

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 20 July 2023**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford,
HR4 0LE**

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

For any further information please contact:

Sarah Buffrey, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: (01432) 260176

Email: sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet

Membership

Chairperson Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Graham Biggs
Councillor Harry Bramer
Councillor Barry Durkin
Councillor Carole Gandy
Councillor Ivan Powell
Councillor Philip Price
Councillor Pete Stoddart

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 22 June 2023.</p>	11 - 26
<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 17 July 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. 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>		
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>	
6.	<p>REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES</p> <p>To receive reports from the Council's scrutiny committees on any recommendations to the Cabinet arising from recent scrutiny committee meetings.</p>	
7.	<p>REVIEW OF NEW HEREFORD LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE LOCATION</p> <p>To present the outcome of the Review of Potential Locations (Appendix 2) for the Library and Learning Centre and to recommend a preferred option for consideration by Cabinet.</p>	27 - 74
8.	<p>STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROPOSAL IN THE CENTRAL WARD</p> <p>To agree the principle of Herefordshire Council investing in a project where the council is in partnership with Wye Valley Trust to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital, and to authorise the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth to sign heads of Terms for both parties to agree the</p>	75 - 100

principles and to further explore options around a strategic investment partnership and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in the Autumn of 2023.

9. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROPOSAL ON A SPECIAL PURPOSE SITE IN THE DINEDOR HILL WARD

101 - 106

To agree the principle of Herefordshire Council investing in an initiative where the council is in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (HWGTA) to enable further development of vocational work based skills across the county, and to authorise the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Assets to sign Heads of Terms for both parties to agree the principles and to further explore options around a strategic investment partnership, and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in autumn 2023.

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

Please take time to read the latest guidance on the council website by following the link at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings and support us in promoting a safe environment for everyone. If you have any queries please contact the Governance Support Team on 01432 261699 or at governancesupportteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

You have a right to:

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of Cabinet and of all Committees and Sub-Committees. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Recording of meetings

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

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

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

The council may make a recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such recordings form part of the record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's web-site.

Public transport links

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station.

The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services->

Guide to Cabinet

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

Cllr Jonathan Lester (Leader)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst (Deputy Leader)	Environment
Cllr Ivan Powell	Children and Young People
Cllr Harry Bramer	Community Services and Assets
Cllr Pete Stoddart	Finance and Corporate Services
Cllr Carole Gandy	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Cllr Graham Biggs	Economy and Growth
Cllr Barry Durkin	Roads and Regulatory Services
Cllr Philip Price	Transport and Infrastructure

The Cabinet's roles are:

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

Who attends cabinet meetings?

- 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.
- Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
- Chairpersons 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.

**The Seven Principles of Public Life
(Nolan Principles)**

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Herefordshire Council

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 22 June 2023 at 2.30 pm

Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting:	Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council (Chairperson) Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)
	Councillors Graham Biggs, Harry Bramer, Barry Durkin, Carole Gandy, Ivan Powell, Philip Price and Pete Stoddart
Cabinet Members in remote attendance	None <i>Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.</i>

Cabinet support members in attendance	Councillors Dan Hurcomb
Group leaders / representatives in attendance	Councillors Terry James, Bob Matthews, Ellie Chowns and Liz Harvey
Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance	Councillors Louis Stark, Toni Fagan, Ellie Chowns, Liz Harvey and Pauline Crockett
Officers in attendance:	Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Assurance, Corporate Director - Children & Young People, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment, Director of Governance and Legal Services, Corporate Services and Corporate Director Community Wellbeing

1. LEADERS OPENING REMARKS

This was the first official meeting held since the funeral of Councillor Peter Jinman. The leader of the council noted how well attended the funeral service was and the many tributes that were paid to an accomplished person who dedicated his life to public service. The sympathies of the whole council remain with his family and friends.

--o0o--

The leader of the council opened the meeting with comments on the publication of the report from the Commission convened to consider families' experience of children's services in Herefordshire.

The leader acknowledged the content of the report and promised that the messages in it will not be lost. He thanked the individuals who met with the panel, and also the panel members.

It is a priority of this administration to support and ensure the improvement of services for children and young people and their families in Herefordshire. The report itself poses seven questions for consideration by the council or by the wider safeguarding partnership and it is important to take the time to carefully reflect on these and make meaningful change, without unnecessary delay.

The cabinet member for children and young people will provide an update in due course and the leader and cabinet member are happy to meet with individual families who shared their experiences with the panel if they wish.

--o0o--

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 14)

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

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 15 - 16)

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

7. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The chairperson of the environment and sustainability scrutiny committee presented recommendations on waste and recycling services arising from the committee meeting of 19 January 2023. The committee felt that progress overall was good but identified a number of areas where further improvements could be made. Eight recommendations were put forward for consideration by the Cabinet.

The cabinet member for environment thanked the committee and the related task and finish group which had preceded the committee for their work. She welcomed the emphasis on the circular economy and proper application of the waste hierarchy.

It was unanimously agreed that the recommendations on the Waste and Recycling report for Herefordshire, made by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19th January 2023 be noted, and that an Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the cabinet member for environment within two months.

8. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK

Cabinet members considered a report setting out the feedback received following the first monitoring visit of children's services by Ofsted, conducted during 29th and 30th March 2023.

The cabinet member children and young people introduced the report and highlighted:

- Having been found to be inadequate, children's services at Herefordshire Council will be subject to regular monitoring by the Ofsted inspectorate.
- The focus of this first visit was the 'front door' into the service, including the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and associated teams. During the inspection in the summer of 2022 there were significant concerns about the front door and the multi-agency response to risk. This monitoring visit noted significant improvement in the functioning of the MASH.
- The cabinet member visited MASH earlier this week and spoke with staff and one of the managers. Improvements were noted, including multi-agency strategy meetings being held promptly.

- The feedback on the poor quality of assessments is disappointing but not a surprise at this stage and is the focus of much attention. Inspectors did find examples of improved practice and were complimentary about the quality of case audits and performance information.
- No significant safeguarding concerns were raised by inspectors during their visit.
- Work with the council's improvement partner starts this month, focused on the quality of practice as well as culture and values in the services.
- Inspectors praised the leadership of the service for their determination and commitment to improve, noting that they understand the scale of change and have a realistic self-assessment. Staff spoken to by the inspectors were positive about the changes being implemented and about their involvement in that change process.
- Recruitment remains a challenge and workforce churn is an ongoing issue. The council has some excellent agency and permanent workers and their commitment and passion to keep improving is welcomed.
- The feedback letter for a first visit is not published by Ofsted but is being shared openly at this meeting as part of the open and honest approach adopted by the service leadership.

Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that:

- It is important to recognise the improvements that have been made and to congratulate staff for these;
- There are 32 families currently on the waiting list for targeted support (around 70 children), the maximum wait for targeted support has been 5 weeks as the service has been shorted staffed and the service is working hard to create extra capacity;
- Signs of safety is still available as a tool for staff to use, particularly in child protection work, but the key is to improve the quality of social work practice and to work with the council's safeguarding partners to have relationship based discussions using any of the tools available;
- It is estimated it will take up to three years to make the changes needed, there is an ambitious program and capacity will be stretched at times but there is a whole council approach to supporting improvement and when the service has required additional capacity the request has been responded to positively;
- Improving children's services is the council's number one priority;
- As the improvements needed are wide-ranging and comprehensive not everything can be progressed at the pace desired and activity must be sequenced so that changes in systems and processes allow in term other things to be improved.

The chairperson of the children and young people scrutiny committee confirmed that the improvement plan will be one of the main elements of focus for the committee and that they will be considering the feedback from Ofsted both from this monitoring visit and future visits. It was confirmed that actions related to the MASH have been picked up by the safeguarding partnership and will be reported back to the partnership.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. The improvements noted in the feedback were welcomed but it was recognised that there is still much more to do. In response to queries it was noted that:

- The voice of children and families is important, there are some signs of better practice from those staff who have completed the training that is being rolled out but not all staff have completed this yet;
- Audit activity is showing more evidence of direct work with children and young people but this needs to be continued and embedded in all that the council does;
- Since the visit more management has been introduced some of the practice development resources have been targeted in this area;

- Positive changes to the records system continue, with more quality assurance processes built in;
- The cabinet member is continuing conversations with all safeguarding partners on professional curiosity and related policies;
- Relationship-based practice and restorative approaches are key areas and one of the reasons that the particular improvement partner has been chosen for Herefordshire Council is their skills in that;
- It is important that where possible and safe, children should stay in the family environment and this should be the starting point for working with children and families.

It was unanimously resolved that:

- a) Cabinet receive this report and note the feedback from Ofsted Inspectors.**

9. REVIEW OF NEW HEREFORD LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE LOCATION

Cabinet members considered a report on a proposed review to identify options for the location of the Library and Resource Centre in Hereford. The cabinet member for community services and assets introduced the report and highlighted that the purpose of the proposed pause and review was to find the best possible location for the library.

The cabinet member explained that the library will be displaced as a result of Herefordshire gaining a new and world-class museum. The review will consider if the same ambition can be set for the library and learning resource centre. Demand for retail commercial space at the Maylord Orchards centre remains high and the original plan for a cultural hub in this location is some way off as projects that were due to be clustered with the new library are now locating elsewhere.

The relocation of the library to Friar Street in July 2023 will proceed as planned while the review is undertaken. During this time the opening hours will be similar to those already in place and there will be a redistribution of some services to other parts of the county. The library bus will be updated and renovated and put into use during the time the library is in Friar Street.

Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that points raised during the political group consultation will be taken into account during the review.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. Concerns were expressed about the potential impact of the review particularly in regard to the review coming at a very late stage in the development of the project, the risk to funding from the Stronger Towns Grant and the financial and reputational risks involved. It was queried whether cabinet members had all the information necessary to take the decision to pause and review the project. In response to queries it was noted that:

- The review will not negatively impact the museum project;
- The funding plan can be delivered within the set timescale.

It was unanimously resolved:

- a) To undertake an internal review to be reported to cabinet to identify the options for the location in Hereford for the Library and Resource Centre project. Should the outcome of the review require a change to the capital programme, Full Council approval will be required;**
- b) To delegate to the Corporate Director for Community and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Service and**

Assets authority to identify the guiding principles for the proposed review;

- c) To delegate to the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment the authority to cancel all current contractor and related works where necessary to secure recommendation (a) and minimise cost implications.**

10. QUARTER 4 BUDGET & PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cabinet members considered a report setting out the performance from quarter 4 2022/23 and the provisional outturn for revenue and capital budgets for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The cabinet member finance and corporate services introduced the report and explained that the final year-end position for 2022/23 is an overspend of £5.6m, representing 3.2% of the net budget. The overspend has been funded from the financial resilience reserve and is broadly consistent with the plan presented to council as part of the budget in February 2023. The council's annual accounts have been prepared and published within the statutory deadline.

