 person	1 Bed 2 person	2 Bed 2 Person	2 Bed 3 Person	2 Bed 4 Person
Single person						
Couple without children						
Single person or couple without children over 55						
Pregnant applicant (25 weeks onwards)						
Parent(s) and one child						
Parent(s) and 2 children regardless of gender aged 0- 9.						
Parent(s) and 2 children same gender aged 0 -15, less than 10 years age difference.						
Parent(s) with 2 children same gender aged 0-15 with greater than 10 years age difference						

PROPERTY SIZE ELIGIBILITY				
Household size	Suitable property size for 3 Bedrooms			
	3 Bed 3 person	3 Bed 4 person	3 Bed 5 person	3 Bed 6 person
Parent(s) with 2 children same gender aged 0-15 with greater than 10 years age difference				
Parent(s) and 2 children different gender one aged over 9 years				
Parent(s) and 3 children any gender mix aged 0-15				
Parent(s) and 3 children, one child over 15, other children of different gender				
Parent(s) and 4 children				

PROPERTY SIZE ELIGIBILITY					
Household size	Suitable property size for 4 Bedrooms				
	4 Bed 4 person	4 Bed 5 person	4 Bed 6 person	4 Bed 7 person	4 Bed 8 person
Parent(s) and 3 children, one child over 15, other children of different gender					
Parent(s) and 4 children					
Parent(s) with 5+ children					

PROPERTY SIZE ELIGIBILITY			
Household size	Suitable property size for 5 and 6 Bedrooms		
	5 Bed	6 Bed	
Parent(s) with 5+ children			

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APPENDIX D: Right to review decisions on applications or offers

All applicants have the right to ask for a review of a decision, if they consider they have been unfairly or unreasonably treated having regard to the provisions of this policy. For example, a decision about:

- suspension or removal from the register;
- any decision taken in relation to their registration;
- information that has been taken into account when assessing the application;
- type of property the applicant is eligible for;
- the band into which they have been placed;
- suitability of accommodation offered to households subject to the full homeless duty.

Initial requests for reviews will be dealt with by the organisation that has been mainly dealing with that part of the application i.e. the organisation that has notified the applicant on the issue they would like reviewed.

For reviews of decisions about the register including banding, property eligibility and decisions in relation to homeless households, requests should be addressed initially to Home Point Lead at Herefordshire Council.

An applicant can appoint an advocate and once appointed the Home Point Lead will deal directly with the advocate. The appeal will initially be dealt with by the Home Point Lead, who was not involved in the original decision.

There are two stages to the appeal process.

Stage 1

The appeal must be made in writing within 21 calendar days of the date of the decision letter, stating the grounds for the appeal. The appeal will be considered and a decision will normally be given within 21 calendar days. In complex cases it may not be possible to give a decision in 21 days and it may take longer. Where this is the case the applicant/advocate will be notified in writing prior to expiry of the 21 day period.

If an applicant is unhappy with the initial review decision they should notify the relevant organisation, in writing, within 21 days of receipt of that decision, requesting a second review.

Stage 2

If the applicant is unhappy with the decision made, they may request that a further review be carried out by the Housing Solutions Reviewing Officer. This request must be made in writing within 14 calendar days of the date of the stage 1 decision. A decision will normally be given in 21 calendar days, subject to extension where necessary.

If the applicant remains unhappy with the outcome of the appeal, the applicant may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are listed below:

Tel: 0300 061 0614 for help making a complaint.

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm (except public holidays)

Fax: 027 7682 0001

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Further information is available on the website <https://www.lgo.org.uk/contact-us>

Contact forms are available on the web page

https://www.lgo.org.uk/forms/showForm.asp?nc=QG1E&fm_fid=81

For decisions regarding **offers of accommodation**, unless from an applicant owed the full homelessness duty, the Lettings Manager of the relevant housing association should be contacted. See Appendix A for contact details.

DRAFT

APPENDIX E: Monitoring and review

In order to ensure that the scheme is achieving its aims of being as open and accessible as possible to all members of the community outcomes, including the following may be monitored:

- a) The number of applicants by band each quarter & by age, ethnicity and disability.
 - By household type and size
 - By band
 - By banding criteria
- b) The number of offers made each quarter and in the financial year:
 - By household type and size
 - By position in the shortlist queue
 - By percentage of lets (where available)
- c) The number of lettings in each quarter and in the financial year:
 - By property type and bedroom size;
 - By type of restricted advertising;
 - Lettings by band awarded;
 - Lettings by banding criteria;
 - Local connection to a parish/ward.
- d) Property Feedback for each allocation as follows monthly:
 - Location of property,
 - Number of beds;
 - Type of property;
 - Number of bids.
 - Refusals
- e) Non bidders, customer satisfaction & performance against service standards annually.

Review

The data collected from the monitoring arrangements will be used in an initial review of the policy 12 months after its implementation.

Any decisions on further review timescales will be taken after the initial review.

APPENDIX F: Service standards

The following outlines our intended approach in working with people who use Herefordshire Council services:

We will treat people with dignity and respect, and expect the same consideration in return.

We will respect people's privacy and confidentiality.

We will listen and respond to concerns, and act to resolve queries where we can and have the powers to do so.