The cabinet member also highlighted that the council has experienced a number of national pressures during the year, including high inflation and the rising cost of living. Children's services in particular has seen rising demand for placements and transport services and £10.2m of the £11.5m children's improvement plan funding has been spent in 2022/23, with the remaining £1.3m carried forward to continue to support transformation and improvement in 2023/24.

Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that:

- Community wellbeing has delivered an underspend of £1.3m, budgets in this area are difficult to forecast and underspends in a number of services are due to clients sadly passing away;
- In addition to this the community wellbeing directorate has delivered all proposed savings and performed well against measures in the delivery plan with two exceptions, which reflect the increasing needs of people coming out of hospital;
- The proposed new care home in the capital programme has not progressed as no suitable site has been found and, having reflected on the priority needs, a new direction for this project is being explored to provide bed based provision for working age adults with complex needs as these placements are often out of county and high cost;
- One piece of land acquired under a compulsory purchase order on the route of the Southern Link Road has been reacquired by the owner exercising their rights under the CPO, this was completed in quarter 3 of 2022/23 and the receipt placed in the capital receipts reserve;
- The Marches Business Improvement programme has exceeded its targets;
- The capital programme will be reviewed in the coming weeks;
- Performance on environment projects has been good with 21 out of 26 projects on track, the wetland at Luston is now fully commissioned and trading credits and the cabinet member will continue to work to find means to see house building restored to the Lugg catchment;
- 30 businesses have now signed up to the '30 for 2030' low-carbon business programme;
- Delivery of works under the home upgrade grant and green homes grant has been a struggle and the cabinet member will be seeking improved performance in future.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. It was noted that the overspend in fact represents a huge effort from all areas of the council given the pressures in children's

services and high rate of inflation. Members of the previous administration thanked officers for their hard work and commitment to the objectives of the county plan. In response to queries it was noted that:

- Cabinet members and senior officers are aware of the continuing cost pressures and the implications of the increasing aging of the population;
- The council has learned from the issues with leases that prevented debts from being chased and improved its leases and agreements for the future;
- Cycling and walking routes in and around the city and connecting the wider area will be considered over the next few months as part of the local transport plan.

It was unanimously resolved that Cabinet, having reviewed performance and financial outturn for year 2022/23, as set out in the appendices A-F, have not identified any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvements.

The meeting ended at 4.32 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 22 June 2023

Question 1**Ms Reid, Hereford****To: Cabinet Member, children and young people**

Quarter 4 Budget & Performance Report discloses a £9.6 million overspend on the children's directorate blaming: "... increases in unit cost prices, inflation and rising demand for placements [eg fostering] and transport services in 2022/23."

There is a similar paragraph in the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2022-23 (A&G Committee meeting, 23/6/2023). The latest LAIT statistics (31/3/2022) show that the rate of children in care in Herefordshire was about twice that of its Statistical Neighbours' average (number since increased).

Per FOI2022/01890 the average weekly costs for each child (12/1/2023) were:

- Fostering: £315
- Fostering agencies: £890
- Children's homes: £5,066

The net base budget for 2023-24 for Looked-After Children is over £28.7 million (Cabinet meeting, 26/1/23). In what ways (with deadlines/dates) will the number of children in care in Herefordshire be reduced/minimised so that the children's directorate's budget is not overspent in 2023-24?

Response

Work began in the last financial year to begin to reduce the numbers of children in our care; stimulate the local placements market; and to develop our commissioning arrangements. Together this activity is contributing to improved support and outcomes for families, and a reduction on the pressures on the children's services budgets through achieving best value and having a greater range and availability of homes for children who come into our care.

The need for each child to come into our care or to be returned home from having been in our care has to be carefully considered and be in the best interest of the individual child. It would not be appropriate to set specific targets or deadlines to reduce the number of children in our care. The numbers of children in our care are also affected by other external factors such as providing care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children through the national transfer scheme and we are proud of Herefordshire's contribution to this important national work.

There are a number of initiatives already in progress including work to increase capacity to ensure children and families at the "edge of care" are well supported; activity to support children and families for whom a return home from care is safe and appropriate; and to strengthen our permanency planning arrangements which are already starting to have a positive impact.

The children's services improvement plan provides an overview of the considerable efforts being made to improve children's services that I shall not repeat here but I am pleased to report that we continue to reduce pressures on the placements budget (which is the budget at the core of your question) through improved management oversight and systems. We will continue to monitor progress through budget monitoring throughout 2023/24

I can also report that through improving practice and increased management oversight the rate at which children come into our care continues to fall.

Supplementary question

The average weekly costs for each child (12/1/2023) were:

- Fostering: £315
- Fostering agencies: £890
- Children's homes: £5,066

The response does not really address “deadline/dates”. Unaddressed is that the rate of children in care is about twice that of similar areas. The rate and cost (£28.7 million in 2023-24) of Looked-After Children (LAC) in Herefordshire were mentioned in the Children’s Commissioner’s report (1/3/23). Other councils care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The rate of care proceedings was about twice that of Statistical Neighbours.

Ways of reducing LAC include Family Group Conferences (was virtually none in Herefordshire) and reunification of children with their families (was not mentioned in the Improvement Plan).

By when and how will these be expedited?

Research by Coram using a randomised controlled trial found that Family Group Conferences reduce the number the number of children in care and cuts costs (*Community Care*, 13/6/23).

Response

As indicated in my initial response, it would not be appropriate to apply targets or deadlines to a matter that is so personal to individual families, children and their own circumstances. The current rate per 10,000 children in our care is 113. That total figure also now includes almost 40 unaccompanied asylum seeking children, which inflates both the figure and the rate considerably but of course is an important part of our work. The rate at which children now come into our care has been below the statistical neighbour and England averages for the past three months as a result of improved practice and management oversight and so the director and his team are confident of seeing a reduction in the overall numbers in the year ahead.

You correctly repeat the average cost of placement so there is nothing more to add there.

Family group conferencing is a part of the improvement plan. It was added in December following the meeting of the children’s scrutiny committee. Reunification of children with their families where this is safe and appropriate to do so is implicit within the development of the edge of care services, also contained in the improvement plan, and there has been some increase in the capacity of the edge of care service. Progress against the improvement fund is monitored by the improvement board, the children’s scrutiny committee and Ofsted as the inspectorate.

Question 2:

To: Cabinet Member, children and young people

Maggie Steel, Hereford

In the Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback report we read:

“By presenting this feedback letter to cabinet, we are putting the letter into the public domain which we believe to be the right thing to do and consistent with the open and transparent approach adopted by the new service leadership over the past eighteen months.”

Meanwhile, the damning Report of the Commission to Consider Families’ Experience of Children’s Services has not been presented to Cabinet. Further, there has been no contact with affected families since its publication. The families asked on 7 June for an “urgent meeting” with the Leader and Cabinet member but no date has been offered and their cases are still not being reviewed.

The gap between public apologies and the ongoing silencing of families is sickening. When will the new Cabinet meet the affected families?

Response

The agenda for the Cabinet Meeting of 22 June 2023 was set in May 2023, prior to the publication of the Report of the Commission to Consider Families’ Experience of Children’s Services in Herefordshire.

The report was shared with all councillors on the day of publication. The report is a challenging and difficult read and the council is extremely grateful to the families who were able to share their experiences, and to the panel for their professional and sensitive approach in hearing the families and preparing their report.

On the day of publication, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Director of Children’s Services made statements acknowledging the report and thanking the families for sharing their experiences.

The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People will meet with any families who shared their experiences with the Commission who would want to meet with them.

The Commission panel asked the council and the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) to consider seven questions posed by the report authors and this activity is underway. To take time to carefully reflect and make meaningful change is important and the Cabinet Member for children and young people will report back to cabinet in due course.

Supplementary question

It is sad that you are not ready to meet the families as a group. The families are offering you the opportunity to hear the common threads in their stories, past and present. These common threads point to systemic risks, and demonstrate that the culture change demanded by Councillors in April 2021 has not yet materialised.

Culture change could start with treating the families with lived experience as an asset not a threat, and with listening openly to them as a group.

A meeting would also be an opportunity for someone from the Council to respond in person to the families who went to the Commission; apologies written for journalists are upsetting, and in many cases do not even reach the families.

Will the Cabinet Member reconsider the decision not to meet with the families as a group?

Response

The cabinet member noted how traumatic it could be for families to have to retell their story again, having been brave enough to tell that story to the commission, and that he wanted to consider carefully whether meeting the group of families collectively was the right thing to do for all of the families. The cabinet member stated that he had not made a decision not to meet with the group of families and wanted to make an informed decision based on the conversations currently taking place.

Question 3:

To: Cabinet Member, children and young people

Ms. Currie, Hereford

Given the significant implication there was profound abuses of power in the recent findings by the families commission report. What action is going to be offered to the families and children effected by this abuse?

Response

The council is grateful to the families who shared their experiences with the panel and is determined to learn lessons and make the necessary improvements.

Work has begun to consider the seven questions posed by the report authors to the council and the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for children and young people have offered to meet with any of the families who shared their experiences with the panel who wish to meet them.

Wider improvement of children's services is monitored by the Improvement Board and by Ofsted inspectors (through the activity of monitoring visits).

Supplementary question

Alongside the work to try and improve Children's Services what actions are you doing to help the families who have suffered abuses of power highlighted in the recent families commission where decisions based on abuses included life-changing for children, birth parents and birth families irreversible and unjust decisions such as adoption.

Response

The cabinet member noted that as he had not yet met with the families to understand in detail the particular needs of those families it was difficult to give a full response to the question.

Question 4:

Liz Wallace, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

If the review goes ahead and the original site of Maylord Orchards remains as the chosen option, can the Committee confirm that this will proceed?

Response

The review will consider the best possible location for the proposed new library and learning resource centre. Should the cabinet conclude through the review that Maylord Orchard remains the best location, the intention would be for the project to proceed.

Question 5:

Mrs Helen Astley, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

Herefordshire Local Government UNISON are extremely concerned about the impact on museum and library users regarding the decision to review the relocation of the library to Maylord Orchards.

UNISON are very concerned that this is an attempt to return to the conservatives previous plans to outsource museum services and significantly reduce Herefordshire libraries down to the bare minimum.

Could the cabinet member confirm that they are still committed to the cultural services transformation, including the review of community libraries, as agreed by the previous administration and part of the public consultation?

Response

The council continues to be committed to the transformation of cultural services, we will continue to seek views from partners and staff, with both stakeholders will be fully engaged throughout the process.

Question 6:

Gemma Davies, Kings Caple, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

It is my understanding that the contracts not only for the glass ceiling but also the relocation works to Maylord orchards, in preparation for the relocation of the library have been awarded. Please could you confirm all costs already incurred in preparation of the site including surveys, feasibility studies, relocation of previous tenants, communications, planning application costs and other relevant costs; the current and expected costs of delaying any works for this review. This should include any potential retendering of the works.

Please ensure that this are in an accessible format and broken down per cost.

Response

A contractor is currently on site to undertake maintenance to the roof, but these works are required for the existing operation of the building and not specific to the Library and Learning Resource Centre project.

The following provides a further breakdown of the headline costs incurred to date as requested. At this stage it is not anticipated works will need to be re-tendered, subject to the outcome of the review.

Work Element	Costs To Date
Design Works RIBA Stage 2,3,3+ Project Management Architect Structural Engineers Mechanical, Electrical, Plant Consultants Fire Engineer Consultant Principle Designer	£ 396,264.79
Survey Works Asbestos Survey Drainage Survey Revenue Business Case	£ 11,662.50
Planning Application Fee Planning Application Fee(Change of use)	£ 462.00
Design Works RIBA Stage 4 Construction Partner(PC) Principle Designer Project Management Architect Structural Engineers Mechanical, Electrical, Plant Consultants Library Design Specialist	£ 118,740.02
HC Internal Staffing Cost PMO	£ 31,504.52
Total	£ 558,633.83

Supplementary question

I am sorry but you do not appeared to have answered my question. I asked what current and expected costs are of delaying the library works due to this review. During many cabinet meetings, all group leaders stressed the importance of proceeding with building plans on time due to the continued increase in cost of labour and materials.

The breakdown that you have provided shows that £556k approx has been spent to date on the planning, RIBA works, survey works and staffing, all of which are not transferable. What's more, a large proportion of that money has been drawn down from the stronger towns funding already allocated to the site specific project.

From the information that you have provided and the apparent lack of due consideration of the cost of delaying the project, would you agree that this purely political decision puts the budget, timescales and entire Hereford city stronger towns fund at risk and shows contempt and disregard for those who have been part of the process all along, including four members of your

Cabinet, who voted through the decision to go ahead with this project, in this location, in July 2022?’

Response

I do not agree at all with the premise that you propose at the end of the supplementary question. We are purely proposing the review of where the library and learning resource centre may go to find the best place for it under the current conditions.

Question 7:

Peter McKay, Leominster

To: Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure

May I please have an update as to when may expect to see the information regarding anomalies in the path records online, reference replies to my supplementary question of 29 June and question of 29 September 2022 ?

Response

Further to the request for an update in relation to the publication of the anomalies in the path records, the council data was created for internal use, it is a working document. Resource will be required to screen and validate the information and make available for the public. Whilst we recognise the potential benefit to the public, with the current resource available, the team are not able to progress due to other priorities and commitments.

Question 8:

Nina Shields, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

Will the Council lose the grant funding if it pulls out of the Maylords project now?

Response:

At this stage the council is proposing to undertake a review of the best possible location for the library and learning resource centre, including in Maylord Orchard. Once the outcome of the review is known, should the proposed location change, we would need to discuss the continued availability of any grant funding with the Stronger Towns Board and the government.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 22 June 2023**Question 1****Cllr Liz Harvey, Ledbury North****To: cabinet member, Community services and assets**

The decision report states that: “other Town Investment Plan projects that were originally due to be clustered with the library in Maylord Orchards (Rural Media Digital Culture Hub, Powerhouse and Encore) to create a cultural hub are now locating elsewhere” and cites this as grounds for the review.

However, the full Strategic Business Case for the Stronger Towns Library and Learning Resource Centre published on the Council’s website and approved by Cabinet in June 2022 makes it clear that changes in the other stronger towns project plans and in the council’s own plans for Maylords have already been fully taken into account.

Why is the Cabinet Member not recognising these facts, and why are the guiding principles for undertaking the review not being made public at the point the case is being made for the need for the review itself?

Response

The cabinet paper cites this as one of a number of reasons for the review, alongside the continued high demand for retail space in the shopping centre. The draft City Centre Masterplan has also identified a range of needs for strategically significant sites, and there are now other options for redevelopment compared to when the project to relocate the library to Maylord Orchard was first identified. The detailed business case referenced is specific to the Maylord Orchard focussed project rather than considering other options in the city at the time. The strategic intent of the Town Investment Plan approved by government was to create a cultural hub in the city. The review is an opportunity to consider if this can still be achieved.

Should cabinet support the decision to undertake the review, the scope of the review will be finalised as soon as possible and circulated. The council will also seek the views of key partners as part of the review process.



Title of report: Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 20 July 2023

Report by: Cabinet member community services 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.

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 10 (General Exception) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

Central;

Purpose

To present the outcome of the Review of Potential Locations (Appendix 2) for the Library and Learning Centre and to recommend a preferred option for consideration by Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **Cabinet agree that the preferred new location of the Library and Learning Centre is the Shirehall as evidenced in the review of options at appendix 2;**
- b) **The decision to relocate the Library and Learning Centre to the Maylord Orchards site is cancelled, all related contracts and agreements relating to the project be terminated and the capital project is removed from the capital programme;**
- c) **A full business case for the Shirehall development to be progressed (to include the library works and all enabling works) and reported back to Cabinet in October 2023; and**
- d) **Delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets to take all operational decisions (within a to c above) and as is necessary to develop the Full Business Case, and to submit the Project Adjustment Request to the Hereford Towns Board and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), if required.**

Alternative options

1. Cabinet could consider one of the alternative sites, including the existing proposal to relocate the Library and Learning Centre to Maylord Orchards, set out in the appended review document. This is not recommended. Following the review a preferred location, Shirehall is considered to represent a stronger case for investment when considered against the criteria applied to all of the locations considered. The supporting evidence is set out in Appendix 1.
2. Cabinet could decide to not proceed with the project to relocate the city library. This is not recommended as the library relocation is necessary to allow the Hereford Museum & Art Gallery (HMAG) project to proceed. The HMAG project will provide a valuable world class museum to the city of Hereford which will increase the footfall, support economic growth and help increase skills levels within the county. If the library relocation was not to proceed the funding already secured for HMAG would be lost.

Key considerations

3. On 22nd June 2023 cabinet approved an internal strategic review to identify the best options for the location in Hereford for the Library and Learning Centre project ([Decision - Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location - Herefordshire Council](#)). Cabinet agreed that the findings be reported back to in July 2023 and should the outcome of require a change to the capital programme, Full Council approval would be sought. The following decision paper outlines the findings of the review for cabinet consideration.
4. A review of the proposed location was requested to ensure the council delivers a modern high-quality library and new learning centre whilst meeting the vision of the Hereford Town Centre Investment Plan, focussing on the regeneration of the city centre through arts, culture, learning and heritage. The ambition is to create world class facilities with a modern 21st century Library and Learning Resource Centre that matches the ambition of the aligned flagship museum and art gallery project. In the previous decision Cabinet approved that the scope of the review should be agreed by the

Corporate Director of Community and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Community Services and Assets. The approved scope for review is set out in Appendix 1.

5. Following the agreement of the scope, the Strategic review has been carried out by a Project Board comprising lead representatives from the Programme Management Office, Library, Economic Development, Finance, Legal and Property Services chaired by the Director for Strategy and Performance (Senior Responsible Officer for the review).
6. A long list of possible locations was initially identified ensuring that they were within council ownership. A high-level feasibility assessment against suitability, availability and accessibility of the buildings (appendix 1) concluded that a shortlist of two locations provided the best possible site. They are the Shirehall and Maylord Orchards which therefore have been subject of the more detailed review.
7. The review paper then considered each of these preferred sites in more detail against the factors set out in the scope i.e.
 - a. Strategic fit
 - b. Value for money
 - c. Financial Viability (including any aid implications)
 - d. Stronger Town Outcome deliverability
 - e. Statutory Duty compliance
 - f. Deliverability
 - g. Legal constraints
 - h. Equality impact potential
8. As part of the review we have engaged a range of key stakeholders and partners including the Stronger Towns Board, the Cultural Partnership and Joint Action for Herefordshire Libraries to gain their views.
9. The review included the following stages;
 - a. Initial high-level consideration of council owned city centre sites to narrow down to deliverable options
 - b. More detailed consideration of sites with greatest potential
 - c. Engagement with Stronger Towns Board
 - d. Engagement with stakeholders
 - e. Review of financial and legal position
 - f. Formulation of recommendations for decision
10. The review has concluded that the best possible location for the Library and Learning Centre is the Shirehall. Whilst recognising the significant merits of the original proposed location, overall it is considered the Shirehall will deliver greater benefit to the city and county. The use of Shirehall will bring an outstanding heritage asset back into use as a civic building and form a showpiece library and learning centre that creates a space that residents will be rightly proud of and where they feel they belong. It will be a home for creative activity, culture and for community and will emphasise the importance of learning and literacy, including digital literacy, to the county's future success. Utilising an existing and currently redundant council owned civic building will also reduce the revenue operational cost compared to being located in a commercial shopping centre.

11. The outcome will also enable Maylord Orchards to continue to successfully operate commercial and retail units and to create new opportunities at the heart of the city centre. Since the purchase of Maylord Orchards the council has endeavoured to ensure that the centre is run effectively and it is noted that there is a strong interest and demand for the units with the centre becoming a vibrant community centre and a key player in regenerating the city centre. Footfall figures, although not expressly captured at Maylord Orchards, are obtained from BID and indicate that from March-end June we are already seeing a circa 44,000 increase in visits; a 50% rise on the previous period last year. Our appointed agents inform us however, that we are performing very well against the national picture (figures below as at 5/6/23).

Total:	41 units
Vacant	5
In legals	2
Occupied	27
In negotiation	2
Library Project	5

12. There are five units in Maylord Orchards that have been allocated to the library project. If these units were to remain commercially available with the library relocated elsewhere, the council would reduce its cost burden by not having to pay any service charges, utilities or business rates. In addition, the council would expect to receive a rental income in the region of £55k. It should be noted that the market, although positive at Maylord Orchards, is still under significant pressure and rentals are negotiated.
13. The space proposed for the Library and Learning Centre in the Shirehall is the Assembly Hall and Undercroft. This site will combine the opportunity to create a stunning and state of the art library with a modern, accessible learning centre and become a cultural hub in the City Centre.
14. The works that are required to provide a world class library and learning centre into the Shirehall are considered to be less than the works required to redevelop the space of Maylord Orchards units (notwithstanding the significant enabling works required). The intention is to create a flexible space to accommodate multiple functions. The Shirehall is significantly larger and will not only meet the needs of the library but also provide flexible space to be used for wider events and activities such as refreshment facilities, civil ceremonies, weddings, registration of births, poetry readings, exhibitions, TED talks, business breakfasts, film screenings, health and wellbeing clinics etc. (subject to available future funding and any necessary consents).
15. Indicative high level timelines have been produced to ensure that the project can still achieve the commitment to the Stronger Towns grant subject to STB approval, with completion of the project estimated as autumn 2025 (see appendix 2 (8)).
16. The available modern and distinctive space within the Undercroft signals the importance that the council attaches to digital literacy and skills for future work. It has room to provide (for example) a training facilities, creating a physical location where people can gather to co-create, share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network and can further accommodate lifestyle/business advice and a sensory room for disabled children and adults (subject to future funding and any necessary consents).