We will prioritise our resources to deal with areas of high risk, specifically danger to the public and where the most vulnerable in the community may be affected.

We can provide an interpreting service for customers who do not speak English or where English is not sufficient.

We can provide information in large print, audio and Braille on request.

We will design services so that they are accessible by disabled people and ensure reasonable adjustments are made where needed.

We will evaluate our practices to make sure we are offering the best service possible next to the resources we have available.

We will always wear ID badges and identify ourselves when responding to phone calls and written correspondence.

APPENDIX G: Complaints

If you are not happy

We welcome positive feedback when you are happy with the service provided as it lets us know what we are doing right.

If you are unhappy, we will work with you to resolve your query or issue at a service level, and if you are not happy with the outcome we will explain why we've taken that particular course of action or find an alternative remedy.

If you are still not happy with the outcome the following routes can be taken.

Formal complaint

A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by Herefordshire Council, our staff or contractors.

This could be based on stated standards not being met or not what the customer thinks is reasonable:

- We are doing something the customer did not want;
- We carried out duties in an unsatisfactory way or our staff or contractors behaved in an unacceptable way;
- We failed to do something which was asked for;
- We should have taken some action;
- Generally, a complaint has to be made within 12 months from the day the matter occurred or came to the notice of the complainant.

Formal complaints to the Council will be dealt with only through the Information Access team and we will not reinvestigate the same complaint. For further information visit the Council's [make a complaint](#) page.

Complaints about the service provided by partner housing associations

These should be dealt with through the specific housing association's Complaint Policy which is available on their websites. See Appendix A for contact details.

GLOSSARY

Home Point	Based in the council's offices at Blueschool House, this team advises on and administers the housing register.
Accessible housing	This refers to housing which has been constructed or modified to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.
Accommodation of choice	Accommodation of choice is defined through legislation and case law in relation to homelessness decisions. It relates to establishing a local connection. If someone is living in accommodation not of their own choice then residence by virtue of simply living in an area will not count towards having a local connection. See below for definition of settled accommodation
Additional preference	Local housing authorities are able to award additional preference benefits to particular descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories and have urgent housing needs.
Affordable Housing	Housing provided at below market prices and allocated on the basis of need to people who qualify for the housing register in Herefordshire as their only home and/or are unable to purchase or rent properties generally available on the open market without financial assistance.
Affordable rented housing	Rented housing usually owned and managed by housing associations where the total rent charged (including service charges, where applicable) is up to 80% of the open market rent.
Allocation policy	This is the policy document which explains the rules that Herefordshire Council uses to define those who qualify to register for social and affordable rented housing, and to prioritise applications in respect of housing need.
Armed Forces	As detailed in s.374 Armed Forces Act 2006, this means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular Army or the Royal Air Force.
Assured shorthold tenancy (AST)	<p>A tenancy can be an AST if all of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the property you rent is not council owned • your tenancy started on or after 15 January 1989 • the property is your main accommodation • your landlord doesn't live in the property <p>It is a form of assured tenancy with limited security of tenure which can be terminated by a section 21 notice giving a minimum notice period of two months.</p>
Bedroom Standard	<p>The bedroom standard is the commonly used standard to assess whether a household is overcrowded. The standard allocates a separate bedroom to each:</p> <p>Adult couple Person over 21 2 people aged 10-20 of the same sex 1 child under 10 years and 1 young person under 20 of the same sex 2 children under 10 years (any or both sexes)</p>

	Any unpaired person aged 10-20 or unpaired child under 10
Effective date	The date on which an applicant applies to the register or, if the application is awarded a higher banding at a later date, the date on which the higher banding was awarded.
Eligibility	Nationally set requirements that applicants have to comply with as the first stage in the registration process.
Equality Act 2010	This act requires that 'due regard' is shown to the needs and rights of members of the community including the 'protected' characteristics, which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Gender • Gender reassignment • Marriage and civil partnerships • Pregnancy and maternity • Race • Religion or belief • Sexual orientation
Extra care	Extra Care housing is designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site.
Full housing duty (homeless)	A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority have accepted as homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless, and acknowledges a duty to ensure that the household is offered settled accommodation.
Homelessness Act 2002	This Act made amendments to the Housing Act 1996 and places a duty on local authorities to review homelessness in their area.
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	The Homelessness Reduction Act comes into force in April 2018. The Act will modify and extend existing homelessness protection.
Housing Act 1996	This Act makes provisions about housing, including the social rented sector, the conduct of tenants, the allocation of housing accommodation by local housing authorities and homelessness.
Housing Act 2004	Parts 1 and 2 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to improve standards in accommodation. The Bedroom standard (see above) was introduced as part of this system.
Housing Association	A not-for-profit landlord organisation providing a range of affordable housing. Also known as Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and, more recently, Private Registered Provider (RP) in the legislation. They are regulated by Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing.