There are larger rooms within the Shirehall that can provide accommodation for bigger teaching groups if required.

17. By moving the library to the Shirehall it will still achieve the outcomes as set out in the existing Stronger Town Funding Full Business Case (see Appendix 2). Subject to the outcome of the decision the council will continue to work with the Hereford Towns Fund Board and DLUHC to submit a Project Adjustment Form to seek approval for the current grant to be utilised in Shirehall.
18. When the ceiling collapsed in 2020, the HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMC&TS) were left without any facility to operate as the site had to be shut down. Since then, the council has worked with HMC&TS to find a temporary location for a Crown Court pending a decision on the future of the Shirehall as they required a solution to their hearing space requirements with the Shirehall potentially unavailable for a number of years. The Council recently received notification that HMC&TS now wish to terminate their occupation of the Shirehall site. Whereas the HMC&TS accommodation did not utilise the Undercroft nor Assembly Hall, their notification has allowed a fresh rethink of how the council might use the Shirehall building and enhance the civic nature of it.

Community impact

19. The ambition is to create an world class modern 21st century Library and Learning Resource Centre will be of significant benefit to the county, establishing a modern high-quality library and learning facility at the heart of the city centre. Creating new reasons for people to visit, spend time and money in the city centre, responding to the decline of retail as a primary footfall driver, will also help secure the economic viability of Hereford and local jobs.
20. Currently the council has no learning centre of its own and delivery is through community facilities by subcontractors. However, the new facility will allow a move towards either direct delivery or a hybrid model.
21. Whilst all sectors of the local community will benefit from the enhanced facilities and services, the project will specifically benefit local schools and colleges in terms of access to the library for educational purposes. The Learning Centre located in a prominent city centre location will provide the whole community with a wide range of services to support the development of their skills, advice and support in seeking new career or personal development opportunities.
22. As well as supporting the Learning Centre, the facility will provide space for health and wellbeing clinics which provides an opportunity to reach our most vulnerable groups and address health inequalities as well as providing a central location in the City Centre.
23. The proposed project will ensure that our communities have good access to high quality modern services, such as libraries, in good and accessible locations that enable the maximum economic benefit and investment in Hereford City. These are key priorities for the council.
24. Both potential sites would enable the library and learning centre services to be located within the heart of the city ensuring the commitment to provide a library and resource centre which is fully accessible for all the community within the city centre.
25. The Shirehall is a prominent civic building and bringing it back into use as an asset for all the community will generate an increase in footfall, it will help to generate additional

visits, in conjunction with the world class museum project and there will be a corresponding increase in trade and economy.

26. The Shirehall would provide the maximum space, allowing additional areas that could be created (for example) into a sensory room designed for children and adults with disabilities; a maker space with digital technology including 3D printing, music production, digital sewing machines, game design etc.; a consultation room allowing individual booths for one-to-one advice on health, personal money management and business start-ups (subject to future funding availability). There could also be substantial provision for training rooms for the Adult Education Service with larger rooms available outside of the footprint of the library if desired. The community of Hereford would benefit from the extra resources and Shirehall would strengthen the outcomes set out in the original business case to Stronger Towns for increasing skills allowing social mobility.

Environmental impact

27. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
28. The development of this project will seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.
29. The environmental impact of this proposal will be considered through the full business case and will include appropriate requirements to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This can be detailed through the design process.
30. Bringing a currently redundant building back into use to create a valued civic asset for all the community will greatly improve the built environment around the city centre. From a planning perspective no change of use is required. Further permissions will depend on the extent of any changes needed and the impact on the listed building.

Equality duty

31. 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: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

32. The long list of potential locations was assessed on the grounds of public accessibility with any considered to be inaccessible ruled out.
33. As part of the strategic review looking at options for a permanent location for Hereford library, Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the proposed sites at The Shirehall and Maylord Orchards. The Equality Impact Assessments indicate that both sites would be appropriate venues for hosting a new library.

Resource implications

Capital

34. The approved capital programme for 2023/24 includes budget of £3.5m for the Maylord Orchards Redevelopment and Learning Resource Centre project funded by £3.0m of Stronger Towns Grant funding and £0.5m use of the capital receipts reserve.
35. If an alternate location for the project is agreed by Cabinet, the continuation of Stronger Towns Grant funding will be subject to approval by the Stronger Towns Fund Board and, if required, a Project Adjustment Report to be agreed by DLUHC. Subject to this approval, a detailed business case will be prepared for the alternative location and presented to Cabinet at a future date. A decision by full Council will be required if there are any resulting changes to the approved capital programme.

Decapitalisation of costs on cessation of Maylord Orchards project

36. The Maylord Orchards project has incurred costs of £434k up to the end of March 2023; funded by £329k of Stronger Towns Grant and £105k from the capital receipts reserve. A further £250k is estimated to be spent in 2023/24 to give a total project cost of £684k by the end of July 2023.
37. Cessation of the project may incur additional abortive costs which will be a further revenue pressure for the council. The Letter of Intent between the Council and the procured contractor has a cap of £86k in terms of works carried out, however, de-mobilisation costs may also be payable by the council. At the date of this report, the contractor has indicated that it has placed orders in the sum of approximately £608k. Where a claim for de-mobilisation costs is made by the contractor, this will be subject to verification checks by the council to confirm that an obligation exists.
38. If the Stronger Towns Fund Board does not agree to transfer funding to an alternative location, there is a risk that the £329k grant funding awarded to date may be clawed back by the Board. Furthermore, if the grant cannot be used to fund costs incurred in 2023/24, the additional £250k will be an unbudgeted revenue pressure for the council.
39. The repayment of grant funding and any additional cessation costs will require identification of funding from revenue or Directorate Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24.
40. The total project costs of £1,292k, analysed between expenditure incurred to date and estimated future costs are noted in the table below.

	Expenditure to March 2023	Estimated spend to July 2023	Potential Abortive Costs	Total Project Costs to be decapitalised
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital expenditure	434	250	-	684
Potential liability for abortive costs (please refer to paras 37 and 42)	-	-	608	608
Total costs	434	250	608	1,292
Funded by:				
Stronger Towns Grant	329	-	-	329
Capital Receipts Reserve	105	-	-	105
Revenue cost pressure	-	250	608	858
Total	434	250	608	1,292

Resource implications: Revenue

41. A revised business case detailing the revenue implications of relocation of the library service will be prepared pending the decision of Cabinet on the proposed relocation.

Legal implications

42. If the project location were to be changed to the Shirehall, Stronger Towns Funding approvals would be required to enable the funding to be utilised for the alternative location. In addition, abortive costs would be payable pursuant to the termination of existing contracts and agreements relating to Maylord Orchards in accordance with the terms therein although a final figure cannot be ascertained at this stage. The Letter of Intent with the procured contractor has a cap of £86k (the main contract had not yet been entered into), however, the contractor may seek de-mobilisation costs and indicated that it has placed orders totalling £608k. As these costs are not subject to the Letter of Intent the Council would seek to minimise any additional costs.
43. The Shirehall is in the freehold ownership of the Council and the proposed location of the library within Shirehall is not subject to any leasehold interest. No change of use will be required; however, the need for further planning permissions or listed building consent will depend on the extent of any proposed changes.
44. The full business case will detail the costs of installation of the library and all enabling works that will be required to be undertaken.

Risk management

45. These are the key risks and mitigations identified in the Strategic Review are set out below:

Risk / opportunity**Mitigation**

We are confident that the library refurbishment will be delivered within the financial envelope.

A detailed cost report will be identified within the full business case.

Any works to the Shirehall will be subject to listed building consent. It may also be necessary to gain planning permission and building control approvals.

This would be dependent on the future designs and will be assessed in more detail in a full business case.

Any installation of library and learning centre to the Shirehall will be subject to refurbishment and renovation of the wider Shirehall building. Currently the budget of £1.2m for these works is considered insufficient for the level of works required.

If Cabinet decide to proceed with the installation of the library and learning centre to Shirehall, there would be a corresponding reinvigoration of the project to renovate the Shirehall to ensure that the two projects are aligned. The capital programme would need to be adjusted to provide budget for the Shirehall wider works (subject to Full Council).

The installation of the library and learning centre to the Shirehall would be subject to agreement with Stronger Towns Board and a Project Adjustment Report to central Government.

Stronger Towns Board have informally signalled that they would accept the amendment if Cabinet decided to proceed with this location, however, it would be subject to a formal decision by the full board and to agreement by Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The Stronger Town timeframes would still apply to the project.

It is considered that the stronger town grant timeframe can still be achieved with the estimated high-level timescales (see appendix 2)

The Stronger Towns grant was £3m. Of that amount approximately £684k has already been spent on the Maylord Orchards design and fees. The remaining budget may not be transferred to the new location.

STB have indicated that they are broadly positive about a potential move of location if it meets or exceeds the outcomes set out in the original business case. However, this is subject to agreement by DLUHC.

DLUHC could clawback any funding already provided to the council.

If DLUHC clawback, the costs of that already paid and the additional costs would require de-capitalisation. These would need to be funded from the revenue budget or an alternative source of funding identified from Directorate Earmarked Reserves.

Potential abortive costs for Maylord Orchards project are not yet fully ascertained	Verification and checks for all abortive costs claimed will need to be undertaken and any costs payable will be funded from the service revenue budget
The Shirehall is able to provide space for a wider and more diverse learning offer than Maylord Orchards	There is the opportunity to enhance the library service provision, serve a broader range of purposes/stakeholders/residents and provide improved outcomes
There may be reputational damage in amending the project to The Shirehall.	The Shirehall is considered to be a much better location providing greater space for flexible usage and capacity for additional events and resource for the library and learning centre. It will also provide a more revenue efficient location than Maylord Orchards.
The original intention of the project was to provide a cultural and community hub with various organisations co-located.	Due to changes in location for a number of other organisations, the initial vision had altered slightly. Whilst still a good offer at Maylord Orchards, the Shirehall has the ability to provide an enhanced resource utilising the greater space and gravitas of the historic building.

46. The above risks will be managed by a Project Board comprising of senior officers from the Programme Management Office, finance, and communications, legal, the library and adult learning services, commercial services and property services. The Senior Responsible Officer for the Shirehall project will be the Strategic Assets Delivery Director.

Consultees

47. The details of the responses of stakeholders who were engaged as part of the review are set out in Appendix 2. Stakeholders included:
1. Joint Action for Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, representing library users
 2. Herefordshire Cultural Partnership
 3. NMITE
 4. Internal service partners - Adult Education, Public Health and Economic Development teams
 5. Equality Compliance Manager
 6. Ward Member for Central Hereford
 7. Hereford City Council
 8. Hereford BID
 9. Stronger Towns Board
 10. Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

Key stakeholders for the project have been engaged as part of the review. These have included the Stronger Towns Board, Herefordshire Cultural Partnership, internal delivery partners, Hereford Business Improvement District, Hereford City Council and the Joint Action on Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, representing service users. The Maylord Orchards project was at an advanced level of development prior to this strategic review and consultees were therefore familiar with the detail of the project whereas for the Shirehall option the consultees had only high-level information on which to comment.