Housing Health and Safety Rating Standard (HHSRS)	The housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) is a risk-based evaluation tool used to identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It includes a definition of bedroom requirements for households known as the 'bedroom standard'.
Housing Register	The Housing Register is the directory of applicants who have expressed an interest in, and qualified for, social housing in Herefordshire.
HSM	Housing Services Manager who has authority to vary aspects of the allocation policy in exceptional circumstances, as indicated in this policy document.
Local connection criteria	<p>These criteria relate firstly to the county and the level of preference an applicant has for social and affordable rented housing in the county in the Allocation policy.</p> <p>Local connection criteria may also refer to the terms of a section 106 planning agreement which gives priority to applicants with a defined connection to the specific parish.</p>
Local lettings plan	Local lettings plans are agreed for the allocation and letting of properties in specific area to address particular issues in that area.
Localism Act 2011	The Localism Act 2011 gave flexibilities to local authorities in relation to qualification on the housing register.
Looked after children	A child who is being looked after the local authority is known as a child in care. They might be living: with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, or in residential children's homes.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Panel Arrangements
Mutual exchange	A swap of homes by two social housing tenants moving permanently into the other tenants property. Tenants must be granted permission by both landlords.
Nomination	The term used for applicants who qualify for the register and whose name and details are provided to the landlord as part of the bidding process through Home Point.
Reasonable Preference	The Housing Act 1996(as amended) requires local authorities to give reasonable preference in their allocation policies to applicants who fall into specified categories of housing need. See section 2.1 of this policy for a full explanation of the categories.
Reduced Preference	The term used for applicants whose application has a lower priority than it would normally have if the applicant had either a local connection to

	Herefordshire or had not previously acted in a manner that was not acceptable for a tenant living in social housing.
Private Registered Provider	Private Registered provider, also known as Registered provider, is the current term for organisations that are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency to provide affordable housing.
Reserved Forces	AS detailed in s374 Armed Forces Act 2006, this means the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.
Section 106	This refers to s.106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 under which developers may provide affordable housing on a specific site, with criteria which grant priority to applicants with a local connection to the parish or ward. .
Settled accommodation	Defined through legislation and case law in relation to homelessness decisions. Any accommodation that is precarious, short term or insecure is not considered settled. Examples of settled accommodation include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freehold or Leasehold Ownership • A tenancy enjoying security of tenure (assured or assured shorthold tenancy) • An indefinite Licence or Permission to Occupy (Any occupation implying an indefinite time period) • Returning to long term occupation with parents • An indefinite stay with other relatives • Tied accommodation as a long term employee.
Social Housing	The term used in this policy document to mean social and affordable rented housing
Social Rented housing	Rented housing usually owned or managed by a housing association, let at below market rents, where the changes in rent levels are subject to government policy.
Specialist housing	Housing that has been specifically designed to meet the requirements of people with particular needs. It can refer to housing that has been purpose designed or designated for a particular client group to assist tenants to live independently.
Space Standard	The space standard is defined in the Housing Act 1985 and refers to the number of people who may sleep in a room based on the size of the room.
Transfer	This is a term used for a permanent move by an existing social housing tenant within social housing stock.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Please read EIA guidelines when completing this form

1. Name of Service Area/Directorate

Name of Head of Service for area being assessed	Richard Gabb
Directorate	Economy and Place

Individual(s) completing this assessment	Name	Job Title
	Trea Connon	Housing Strategy officer
Date assessment completed	13 th November 2019	

2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, document, service redesign, strategy etc.)	Revised Housing Allocation scheme for Herefordshire 2020			
What is the aim, purpose and/or intended outcomes of this activity?	<p>The main purpose of the scheme is to meet the requirement under s166A Housing Act 1996(as amended) for every local housing authority in England to have an allocation scheme for determining priorities and the procedure to be followed in allocating social housing. For this purpose ‘procedure’ means all aspects of the process. The scheme is similar to the policy approved by Cabinet in April 2018, although procedures have changed to reflect the reversion to a choice based lettings scheme.</p> <p>There are revisions to the policy notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The change of banding positions for prevention of homelessness (from band C to band B) and the relief of homelessness (from band B to band C) • The deletion of sharing siblings from the banding criteria • The addition of Band E for existing tenants and general applicants who do not have a housing need identified in the council’s banding criteria • Amendments to the additional preference criteria for military personnel to improve clarity • The introduction of a suspension process for unacceptable behaviour, breaches of tenancy or other agreements, and housing related debt • Applicants will be able to bid on two properties at any one time • Operational arrangements 			
Name of lead for activity	Trea Connon/Andy Churcher			
Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Users <input type="checkbox"/> Patients <input type="checkbox"/> Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other __Registered providers__		

	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitors
Is this:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review of an existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?
What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name sources, eg demographic information for services/staff groups affected, complaints etc.	<p>1. Understanding Herefordshire 2018</p> <p>The mid 2018 population estimates that 51% of the population are female, outnumbering men in almost all age groups over 40. People over 65 comprise 24% of the population, although Hereford city has a younger age profile. The BAME population also has a younger profile with 77% being under the age of 45, compared to 50% of the total population.</p> <p>Herefordshire has a small but growing BAME population which does not seem to be represented on the register. It may be that this group of applicants prefer different housing tenures, there are problems with the data collected from the housing register applications but this is an area that needs further investigation.</p> <p>2. Service user information from the current housing register, where available.</p> <p>The current register holds about 900 applications with an average of just over 60 households joining monthly. Register applicants are typically on low incomes and/or benefits who find it difficult to rent affordable accommodation in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council does not have its own social housing stock and is reliant on private registered providers (commonly known as housing associations) to fulfil its statutory duties in respect of housing homeless households and those in priority need. An average of just under 60 households per month accept an offer.</p> <p><u>Housing register demographics</u></p> <p>As at 30th October 2019 the 900 applicants on the register included:</p> <p>a) Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 25's = 116 • Over 65 = 164 including 52 80 and over <p>b) Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 795 White British • 64 other white/Irish(white) • 8 other British (BAME) • 4 Gypsy/Roma/traveller <p>c) Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 549 female lead applicants • 351 male lead applicants <p>d) Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 390 registered disabled • Of these 121 identified as having mental health issues, 26 hearing impaired/deaf, 25 blind/visually impaired and 64 with learning difficulties/disabilities. <p>e) Households that required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 bedroom = 447 • 2 bed = 277 • 3 bed =134 • 4 bed = 31 • 5 bed = 6
Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who	Legislation requires consultation with the housing associations and this has been undertaken.

<p>and how have you engaged with, or why do you believe this is not required)</p>	<p>The procedures of the choice-based lettings scheme are not changing substantially though they are detailed to a greater extent in the scheme. Statute requires this information to be included and little of this can be changed. To do so would affect the working of the IT system without which the scheme cannot be implemented. Similarly, the changes to the banding criteria, qualification are largely required under legislation and the code of guidance. Therefore there has not been consultation with service or potential service users on this occasion.</p>
<p>Summary of relevant findings</p>	<p>There is some discrepancy between the profile of applicants to the register and residents of Herefordshire as a whole. It is not clear why this is the case but is likely to reflect how housing need changes over through the life cycle and the income/wealth of households.</p> <p>It is not possible at the time to provide information on whether people with some of the protected characteristics are on the register. It is also not currently possible to provide diversity information on the applicants that have been housed.</p> <p>Changes in the policy will change the priority for housing of people in many of the groups but it is not believed that any one group will be more affected than another.</p> <p>The upgrade of the IT system is expected to improve reporting capabilities which should provide a better understanding of the effect of the policy on households in the protected characteristics groups. However, the final decision on who is offered a property is made by the housing association and it is possible that information will be lacking or that their policies will have an impact for some of the protected characteristics groups, although this is not expected to have an impact.</p>

3. The impact of this activity

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development and implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please tick one or more impact box below for each Equality Group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on staff, public, patients, carers etc. in these equality groups.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
Age		×		Applicants already have to use an online system and there is some evidence that older people use of the internet less regularly than others and therefore may be disadvantaged by an online system.
Disability	×			The customer housing portal was developed to improve accessibility and so is expected to have a positive impact on people with disabilities.
Gender Reassignment		×		Data to gender reassignment is not currently collected but the changes are not expected to affect this group more than any other.
Marriage & Civil Partnerships	×			Although not new, as it was recognised in the 2018 policy there is now a criterion for relationship breakdown where children are involved which is likely to help stabilise families at this time.
Pregnancy & Maternity	×			As in 2018 policy, the scheme does recognise the potential need for an additional bedroom where a household is pursuing fostering or adoption.
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)		×		The changes are considered likely to have a neutral impact, although there may be language barriers, due to a racial or nationality dimension for recent immigrants. It is not clear why there is such a small percentage of BAME applicants on the register and further work will be needed to ensure this is not due to unidentified barrier.
Religion & Belief		×		Further data will need to be collected to assess impact. However, it is not anticipated that the changes will have either a positive or negative impact on this group.
Sex	×			Additional priority available to those subject to domestic abuse. This was in the 2018 policy also.
Sexual Orientation		×		The scheme is not expected to have an impact on this group. However work to collect data in respect of sexual orientation and gender reassignment to ensure there is no negative impact will require guidance and sensitivity.
Other Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups (eg. carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation, etc)			×	People in rural areas without direct access to the internet may be disadvantaged by the change from a weekly advertising cycle to one where an advert is placed on the system for a week on any day of the week.
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions within societies)	×			As with current (2014) and the non-implemented 2018 policy health issues are provided for in the scheme with additional criteria such as hospital discharge being added to support appropriate housing.

What actions will you take to mitigate any potential negative impacts?	Risk identified	Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	Who will lead on the action?	Timeframe
	Effect on rural applicants without access to internet	Housing associations maintain minimum 7 day per week advertising. Potential use of auto bidding (using IT system to automatically bid for properties of required size and location). Continued liaison with parish councils. Review potential use of other rural service hubs	Housing strategy officer	12 months

4. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?	Internal monitoring meetings will occur every three months after implementation with a formal review 12 months after implementation.
When will you review this EIA? (eg in a service redesign, this EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the design & implementation)	The scheme will be reviewed formally 12 months after implementation. However monitoring meetings will occur every 3 months after implementation and, subject to availability, protected characteristic data will be part of this monitoring.

5. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.
- All staff are expected to deliver services and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics.