Given the relocation of other related projects (Encore, Rural Media Company, Powerhouse) away from Maylord Orchards, some respondents felt the original vision to create a clustering or cultural hub could no longer be realised and therefore the location was no longer suitable for a library. Other respondents referred to the potential for loss of momentum and potential delay to delivery of a new library in the city centre if the location is changed and for the costs involved. The JAHL expressed continuing concern about the suitability of Maylord Orchards as a location and stressed a willingness to work closely with the Council on improving the library service county-wide.

Some comments raised the issue of how a library in the Assembly Hall might affect historic use of the hall as a venue for concerts and other performances. Use of the Assembly Hall for a wide range of events is part of the draft vision for the library and continued engagement with stakeholders will be required as the Full Business Case is developed, to ensure that any concerns are addressed as far as possible.

48. This report has consulted colleagues from finance, communications, legal as well as the Cabinet Member, Community Services and Assets. The matters within the report will be presented to a Political Group Consultation meeting and Scrutiny Committee will also have the opportunity to provide comments prior to the Cabinet meeting.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Strategic Review

Appendix 2 - Appendices to the Review

Background papers

None

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

HMAG - Hereford Museum and Art Gallery

STB - Stronger Towns Board

LC - Learning Centre

DLUHC - Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities



Strategic Review of Hereford Library and Learning Centre Location

July 2023

Summary

1. In July 2022 full Council approved the submission of the business case and additional funding into the capital programme for the redevelopment of Maylord Orchards to incorporate the city centre Library and Learning Centre. However, in response to a changing strategic and operational environment and following recent changes in priorities, a strategic review was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 June 2023 to consider the best possible location for the library whilst maximising the use of all council assets.
2. This review has analysed available locations against clear criteria, including their ability to deliver the outcomes of the Stronger Towns Funding/Hereford Town Improvement Plan within prescribed timescales and their alignment to strategic opportunities.
3. A new vision for a Library and Learning Centre has been put forward which sets a high level of ambition (see Appendix 2(1) Draft Vision for the Library and Learning Centre) and is summarised below:

To establish an outstanding and vibrant cultural hub which brings arts, culture, entertainment and education together in a showpiece library and learning centre. It will create a place that the community will be rightly proud of and where they feel they belong. It will be a home for creatives, for culture and for community and will emphasise the importance of learning and literacy to the county's future success.

4. The intention of the original plans for the library to locate in Maylord Orchards was to form part of a cluster of cultural organisations and users in a refurbished city centre location. However partners key to that project have since found alternative sites thus reducing the impact and vision of the proposed cultural hub. At the same time, improvements in the commercial letting potential of the Maylord Orchard have introduced opportunity costs, removing a key driver for that location.
5. The Shirehall, meanwhile, is currently vacant due to the requirement to refurbish and repair. The Shirehall is a prominent city centre location with an opportunity to catalyse wider regeneration and create a new venue which brings a significant heritage site back into use as a civic asset.
6. Other council owned sites have also been considered for their deliverability but have been discounted on the grounds of suitability, availability and accessibility (Appendix 2 (3)).
7. This review concludes that the Shirehall now offers the greatest potential for a truly transformative project - one that can create a destination in the city that offers an outstanding 21st century library within a high quality venue for events and learning facilities that equip

residents for the future and complements the world class museum project.

8. The strategic review therefore recommends the Shirehall as the preferred option for a new library and learning centre in principle. The library and learning centre project would form part of a reinstated the Shirehall refurbishment project, subject to development of a Full Business Case following further work, financial modelling and consultation with stakeholders.

Background, purpose and scope of the strategic review

9. In 2020 government selected Hereford to be one of 101 towns/ cities from across England who were eligible to seek up to £25m of funding to support regeneration and enable economic growth. As required by the funding guidance, a Hereford Stronger Towns Partnership Board was formed including wide ranging representation across the public, private and community sectors. The Board oversaw the development of a Town Investment Plan through extensive local community engagement, inviting people to put forward project proposals for submission to government in the Plan, subsequently securing £22.4m.
10. The Hereford Town Investment Plan recognises the need to re-purpose and regenerate the city centre. As national demand for physical retail space and office space declines, accelerated by the impact of Covid 19, there is a need to consider the future role of town and city centres in generating trade and jobs. In supporting the regeneration of Hereford, the Town Investment Plan has a focus on realising our significant opportunities in art, culture, heritage, tourism and learning.
11. One of the Council-led projects identified in the Town Investment Plan is to relocate the current Hereford Library into the Maylord Orchards shopping centre and create a new Learning Resource Centre. The original purpose of the project was to enable the current Broad Street library space to be better utilised as part of the flagship £18m linked project to create a new Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, and at the same time, create a mixed-use cultural hub within Maylord Orchards. The Town Investment Plan states *'this ecosystem of inter-connected projects stakes out a transformational post-Covid future for our city. It repurposes the Maylord Shopping Centre at the heart of the city as the base for a new Library and Learning Centre, a new Digital Culture Hub, and an enhanced creative and performance space linked to the Powerhouse and Encore initiatives which will attract footfall in its own right'*.
12. However, some of the initial drivers have changed since the original project was identified in 2020. The demand for retail/ commercial space in Maylord Orchards has remained relatively high, and other Town Investment Plan projects that were originally due to be clustered with the library in Maylord Orchards (Rural Media Digital Culture Hub, Powerhouse and Encore) to create a cultural hub are now locating elsewhere. The draft Hereford City Masterplan has identified a wide range of future needs for strategically significant sites across the city centre, and alternative locations have become available for redevelopment.
13. The Cabinet has expressed a need for ambition for the library to match the intention of creating a world class museum; making a compelling library destination that enhances the cultural offer. At its meeting on 22nd June 2023, Herefordshire Council's Cabinet therefore decided to undertake an internal review of the options for the location in Hereford for the Library and Resource Centre project, pausing the current Maylord Orchards Library and Learning Resource

Centre project ([Decision - Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location - Herefordshire Council](#)).

14. The scoping document for the review (see Appendix 2(2) Scope of Review) sets the approach taken, seeking the site with greatest potential for the Library and Learning Centre to deliver the most significant public benefit, while taking account of any related financial, reputational and operational risks.
15. The terms are to consider available publicly owned city centre locations to establish their feasibility and desirability in delivering the greatest impact against the set criteria as alternative sites for the new library and learning centre:
 - Strategic fit – with the Big Economic Plan, Town Investment Plan, City Masterplan, Health and Wellbeing strategy and other key partnership strategies.
 - Value for money – in delivering improved perceptions of Hereford by residents, visitors and businesses, increasing visitors to arts, heritage and cultural events and venues and assisting new learners, as well as the optimum use of council assets.
 - Financial Viability (including any aid implications).
 - Ability to deliver the Stronger Towns Business Case outcomes of
 - ✓ More accessible and improved facilities for skills
 - ✓ Increased skills responding to local need
 - ✓ Upgraded or protected libraries
 - ✓ Delivery of new public spaces
 - ✓ Community non-accredited learning
 - Statutory Duty Compliance
 - Deliverability
 - Legal constraints
 - Equality impact potential

Review Process

16. The review followed the agreed steps:
 - a. Initial high-level consideration of council owned city centre sites to narrow down to deliverable options
 - b. More detailed consideration of sites with greatest potential
 - c. Consultation with Stronger Towns Board
 - d. Consultation with stakeholders
 - e. Review of financial and legal position
 - f. Formulation of recommendations for decision

Initial high-level review of available sites

17. An initial high-level review considered a range of potential assets owned by the Council, to determine their feasibility as possible locations of a library and learning centre. This attached as an Appendix 3.

Analysis of sites identified to progress to evaluation

18. The initial high-level review identified two short listed sites to be brought forward as feasible options for further evaluation. These are the site originally proposed at Maylord Orchards, and the Assembly Hall & Undercroft of the Shirehall. Floor plans showing the areas under consideration are attached in Appendix 2 (4, 5, 6 and 7). The following section evaluates the two sites.

Strategic fit analysis

19. The extent to which the sites can deliver on the ambitions of the Council and its partners:

Draft Hereford City Masterplan	
<p>With an emerging Local Plan, a recently approved Big Economic Plan in development and a new Local Transport Plan, including a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to come, Herefordshire Council will publish in draft for consultation a detailed masterplan for Hereford. This celebrates the city’s character and provides a blueprint for making it an even better place to live, work and visit in the future. The draft masterplan will set out our vision to enhance the character of the city and improve connections to the market towns and villages nearby. The aim is to make Hereford an even better city, a greener, healthier and safer place to live, work, study and visit – and crucially, an easier place to get around. Investing in good comprehensive planning for the city, comprising a strategy and outline plans, will mean we are ready to make compelling bids for capital funding when the opportunities arise.</p>	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
<p>The Masterplan as currently drafted identifies the previously agreed library relocation within Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre as part of the agenda to diversify the city centre and drive footfall. However, it noted the need to strengthen the centre as a whole.</p> <p>The Masterplan further identifies Maylord Orchards as a potential site for NMITE to occupy which would provide the university a home in the heart of the city.</p> <p>However, since the Masterplan was drafted, it has become apparent that there is a greater demand for the units within Maylord Orchards than originally identified requiring a further assessment of the site.</p>	<p>The proposals to locate the library and learning resource centre within the Shirehall are clearly aligned with the draft Hereford City Masterplan “Big Idea 5: A Vibrant Historic Core” pages 140-155. This envisages a dynamic and flexible role for the future of the Shirehall supporting the creation of a multifaceted space that can accommodate a wide range of events and activities for a diverse range of user including both the local community and visitors.</p> <p>The flexible approach to the design of the library space to allow the creation of a performance space within the building could be of considerable benefit to the cultural life of the city and the attractiveness of Hereford as a place to live, visit and study. Together with other heritage buildings within this area, the Shirehall could help redefine the area as a cultural focus for the city.</p> <p>The proposals will also potentially act as a catalyst for other proposals in this area such as the aspirations for the restoration of St Peter’s square, strengthening the walking and cycling connections between St Peter’s Square and Gaol Street and the potential for a more extensive placemaking scheme such as lawns, gardens and tree planting to create an</p>