Signature of person completing EIA	T Connon
Date signed	14.11.2019



Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision date:	Thursday, 27 February 2020
Title of report:	Better ways of working implementation
Report by:	Cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

The report is to outline further delivery of the "better ways of working" initiative that enables employees to work flexibly and to consolidate use of premises. This decision will specifically relate to the future occupancy of the Nelson House building and consider changes to Plough Lane and Elgar House offices to accommodate any increased occupancy of these buildings. The report will include details of any required financial investment and associated savings, details of any required procurement and any guidance to changes to staff working practices that will enable the improved usage of the workspace.

As well as consolidating spaces based on cost saving the purpose is the creation of a flexible, modern working environment that can have a positive impact on service delivery and staff morale. Also, open plan and shared spaces support opportunities for collaborative working can aid communication. With reducing the number of sites the on-going use and cost of utilities can lessen

and through encouraging the use of multi-agency offices in the market towns and home working reduces employees carbon footprint, including congestion into Hereford.

Better ways of working is an initiative that was introduced several years ago and whilst some teams have adopted the approach it has not been consistently applied across the organisation. Due to the proposed reduction in council buildings, associated guidance and policies will need to be more robustly applied with the proposals providing an opportunity to instigate a consistent approach.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) notice is served to vacate the Nelson building from 30 September 2020 making an annual saving of £155k;**
- (b) approve spend of up to £850k to deliver the better ways of working project as detailed in this report through delegated authority to the chief finance officer in consultation with the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets; and**
- (c) the principles of better ways of working are adopted by Herefordshire Council (point 21).**

Alternative options

1. That the lease for Nelson House is renewed. This is not recommended as based on effective management of sites going forward Nelson House will no longer be needed. By reducing key office locations in Hereford from 3 to 2 sites an annual saving and reduced energy consumption can be realised. The council is operating at Nelson House on an expired lease and until such time as the lease is renewed the landlord could serve notice to terminate the tenancy, which presently creates uncertainty and risk. If the council decided to renew the lease it is possible the landlord will seek an uplift in rent.
2. Find alternative leased premises once tenancy at Nelson House is terminated rather than relocate staff to Plough Lane offices. There are no suitable alternative premises on the open market within Hereford. This is not recommended as this does not proactively plan for future change, limits opportunity for longer term saving and could create uncertainty for a service based on another short term lease.
3. That there is no investment in premises or furniture and fittings. This is not recommended as without redesign of Plough Lane to enable reconfiguring the workspace additional staff and flexible working could not be accommodated. The efficient use of space in Plough Lane is restricted by the large existing office furniture, in addition an element of spend would be required to cover replacement furniture that is damaged or worn, specifically at Elgar House.
4. That the principles of better ways of working are not formally adopted. This is not recommended as though the principles would be implemented through an operational decision (and already in place) having them as part of the decision making supports the implementation and cultural change.

Key considerations

5. How people work has changed over the years and therefore the requirement for work space has also changed. This has been aided by existing investment in technology but also the acknowledgment that ability to work flexibly can have benefits for the employer and employee. An appealing working environment can have a positive impact on staff morale in attracting and retaining people to work for the organisation. Also, open plan and shared spaces support opportunities for collaborative working, aid communication and moving away from working in silos. These positive effects have the benefit of creating reduced office based expenditure in needing reduced desk space as people work flexibly in different types of environments.
6. The approach is consistent with the council's drive for efficiencies in using shared sites and reducing office space. Property services have a savings target to reduce costs of sites and over the long run savings will be made on the revenue of operating multi-sites. Consolidation of office sites has been part of the council's current delivery plan ([link](#)).
7. A cabinet decision of [11 February 2016](#) agreed the Corporate Property Strategy 2016-2020. This report and related recommendations reflects two intentions of that strategy "to support the efficient, integrated delivery of public services across the county by providing modern, fit for purpose buildings, shared by public agencies". In particular it supports the objective "to enable service integration and agile working with modern, fit for purpose workspaces supporting higher productivity". This strategy is due for renewal later this year but will propose continued goals of agile working, integration and efficient use of workspace.
8. The intention is to reduce expenditure of back office costs to enable continued support of frontline services. As an example, in the last 18 months the lease of the premises at Bath Street was terminated and staff relocated to other buildings within the council's operational estate. This resulted in revenue savings of £130k per annum. As well as financial benefit there are the advantages of teams working closer together and quality office space will support morale in demonstrating that staff are valued and give a positive impression for visitors. As well as cost there is a sustainability benefit reduced energy consumption in amalgamating office buildings.
9. As part of the council's operational estate the core sites (Plough Lane, Elgar House and currently Nelson House) are supported by MAOs (multi agency offices) in all of the market towns. The MAO's enable staff to work more locally, either to save travelling to core buildings or when working in different parts of the county e.g. visits. The position of MAOs in different parts of Herefordshire also recognises that the council operates services covering the whole of the county, hence being visible and being aware of community issues in rural areas and market towns. These are also supported by locality offices for specific teams in north and south of the county.
10. Other forms of flexible working include working from home when this suits the business requirements. The council has invested in technology that has supported mobile and flexible working, and is now investing in the MAO's to increase workstation capacity (primarily at Leominster and then Ledbury).
11. The lease of Nelson House expired on the 31 August 2016 and the council has been holding over on a statutory tenancy since that date. Three months' notice to terminate the tenancy can be served by either the landlord or tenant (the council), which presents a risk

to the council if no plan is in place regarding the future accommodation of the staff based within the property.