	alternative tranquil space destination within the city that would also allow the building to function as both an indoor and outdoor space.
Big Economic Plan	
Developed in partnership, the Big Economic Plan sets out a vision for 2050 which sees Herefordshire as a vibrant, healthy, zero carbon and inclusive place to live, work study and visit at all stages of life. The plan aims to grow and distribute wealth across several key areas and has adopted the ‘Six Capitals’ approach: people, community and partnerships, environment and climate change, enterprise, infrastructure and investment. The two potential locations for the Library and Learning Centre align with the outcomes of the Big Economic Plan across a number of these key areas	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
The library and learning centre at Maylord Orchards was predicated on generating a new reason for people to visit, spend time and money in Hereford as retail declines as a primary attractor. A means to regenerate the Maylord Orchards site (a key location in the city centre) the project also includes deliver aesthetic enhancements to Trinity Square and open the Atrium to create a new public space for social engagement/events and improved quality of life. In alignment with the Big Economic Plan, the location of the library at Maylords would create a positive environment for children and young people, residents and visitors. It would enhance the social and cultural offer within the city centre, drive footfall and rejuvenate the retail area. However, recently there has been a high level of interest from prospective tenants which suggests there is potential for alternative uses for this site, which in turn could have the equal benefit of increasing footfall and creating a positive city centre environment for residents and visitors alike.	<p>A key focal point of the Economic Plan is focussed on quality of life offer through place shaping, utilising the county’s heritage, natural environment, and strengths in the arts and creative industries.</p> <p>The proposed redevelopment of the Shirehall will bring a redundant Grade 2 listed building back into economic use, creating a focal point to for the regeneration of the northern part of the city centre adding value to the proposed Hereford Museum and Art Gallery to the south.</p> <p>The project would generate new reasons to visit the city centre driving footfall and trade between these two historic flagship buildings in supporting the regeneration, opposed to leaving the current the Shirehall building boarded up and a blight to the centre of the city.</p> <p>The scale of the Shirehall building also offers future opportunities for creative industries and possibly business space. It also ensures Maylord Orchards can continue to offer commercial opportunities at the heart of the city centre.</p>
Town Investment Plan	
The Town Investment Plan sets out a “cultural assets” package which seeks to develop (amongst other cultural, sporting and community facilities) new, upgraded or protected libraries, prominent landmarks or historical buildings.	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
Maylord Orchards can deliver an upgraded library and learning centre. However, with the movement of the original partners (Rural Media Company, Powerhouse, Encore) away from the site, the original ambition to cluster assets and create a “hub” can no longer be delivered.	The Shirehall has the potential to deliver the original vision for the Library and Learning Centre, being part of a wider cultural hub, but also bringing a Grade 2 listed building back into use.

	<p>Utilising the Shirehall building will create two complementary significant heritage focussed attractions at the north and south of the city centre (complementing the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery project), enhancing the visitor and cultural offer of the city.</p> <p>The Town Investment Plan recognises that the city currently underperforms in tourism due to the lack of key attractors.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing strategy</p>	
<p>The Health & Wellbeing Strategy seeks to ensure residents are resilient; lead fulfilling lives; are emotionally and physically healthy and feel safe and secure. It targets health and wellbeing inequalities and makes a clear link between health and employment. Health and Wellbeing work is one of the national Universal Library Offers and working with this sector to deliver information, advice, guidance and signposting will be part of the future library offer.</p>	
<p>Maylord Orchards</p>	<p>The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft</p>
<p>The priorities of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy will be supported by providing library services which address mental health & wellbeing, early literacy, addressing social isolation and providing advice and resources for health lifestyles. The library and learning centre will also provide safe and neutral space for work with partners to support people with additional needs identified as priorities within the strategy. The provision of one-to-one consultation space, space for exhibition of materials and events in conjunction with public health partners has been included in the specification for the Maylord Orchards site (although space is limited for this purpose).</p>	<p>At the Shirehall in the Undercroft there is space to create additional confidential consultation provision, and for exhibitions on a wide range of topics of interest to residents. There is also space to consider a sensory room for people with disabilities to be created. The offer is therefore expected to be similar in nature, but the space offers greater potential for delivery of a wider range of activities.</p>

<p>Stronger Towns Fund Outcomes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving perceptions of Hereford by residents, visitors and businesses • Increasing visitors to arts, heritage and cultural events and venues • Assisting new learners <p>Both sites are geographically central and can contribute to the Outcomes of the Stronger Towns funding. Maylord Orchards was conceived with a separate learning resource centre on the first floor opposite the library and is fully accessible. The Shirehall Undercroft is accessible and would be the location for the digital literacy/makerspace. The Assembly Hall is accessible, but a platform lift is needed to enable full access to the stage. Both potential locations offer a range of ways to support both formal and informal learning through use of newly equipped and digitally enabled rooms, reliable and fast Wi-Fi connectivity, provision of both Council owned fixed pcs and tablet technology and space to Bring your Own Device. Both sites have capacity to accommodate the needs of the Adult Education Service and to support a wide range of community learning activities. As detailed design work is not yet undertaken for either site, further consultation with partners will be undertaken to inform this and will include, for example, consideration of the needs of different learners across all backgrounds.</p>

Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
Maylord Orchards as a location for the library and learning centre has potential to provide an accessible, city centre facility operating as a modern library building primarily to serve residents and businesses. The site is within the main retail quarter which creates strong reason to visit and the increased footfall to the precinct could have knock-on benefits to other businesses located there. The space in the Adult Learning Centre in the old Food Hall unit would offer high quality training space with good connectivity and would be a home for the Adult Education service as well as a potential space for business support activities.	The Shirehall as a location would have greater public impact as it is more visible and the building itself has heritage value and is visually impressive. The Assembly Hall, in particular, has significant potential as a venue to build a statement library that would be a talking point for residents and visitors, as well as a great place for service users on a day-to-day basis. The hall could also be used for a wider range of public events, drawing in visitors, who might also be interested in the history of the building. The Undercroft will offer a quality space to hire for training and for business support consultations.
Maylord Orchards lends itself more to a local focus and while it may play some part in attracting visitors into the retail area, and could certainly host cultural activities and audiences, the principal increase would be in footfall to the library service and adult education	The Shirehall has potential to become a highly visible “statement” cultural facility in a listed building and both the vision for a high-quality cultural offer in the Assembly Hall and the seating capacity offer greater potential to increase visitors and to collaborate with partners in the cultural sector to develop and deepen visitors’ experience of the city’s cultural life.
Stronger Towns Fund Outputs	
More accessible and improved facilities for skills – target 1 new facility	
Achieves target	Achieves target
Increased skills responding to local need – target 584 participations, 74 accredited learners	
Detail of delivery still in design to achieve target	Service not yet designed but greater space provides opportunity to exceed target
Upgraded or protected libraries – target 674.3 square metres	
Achieves target	Exceeds target (861.98 square metres)
Community non-accredited learning – target 400 learners	
Detail of delivery still in design to achieve target	Service not yet designed but greater space provides opportunity to exceed target

Deliverability assessment

20. The factors affecting deliverability of each site:

Projected timescales	
Work on the project at either site can start following the Cabinet’s decision and both locations remain achievable within the Stronger Towns timeframes (See pages 16-17 in appendix).	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
Maylord Orchards completion would be September 2024, reflecting the more advanced stage of development at the point of undertaking the review.	Shirehall completion would be currently estimated July 2025 (subject to a formal project plan being put in place and approvals)

Planning Considerations	
Planning permissions are dependent on design which will be realised at a later date.	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
Maylord Orchards has already successfully achieved planning permission as it is a fully developed construction project.	The Shirehall may require Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent subject to the extent of the proposed works. The Shirehall is unlikely to require change of use consent given current status. This would be considered through the development of the design process and the full business case.

Scope of Works	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
Maylord Orchards is at RIBA 3+ with a Design and Build contractor procured. Further detailed design works are required for this site, including the design of the library interior fixtures, fittings and equipment. Demolition and renovation works could then start. The proposed scheme will require works to the public areas which have potential to disrupt customers and may also impact businesses in the vicinity.	<p>Shirehall works to install the library and learning centre may be less onerous in comparison as the Undercroft has relatively recently been refurbished. However, technical surveys would be required to further assess the structural integrity, and load-bearing capacity, of the Assembly Hall and the supporting walls within the Undercroft. Acoustic surveys would also need to be revisited to ensure any work required to achieve the revised purpose set out in the library vision, is identified.</p> <p>Wider works would be required to the Shirehall before the library could be installed, to address the structural defects within the building. Work carried out in preparation of this review demonstrates that these wider works would not be a barrier to the installation of the library, and that the outline timeframes are compatible with the Stronger Town grant requirements. However, it should be noted that the identified works to the Shirehall will be required in advance of the library fit out and will require further capital funding to be approved.</p>

Availability of Asset	
Both Maylord Orchards Units and the Shirehall Undercroft & Assembly Hall are fully owned by the council and are currently vacant.	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft

Maylord Orchards units identified for the Library and Learning Centre are available for immediate use.

However, the Council has worked hard to understand the centre since its purchase in 2020 and how to run it effectively. This is currently bearing fruit and there is a strong interest and demand for the units with the centre becoming a vibrant community centre and a key player in regenerating the city centre. Footfall figures, although not expressly captured at Maylord Orchards, are obtained from BID and indicate that from March-end June we are already seeing a circa 44,000 increase in visits; a 50% rise on the previous period last year. Works are progressing to expand a community, health and wellbeing offer to help bring footfall for retail clients but this is in the context of a national retail picture that will remain hard for the foreseeable future; therefore we expect to see some churn across the centre for a while. Our appointed agents inform us however, that we are performing very well against the national picture (figures below as at 5/6/23).

Total:	41 units
Vacant	5
In legals	2
Occupied	27
In negotiation	2
Library Project	5

By continuing to offer the identified library and learning resource units for use by commercial tenants, the Council would not only cover the service charge costs (costs of running the centre), have an external party cover non-domestic rates liability charges and expect to see a rental income in the region of £55k pa. It should be noted that the market, although positive at Maylord Orchards, is still under significant pressure and rentals are negotiated

Despite the availability of the Shirehall, heating replacement, wiring, damp ingress and structural elements all need to be undertaken across the site. The programme will mean that the whole site will be a phased construction site and therefore it will not be possible to bring one part into commission before the rest. The wider works required to the Shirehall to rectify building defects will need to be undertaken before works to the library space can be undertaken as these are either whole site or limiting works. The Shirehall project will include the library element and will need to be run as one project, although it may be possible ultimately to realise the new library and learning centre in advance of the rest of the site.

When the ceiling collapsed in 2020, the HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMC&TS) were left without any facility to operate as the site had to be shut down. Since then, the council has worked with HMC&TS to find a temporary location for a Crown Court pending a decision on the future of the Shirehall. The Council recently received notification that HMC&TS now wish to terminate their occupation of the Shirehall site. Whereas the HMC&TS accommodation did not utilise the Undercroft nor Assembly Hall, their notification has allowed a fresh rethink of how the council might use the Shirehall building and enhance the civic nature of it.

21. High level risks / opportunities for Maylord Orchards:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<p>The Maylord Orchards project is fully developed and ready to proceed. Programmed to be completed by summer 2024, it is estimated that it could still be accomplished by September 2024.</p>	<p>Should the existing construction partner remain engaged, the construction could commence approximately 2 months after the Cabinet decision, if required due to contractor remobilisation.</p>
<p>The delay to allow for the review of the Library and Learning Resource centre location may increase costs for the Maylord Orchards construction owing to extension of programme and the possible impact of inflation and appears likely to exceed the currently allocated budget.</p>	<p>If a decision to proceed with the project at Maylord Orchards location, the construction contract is ready, subject to a) construction partner remaining committed b) any cost revisions within the scope of currently allocated budget or ability to value engineer the scope back into available budget.</p>
<p>There may be reputational damage associated with proceeding with the project at Maylord Orchards, following the pause for review.</p>	<p>The review is necessary given the change in circumstances set out in the report to Cabinet at the June meeting to enable the best possible location for the library and resource centre.</p>
<p>The viability of creating the community and cultural hub as initially intended within the project full business case for Maylord Orchards may be affected by the changing circumstances set out in the report to Cabinet (i.e. relocation of other partners).</p>	<p>This was considered as part of the original decision to proceed with Maylord Orchards. Commercial interest has continued in the Maylord Orchards units, and at the same time further opportunities have been identified through the process of developing the Masterplan.</p>
<p>There is an opportunity cost to the Council if the library and learning centre is provided in Maylord Orchards from loss of potential rental income from tenanted space.</p>	<p>Maylord Orchards has received a greater level of enquiry from potential tenants than anticipated. In order to secure optimum use of existing assets, the commercial use of the site should be fully optimised.</p>
<p>The delay caused by the review, or a decision to locate the Library and Learning Resource Centre project elsewhere may impact the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery project.</p>	<p>The HMAG project will not be impacted by the review or a potential change of location. The library is moving into a temporary location within the Friars Street Resource Centre to ensure that HMAG is successful.</p>

Potential abortive costs for Maylord Orchards project are not yet fully ascertained

Verification and checks for all abortive costs claimed would be required to be undertaken and a revenue budget identified.

22. High level risks / opportunities for Shirehall:

Risk / opportunity

The costs for the installation of the library and learning centre into Shirehall (together with all enabling and wider works) are to be identified within a FBC

Mitigation

The professional partners for the project are also cognisant of the Shirehall building and have provided high-level cost estimates for the library and learning centre. However, this is dependent on a series of intrusive surveys which will be required e.g., structural loading and acoustic surveys which would then inform costs to be provided in a full business.

Any works to Shirehall will be subject to listed building consent. It may also be necessary to gain planning permission and building control approvals.

This would be dependent on the future designs and will be assessed in more detail in a full business case.

Any installation of library and learning centre to Shirehall will be subject to refurbishment and renovation of the wider Shirehall building. Currently the remaining budget of £1.2m for these works is not sufficient for the level of works required.

If Cabinet decide to proceed with the installation of the library and learning centre to Shirehall, there would be a reinvigoration of the project to renovate the Shirehall to ensure that the two projects are aligned. The capital programme would need to be adjusted to provide budget for the Shirehall wider works (subject to Full Council approval).

The transfer of grant funding to an alternative location would be subject to agreement by the Stronger Towns Board and a Project Adjustment Report to central Government.

An application to the Stronger Towns Board will be made and a further Project Adjustment Report prepared however confirmation of transfer will be subject to a formal decision by the full board and the agreement of DHLUC.

The Stronger Town timeframes would still apply to the project.

It is considered that the Stronger Town grant timeframe would be achievable as the library and learning centre project could be completed by July 2025

<p>The Stronger Town grant was £3m. Of that amount approximately £684k has already been spent on the Maylord Orchard design and fees. The remaining budget may not be transferred to the new location.</p>	<p>Discussions with the Stronger Towns Board will take place as noted above. If the transfer is not agreed, alternative funding must be identified from revenue or Directorate Earmarked Reserves.</p>
<p>DHLUC could clawback any funding already provided to the council.</p>	<p>If DHLUC clawback, the costs already paid, and the additional costs would require de-capitalisation. Funding for these costs would need to be identified from Directorate Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24.</p>
<p>Potential abortive costs for Maylord Orchards project are not yet fully ascertained</p>	<p>Verification and checks for all abortive costs claimed would be required to be undertaken and a revenue budget identified.</p>
<p>Shirehall is able to provide space for a wider and more diverse learning offer than Maylord Orchards</p>	<p>There is the opportunity to enhance the library service provision, serve a broader range of purposes/stakeholders/residents and provide improved outcomes</p>
<p>There may be reputational damage in amending the project to Shire Hall.</p>	<p>The Shirehall is considered to be a much better location providing greater space for flexible usage and capacity for additional events and resource for the library and learning centre. It will also provide a more revenue efficient location than Maylord Orchards.</p>
<p>The original intention of the project was to provide a cultural and community hub with various organisations co-located.</p>	<p>Due to changes in location for a number of other organisations, the initial vision had altered slightly. Whilst still a good offer at Maylord Orchards, the Shirehall has the ability to provide an enhanced resource utilising the greater space and gravitas of the historic building.</p>

Statutory service requirements - the Library Duty

23. Herefordshire Council is a Library Authority with statutory responsibility to deliver library services which are comprehensive and efficient, available to all persons desiring to make use thereof, and to employ such officers, provide and maintain such buildings and equipment, and such books and other materials, and to do such other things, as are required for that purpose. The city library and learning centre is part of the wider county service and the site chosen will need to ensure that the wider service needs (for example, for storage and staffing) are considered. The city library is relocating to facilitate redevelopment of the museum and art gallery. Provision of library services in the city centre will continue at Friars Street MRLC while the project to develop a permanent, high-quality library is delivered. Sites and services proposed have been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Council's obligations as a

statutory library authority and the public and stakeholders will continue to be consulted as plans develop.

Delivery of the Universal Library Offers (ULO)

24. The Universal Library Offers developed by Libraries Connected and national library partners including Arts Council England and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity. Herefordshire Libraries have been working with partners and colleagues in recent months to develop a wider service offer that could be delivered from a new Hereford library and rolled out to cover the service across the county. They include culture, health & wellbeing, business & economy, digital literacy and the Children's promise. Each of the proposed sites evaluated have opportunities to deliver the ULOs with a different mix of activities, sector partners and potential audiences for participation to be developed in consultation with stakeholders and reflected in the detailed design.

Culture – including reading for pleasure, cultural events and activities

There would be access to reading materials for all ages and backgrounds, including accessible formats. Activities and events for all ages could range from rhyme times for under 5s through to book groups, talks and other events. The library could be a meeting place for clubs and societies and with opportunities for developing craft and makerspaces.

Health and wellbeing – supporting people to lead healthy lives

The library provides a safe, warm, neutral and free to access space to connect with others or spend some quiet time. It would be a source of health information with professionals from health and wellbeing partners running activities and advice sessions covering areas such as the cost of living, healthy eating and how to stay active. It would be a place where people can learn about Hereford and Herefordshire, local and family history and connect with their locality

Economy – Support for business, skills and employment

The library could be a venue to work with partners to deliver Small & Medium-sized Business (SME) clinics and business advice, to host business networking and special events and to provide access to resources to support businesses. There could be informal progression and learning activities as well as more structured adult education classes. The Adult Education service is a key partner in delivery, resident in the new library and providing outputs associated with the Stronger Towns Fund grant and its needs can be accommodated at both sites.

Digital Literacy – Free access to the internet and help to develop skills and confidence

The library would provide free access to the public network as well as providing fast Wi-Fi. There would be the opportunity to provide informal support to help people get online and to access council services as well as more formal training opportunities for people to develop their digital skills.

Children's Promise - every child and young person in libraries is inspired to read for pleasure, has access to a diverse range of materials, can engage in a variety of digital activities and can take part in activities that improve their well-being.

Engagement with stakeholders

25. Key stakeholders for the project have been engaged as part of the review. These have included the Stronger Towns Board, Herefordshire Cultural Partnership, internal delivery partners, Hereford Business Improvement District, Hereford City Council and the Joint Action on Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, representing service users. The Maylord Orchards project was at an advanced level of development prior to this strategic review and consultees were therefore familiar with the detail of the project whereas for the Shirehall option the consultees had only high-level information on which to comment.
26. Given the relocation of other related projects (Encore, Rural Media Company, Powerhouse) away from Maylord Orchards, some respondents felt the original vision to create a clustering or cultural hub could no longer be realised and therefore the location was no longer suitable for a library. Other respondents referred to the potential for loss of momentum and potential delay to delivery of a new library in the city centre if the location is changed and for the costs involved. The JAHL expressed continuing concern about the suitability of Maylord Orchards as a location and stressed a willingness to work closely with the Council on improving the library service county-wide.
27. Some comments raised the issue of how a library in the Assembly Hall might affect historic use of the hall as a venue for concerts and other performances. Use of the Assembly Hall for a wide range of events is part of the draft vision for the library and continued engagement with stakeholders will be required as the Full Business Case is developed, to ensure that any concerns are addressed as far as possible.

Finances

Capital

28. The approved capital programme for 2023/24 includes budget of £3.5m for the Maylord Orchard Redevelopment and Learning Resource Centre project funded by £3.0m of Stronger Towns Grant funding and £0.5m use of the capital receipts reserve.
29. If an alternate location for the project is agreed by Cabinet, the continuation of Stronger Towns Grant funding will be subject to approval by the Stronger Towns Fund Board and, if required, a Project Adjustment Report to be agreed by DLUHC. Subject to this approval, a detailed business case will be prepared for the alternative location and presented to Cabinet at a future date. A decision by full Council will be required if there are any resulting changes to the approved capital programme.
30. The Maylord Orchards project has incurred costs of £434k up to the end of March 2023; funded by £329k of Stronger Towns Grant and £105k from the capital receipts reserve. A further £250k is estimated to be spent in 2023/24 to give a total project cost of £684k by the end of July 2023.

31. Cessation of the project may incur additional abortive costs which will be a further revenue pressure for the council. Costs pursuant to the Letter of Intent have a cap of £86k, however, de-mobilisation costs, referenced in the Letter of Intent between the council and contractor, may be payable by the council. At the date of this review, the procured contractor has indicated that it has placed orders to a value of £608k. Where a claim for de-mobilisation costs is made by the contractor, this will be subject to verification checks by the council to confirm that an obligation exists.
32. If the Stronger Towns Fund Board do not agree to transfer funding to an alternative location, there is a risk that the £329k grant funding awarded to date may be clawed back by the Board. Furthermore, if the grant cannot be used to fund costs incurred in 2023/24, the additional £250k will be an unbudgeted revenue pressure for the council.
33. The repayment of grant funding and any additional cessation costs will require identification of funding from revenue or Directorate Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24.
34. The total project costs of £1,292k, analysed between expenditure incurred to date and estimated future costs are noted in the table below.