12. The information below outlines the occupancy and financial profile of the core buildings.

Plough Lane

Owned by the council; a largely open plan building accommodating a range of services and teams, including some rental and partnership arrangements in place (South West Audit, DVLA, Environment Agency, Hoople). Customer access, though not a customer service centre. Located in the Whitecross area of Hereford.

Tenure: Freehold (Herefordshire Council)

Annual Costs: £541k

Issues: un-necessary storage on site; legacy of large desks and dated furniture; vehicular egress at peak times can be difficult.

Elgar House

Largely accommodates Adults and Communities Services, based in the north of Hereford on Holmer Road. 2gether Trust and Healthwatch are also based on site and occupy circa 25% of the building by way of formal tenancies.

Tenure: Leasehold

Annual Costs: £205k

Issues: Low levels of open plan office space restricts flexible use; limited onsite parking.

Nelson House

Situated in Whitecross, Hereford within a short walk from Plough Lane and the city centre. Accommodation for Children and Family services, including some visits from the public although the use of the property is formally for office purposes. A multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is located on-site. From 1 July 2019 provision agreed for the ACE (Adoption Central England) team to use Nelson House as one of their offices.

Tenure: Leasehold

Annual Costs: £155k

Issues: The nature of the work means that employees are in and out of the building with majority of parking at Plough Lane.

13. The following table outlines the use of the buildings in comparison to each other. It shows that the buildings are not fully occupied (average daily use) and the figures when apply the 6:10 ratio:

Building	number of staff assigned to premise	Average daily use	Fire regulation capacity	Number of meetings rooms
Plough*	759	472	570* on first and second floors	17
6:10 ratio	455	283		
Nelson	233	140	190 on first floor	9
6:10 ratio	125	83		
Elgar	224	154	380 on first and second floors	5
6:10 ratio	134	92		

*Fire capacity for Plough Lane is based on the installation of the new fire escape.

The proposals

14. The proposal is to consolidate three key office locations into two based on maximised use of Elgar House (which has a long term lease) and Plough Lane (as a building owned by the council). This means improving the standard of accommodation at Elgar House and creating greater efficient use of space at Plough Lane. This will enable the termination of the tenancy of Nelson House creating a long term saving. To accommodate 233 members of staff from Nelson House (creating at least 140 work stations based on average use) there will need to be a reconfiguration of Plough Lane and Elgar House in tandem with adopting different work practices.
15. The proposed changes are envisaged to create a positive, modern work environment, which can make the difference to people wanting to work for the council and be retained within the organisation. Locating Nelson House based children's services staff in Plough Lane will assist ensuring that the services are positively integrated with the wider service teams in Plough Lane, with the potential for improved joint-working. Recruitment to children's services is an ongoing challenge due principally to the shortage of supply in England of experienced and qualified professionals, who can often choose where to work. Plough Lane is seen considered as better work space than Nelson House, with the prospect that this will enhance the attractiveness of Herefordshire Council to prospective children's services candidates.
16. The existing furniture, in particular the chairs and desks, are a legacy from when the council acquired the Plough Lane building over a decade ago, being included with the building in the transaction. With the advent of increased use of technology and drive towards less printing and paper storage, the size of desks and requirement for storage space can be reduced. Reduced desk size would enable modern space planning to be implemented thereby optimising the number of staff who could work from Plough Lane including collaborative and break out areas. In order to meet the requirement for meeting space the proposed redesign includes more informal meeting facilities such as meeting booths. There are also plans to increase meeting room capacity at other sites in the city and at Elgar House. There is opportunity to reuse furniture in different locations (including Elgar House) where there is less pressure for space which will help to improve the quality of the work environment (which was found to be an issue in the 2019 Staff Opinion Survey).
17. An Insight Report was commissioned to monitor room use which enables us to understand the needs for meeting space at Nelson House – which also included staff consultation. This report provides data on the number of people using a room and the period it was occupied. The findings showed that:
 - Meeting rooms are well used with many being fully booked during the survey period
 - For most meetings the number of people attending each is significantly less than the capacity of the meeting room
 - Overall 20% of workstations remained unused even at team peak times
 - The small enclosed rooms do not allow for workplace flexibility.
18. Children services also has a key need for children's and families operational teams to be able to discuss and relay sensitive information within a confidential environment. Regular use of meeting rooms for statutory meetings and a reception area where families can present themselves.

19. Therefore to accommodate employees relocating from Nelson House the following is required:
- Reconfigure and redesign Plough Lane to create additional capacity and flexibility
 - Procurement of furniture that accommodates flexible working including smaller/straight desks at Plough Lane, lockers, soundproofing, onsite storage, meeting tables, meeting chairs, canteen furniture, acoustic booth / meeting space and standardised task chairs
 - Optimise the use of space at Elgar House and improve the quality of the work environment to support collaborative working
 - All staff to use lap-tops with docking stations at each desk unless there is a need for reasonable adjustment based on disability/health issues (this is part of an existing capital programme and decision)
 - New approaches to meeting and collaborative spaces
 - Create recycling zones as part of reconfigured communal / kitchen areas to deal more effectively with waste material and make better use of space.
20. The above will be supported by existing schemes to enable better ways of working including improvements to the capacity of MAOs; IT hardware / software and laptop safes. Hoople will also be considering its storage requirements for IT linked to the changes.

Principles of Better Ways of Working

21. The principles of better ways of working relate to required behaviours from all staff in ensuring agile and flexible working can be fully utilised, efficiencies realised and reduction in the council's carbon footprint. These principles are based on:
- **6:10 ratio** - for every 10 FTE members of staff 6 desks would be allocated in all locations, and allocated at teams or division level. Fixed desks only allocated on a very specific service requirement or reasonable adjustment
 - **Mobile IT** – each member of staff will be issued with their own lap-top with the withdrawal of all desk tops with the exception of MAOs, which will hold between 1-2 desk tops depending on their size
 - **Clear desk** - For each member of staff to operate a clear desk with no items aside from fixed IT hardware left on the desk at the end of the day or for an extended period (more than 3 hours)
 - **Storage** – storage of personal items within designated lockers with work storage kept to a minimum being considered for disposal and relocated off-site
 - **Become paper-light** – non-print as first option to save cost / carbon footprint on waste and recycling; maximise electronic systems for document management
 - **Reduce travel** – reduce mileage by maximizing MAOs, conference calling, sustainable travel to work methods
 - **Agile working** – use the range of options available for different ways of flexible working at different sites, from home and working hours arrangement in-line with business needs.

Procurement

22. A re-design of the office space at Plough Lane has been undertaken to inform the procurement for the furniture which will be undertaken via the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) framework – Office Furniture (282). Using the framework means that companies have already progressed through an initial procurement process to assess technical and professional ability. There are five companies on the framework that will be

able to bid for the contract to provide the furniture. A soft market test exercise has taken place to explore aspects and consideration of the market along with research visits.

23. Companies will be required to outline the social value that will form part of the submission based on use of local supplier / labour along with environment standards. This will be in-line with the council's [disposal policy](#) and support re-use and recycling of furniture and materials. In addition they will be asked to provide details of what actions they are taking in the manufacturing process to reduce carbon generation and source sustainable materials.
24. As previously mentioned, a key requirement is to reduce the size of desks and this is a common trend in respect of modern office use. There is a limited market for the larger desks therefore the current desks will be recycled in-line with the council's disposal policy including offers to community groups.

Community impact

25. The key impact of the decision is a revenue saving that can in turn have a positive effect in mitigating savings from direct service delivery. In addition there is the increase in morale that can also have a positive impact on service delivery and retention of key staff.
26. Employees at Nelson House directly work with children and families. There will be disruption due to relocation and the need to operate differently, but every consideration will be given to the people supported by children services. This does mean that the different services within the children's and families directorate will be at Plough Lane, and this can provide a sustainable network of management and team support.

Equality duty

27. 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.
28. 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 proposed changes are envisaged to create a positive, modern work environment, which can make the difference to people wanting to work for the council and supports the disability confident scheme. The principles of better ways of working relate to staff behaviours ensuring agile and flexible working, and consideration has been given to the impact on disabled employees through the council's commitment to reasonable adjustment. We believe that it will have a positive impact on our equality duty as it will support the council in advancing equality of opportunity for those employees that share a relevant protected characteristic.

Resource implications

29. There is presently funding approved within the Accommodation Plan to enable the construction of a fire escape at Plough Lane to ensure the building is compliant with fire regulations in order to accommodate the planned compliment of personnel.
30. Funding will be required the redesign of Plough Lane including stock outlined in paragraph 19, works needed on site, IT requirements along with deployment, logistic and delivery costs. Outlined below:

Capital costs	2020/21	2021/22	future years	totals
Redesign costs including purchase of stock	779,000	0	0	779,000
ICT and logistical costs	71,000	0	0	71,000
Works at sites	50,000	0	0	50,000
total	900,000	0	0	900,000

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2020/21	2021/22	future years	totals
Corporate funded borrowing	850,000	0	0	850,000
Revenue budget	50,000	0	0	50,000
total	900,000	0	0	900,000

Revenue budget implications	2020/21	2021/22	future years	totals
Nelson House Revenue saving	-77,500	-155,000	-617,500	-650,000
Remove requirement to replace furniture			-200,000	-200,000
Total	-77,500	-155,000	-617,500	-850,000

31. The capital bid for 'invest to save' was previously submitted as part of the capital funding considerations to realise savings within property services. This is based on the long term saving programme based on total capital cost outlined with a return on investment in year 4 (when taking account replacement of furniture).
32. Some of the cost can be offset by re-use of furniture that would need to be replaced, especially chairs and tables, along with works delayed at Elgar House until the rationalisation of key office sites in Hereford.
33. A baseline will be established for current mileage and print consumption to track reduced trend overtime which will be supported by a number of factors and have a positive effect on reducing the council's carbon footprint.
34. Summary of sustainability impacts:
- Reduce energy consumption by reducing use of 3 buildings to 2, with a reduced carbon footprint and reduced on-going cost
 - Purchase of office furniture offset by re-use and recycle stock, including relocation to sites, services and offered to community organisations

- Tendering suppliers outline their proposals for sustainability as part of the procurement
- Greater flexible working including using MAOs and home working to reduce travel
- Recycle zones created to foster greater consideration of waste and optimise the recycling of material
- Design features to reduce paper consumption and “paper-light” campaign including making the most of technology.

Legal implications

35. Herefordshire Council took an assignment of the lease in respect of Nelson House on the 1 August 2013. The lease had an expiry date of the 31 August 2016 and the council have held over since that date. The council can leave the premises upon service of three months’ notice.
36. There are no other legal implications.

Risk management

37. Based on this recommendations being approved the following risks has been identified.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That cost of building work increased based on estimate.	That building work is optimised and contingency is built into the quote.
That people do not adapt better ways of work.	This will be a work requirement enforced through the management structure.
That reconfigured space does not work for services.	Pre-planning and testing to take place.
Increase in workforce not accommodated within new arrangements.	Promote flexible working and working from different sites.
The high cost of the landlords’ dilapidation claim in respect of the Nelson House building lease termination	Negotiate settlement
Not enough meeting space	Make the most of different spaces in Hereford and the wider county, but also to work differently to not rely on traditional meetings e.g. greater use technology for conference calling (where appropriate) or collaborative working in small groups.

Consultees

38. The follow points have been raised as part of the political group consultation:

- Appreciate the rationale for the change, in terms of making more efficient use of space.
- Regarding the proposed change in culture towards hot-desking - how many of the people involved in planning that have previously worked in such environments? What is the evidence that such an approach improves staff morale? What consultation has been done with staff regarding this proposed significant change in desk culture? What evidence is there in the wider literature regarding whether this is cost-effective in a broader sense? I would be hesitant to make such a major change to working culture without proper staff consultation.

Response: The approach to hot-desking and ratio of 6:10 desk allocation per team is an established approach within the council (20 October 2011 cabinet report, [Locality Asset Review and Accommodation Programme](#)). However, as services have flexed and contracted teams have ended being dispersed within Plough Lane and in some cases the approach has not been consistently applied. The proposals mean that division and teams will be allocated zones to address the problem of different teams working separately. Away from the experience in Herefordshire Council, the board involved in the project consist of members who have worked at Warwickshire County Council, West Mercia and Warwickshire Police, Place Partnership and a newly joined member of the management board has experienced similar changes within Worcestershire Council. Useful research is available from the National Audit Office: [link](#) and staff consultation has taken place on the follow ways:

- As staff representatives consultation has taken places with the unions throughout the last 12 months from concept to design and are supportive thus far of the proposals outlined in this report
 - For the particular proposals a detail study and consultation has taken place with staff from Nelson House who will be most impacted due to relocation to Plough Lane (see previous points)
 - In addition the 2019 staff opinion survey asked staff about their working environment which also gave the option of free text
 - the Chief Executive briefings in January 2020 included a focus on BWOW and the proposals
 - The Leadership group (senior and middle managers) received specific briefing on changes to share with their teams
 - A “delivery group” has been established as part of the project including service representatives.
- Purchase furniture raises two concerns: 1) the cost and 2) the environmental impact on purchase of new desks. Taking the climate crisis seriously means considering the climate and ecological impact of all purchasing decisions giving due consideration to whether such procurement is really necessary, and how this procurement can actively contribute towards our sustainability goals. Can we buy Herefordshire-made desks, made from locally-grown wood? If existing desks are really too large, can we cut them down?

Response: The costs outlined are “up to” amounts and will depend of the procurement. The items including desk, chairs, furniture of meeting spaces to make rooms flexible, lockers, storage, sound proofing boards, kitchen equipment. Some of these items would have needing purchase over the coming years in an adhoc way – the proposals provide a consistent approach. For example 222 chairs have been purchased over the last 2 years from the 3 office sites in Hereford

– which each chair costing £120. The items need to be of a reasonable quality as have high use and longevity. Bespoke desks (including cut down of current desks) have been explored but the costs is prohibitive.

Whilst the change in furniture is necessary to accommodation staff in Plough Lane as part of the procurement the supplier will be required to demonstrate approaches to sustainability. In additional furniture will be recycled and reused (please see resource section for other sustainability points).

- Further thought could be given to linking BWOW more explicitly with efforts to reduce the carbon impact of staff travel.

Response: This has been agreed with promotion and encouragement of MAOs in different locations. The council encourages car sharing, cycling and walking, and has a cycle purchasing scheme available for staff.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

General Scrutiny Committee 29/11/2019 - 2020/21 budget and corporate plan proposals
(Appendix 7) [Appendix 7 - CIB Business Case](#)

Glossary of terms

Term	Abbreviation	Meaning
Better Ways of Working	BWOW	A brand used by the council for a programme of work
ESPO	Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation	A Framework used for contracting
FTE	Full time employee	Person who works 37 hour a week
Multi-agency office	MAO	Office location for staff to use adhoc not a permanent location – based in the market town and Hereford
South West Audit	SWAP	Internal audit of Herefordshire Council
Driving Vehicle Licensing Authority	DVLA	Maintain the registration and licensing of drivers maintaining the registration and licensing of vehicles.

Environment Agency	EA	Public body that is in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom
Hoople		Hoople was established in 2011 as a company and delivers services to the council and other clients.