	Expenditure to March 2023	Estimated spend to July 2023	Potential Abortive Costs	Total Project Costs to be decapitalised
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital expenditure	434	250		684
Potential liability for abortive costs (refer to paras 31 and 36)	-	-	608	608
Total costs	434	250	608	1,292
Funded by:				
Stronger Towns Grant	329	-	-	329
Capital Receipts Reserve	105	-	-	105
Revenue cost pressure	-	250	608	858
Total	434	250	608	1,292

Revenue

35. A revised business case detailing the revenue implications of relocation of the library service will be prepared pending the decision of Cabinet of the proposed relocation

Legal implications

36. Consideration of the Stronger Towns Funding and existing contracts has been undertaken. If the project location were to be changed to the Shirehall, Stronger Towns Funding approvals would be required to enable the funding to be utilised for the alternative location. In addition, abortive costs would be payable pursuant to the termination of existing contracts and agreements relating to Maylord Orchards in accordance with the terms therein although a final figure cannot be ascertained at this stage. The Letter of Intent with the procured contractor has a cap of £86,000 (the main contract had not yet been entered into), however, the contractor

may seek de-mobilisation costs and indicated that it has placed orders totalling £608,000. As these costs are not subject to the Letter of Intent the Council would seek to minimise any additional costs.

37. The Shirehall is in the freehold ownership of the Council and the proposed location of the library within the Shirehall is not subject to any leasehold interest. Change of use is unlikely to be required for use of the Shirehall as a library; however, further permissions will depend on the extent of proposed changes and the impact on the listed building.

Equalities

38. As part of the strategic review looking at options for a permanent location for Hereford library, Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the proposed sites at Sthe hirehall and Maylord Orchards. The Equality Impact Assessments indicate that both sites would be appropriate venues for hosting a new library. Consideration needs to be given to the issue of people with disabilities or those with prams or pushchairs accessing the main entrance of the Shirehall building as part of the wider redevelopment of the site, however level access is available to the Undercroft area of the Shirehall from where there is lift access to all areas of the building in which the library service would be housed. Public transport links to both sites are an improvement on the library's current permanent location in Broad Street. The walk from the train station to both sites is of identical distance and shorter than the walk to the current permanent location and there is plentiful pay and display parking available near both proposed sites with a number of spaces available for blue badge holders.

Conclusions and Recommendations

39. The strategic review has been completed against the criteria approved by the Cabinet Member for Community and Assets and by the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing. The review was undertaken with engagement from a number of stakeholders and consultees to provide initial feedback into the location options. In addition, the initial high-level costings for the Shirehall have been provided based on assumptions and ahead of full completion of surveys.
40. The review highlights that the decision for the library to be relocated into Maylord Orchards was underpinned by the opportunity to create a cultural cluster. However, as described some of the initial drivers have changed since the original project was identified. The demand for space in Maylord Orchards has remained relatively high from other potential tenants, and other Town Investment Plan projects that were originally due to be clustered with the library in Maylord Orchards (Rural Media Digital Culture Hub, Powerhouse and Encore) to create a cultural hub are now locating elsewhere. There is now a greater likelihood for the Council to achieve an income from letting the units identified in Maylord Orchards for the library project.
41. The draft Hereford City Masterplan has identified a wide range of future needs for strategically significant sites across the city centre, and alternative locations have become available for redevelopment.
42. The review has identified that the revenue costs for the service would reduce by relocating the library to the Shirehall. The Stronger Towns Board have provided initial feedback on the relocation and the review has identified that the funding timetables for the Stronger Towns can

be met.

43. Although Maylord Orchards provides an opportunity for a city centre location on the high street, the relocation and redevelopment of the Shirehall provides greater public value by repurposing an important civic building to create a new, innovative and creative library within a cultural hub that complements the vision for the world class museum on Broad Street. Basing the Library and Learning Centre in the Shirehall would create to significant new attractions based in key heritage buildings to the north and south of the city centre.
44. Overall, the review recognises that these are significant merits to both locations. Both have significant strategic fit, both would deliver a new modern library service and learning centre at the heart of the city, and achieve the Town Investment Plan outputs and outcomes. However on balance, the Shirehall brings a currently redundant historic building back into use, the scale of the building offers opportunities to provide a wider cultural hub, whilst also offering operational revenue savings. Utilising the Shirehall also then frees up the intended Library and Learning Centre space for commercial activity creating more jobs and investment in the city centre.
45. Therefore, it is recommended that the preferred new location of the Library and Learning Centre is the Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft (as evidenced in the above strategic review) and that the project to relocate the Library and Learning Centre to the Maylord Orchards site is cancelled, all related contracts and agreements relating to the project terminated, and the capital project is removed from the capital programme.
46. A full business case should be progressed (to include the library works and all enabling works) and reported back to Cabinet in October 2023 with any associated changes to the capital programme being submitted to full Council for agreement.
47. The full business case would support a case to the Hereford Stronger Towns Fund Board and Department of Levelling Up and Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to redirect the current grant terms and conditions to the Shirehall location.

Appendices

- 1 - Draft Vision for Library & Learning Centre
- 2 - Scope of Review of Potential Alternative Sites for Location of Hereford Library
- 3 - High Level Review of Alternative Sites
- 4 - Map showing location of alternative sites
- 5 - Floor plans the Shirehall
- 6 –Ground Floor Plan Maylord Orchards
- 7 – First Floor Plan Maylords Orchards

Appendix

Appendices:

1-Draft Vision for Library & Learning Centre.....	2
2-Scope of Review of Potential Alternative Sites for Location of Hereford Library.....	5
3-High Level Review of Alternative Sites.....	11
4-Map showing location of alternative sites.....	12
5-Floor plans for the Shirehall.....	13
6-Ground Floor Plan for Maylord Orchards.....	14
7-First Floor Plan Maylords Orchards.....	15
8- Shirehall High Level Feasibility.....	16
9-Maylord Programme.....	17
10- Cabinet Decision 22 nd of June 2023.....	18

1. Vision for a Library and Learning Centre to Create a Vibrant Cultural Hub in the Heart of the City

To establish an outstanding and vibrant cultural hub which brings arts, culture, entertainment and education together in a showpiece library and learning centre. It will create a place that the community will be rightly proud of and where they feel they belong. It will be a home for creatives, for culture and for community and will emphasise the importance of learning and literacy to the county’s future success.

Aims

- To provide access to information, resources, and services that promote personal growth, cultural enrichment and lifelong learning for all members of the community.
- To act as a counterpart to the transformational vision for a world class museum in the city centre
- To provide a multi-functional infrastructure that promotes skills, learning, enriching activities and education
- To create an opportunity to build sustainable partnerships across sectors and facilitate health and wellbeing initiatives
- To create a thriving and connected cultural hub open to collaboration and innovation.

Meeting the Vision

Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall & Undercroft
The Maylord Orchards site offers a location in the city centre which can be repurposed to deliver a modern library service, providing lending and reference of written resources, as required by statute. As part of a broader approach to cluster cultural delivery within the complex, the library would relocate to Maylord Orchards and a new Learning Resource Centre would be created to support delivery of formal and informal education.	The Shirehall is a distinctly impressive iconic building, situated in the heart of the city centre, which has been identified as a potential site for a new state of the art library and learning centre. As part of the Town Centre investment plan and delivery of a world class museum at Broad Street, the current library would relocate to the Shirehall. Along with the nearby cathedral, this clustering of Herefords cultural

Maylord Orchards site has the potential to create a new reason to visit the precinct and can be designed with as much flexibility as possible to enable delivery of the universal library offer, including high speed and reliable fast Wi-Fi, alongside a children's library and moveable shelving that allows for the library to have a fresh look and configuration depending on how it is proposed to be used.

Since 2017 the national Universal Library Offers have significantly broadened the definition of a library service. These include support for Digital Literacy and for Health & Wellbeing, delivery of Cultural and Creative activities, supporting Skills & Employment and a Children's Promise to provide reading for pleasure, creative and digital opportunities to support learning and wellbeing. The potential to deliver enhanced services to support health and wellbeing, skills and business, digital literacy and education is clear but there are some compromises required by the site. The available floor space within Maylord Orchards will not accommodate every requirement from the start, but there is the possibility of room to grow the offer over time, as space becomes available or new partnerships are developed).

The majority of the funds available are allocated to the enabling works to make the necessary changes to the smaller retail units in order to create a coherent library and learning centre space. This leaves a more modest budget for the bespoke interior fit-out design and construction.

To create a library that can deliver fully against the ambition set by the Council to create a high impact showpiece library to complement the new world class museum would be difficult at

and heritage assets will create an inspirational visitor attraction for the city.

The Shirehall opened in 1817 in St Peter's Square as a home for the Council and the courts of justice in Hereford. Grade 2* listed and occupying a significant place in Herefordshire's heritage, the Shirehall stands on a prominent site (the former gaol house) in the city centre. The Assembly Hall was added in 1862 at the rear of the building. The Shirehall itself is no longer occupied and has been identified as a key strategic site, needing investment to bring it back into use.

The space proposed for the library and learning centre is the Assembly Hall and its Undercroft. This site combines the opportunity to create a state-of-the-art public library, with a modern, accessible learning centre. The Assembly Hall is a light and airy double height space with a stage at one end and backstage facilities (including a green room and basic facilities). The Undercroft comprises a series of separate spaces, a delivery room and an office. The Shirehall is listed, and it will be important to retain its original character as far as possible.

The lending, reference and children's library and the local history collection will be located in the grand Assembly Hall which will become a destination site in its own right.

the Maylord Orchards site because its location and character do not create the highly visible, destination venue that is an attractor in its own right.

There is reduced potential to deliver on the original intention of the scheme and provide a cultural hub within the city centre since a number of organisations initially identified to be co-located have revised their intended site. This leaves the library and learning centre as a stand-alone cultural offer within Maylord Orchards currently.

The library and learning centre within Maylord Orchards requires a portion of the space to be provided as a café facility to contribute to the revenue running costs which is also a constraint on the flexibility of the space.

Flexibly designed so that library fixtures (shelving, formal and informal seating and workspace) will be able to “dock” at the sides of the hall to enable larger scale events (such as cultural events careers fairs, craft exhibitions, film screenings or hackathons) to use the main space, the hall will become a multi-functional venue for creatives, for culture and for community. Up to 300 people can be accommodated theatre style in the space.

There is a requirement for a platform lift to enable full accessibility, including the stage and backstage area. This will also facilitate get-in and get-out of equipment for the full range of possible event uses. The “choir seating” at the back of the stage provides the potential to face an event in either direction, using the seating for audiences at smaller events or facing the main hall for events with larger attendance.

Since 2017 the national Universal Library Offers have significantly broadened the definition of a library service. These include support for Digital Literacy and for Health & Wellbeing, delivery of Cultural and Creative activities, supporting Skills & Employment and a Children’s Promise to provide reading for pleasure, creative and digital opportunities to support learning and wellbeing. While the Assembly Hall has ample space to enable exhibitions, events and activities (such as TED talks, business breakfasts, children’s rhyme-times, author talks, poetry readings, film screenings etc.), the Undercroft provides important space for informal learning and advice.

The spaces in the Undercroft are:

- The Welcome Space – level access into an open reception space with quick-pick stock and self-issue machines, Talk Community directory tablets, buggy storage and rotating display of materials linked to key topics (such as

	<p>mental health, climate change, Herefordshire Hoard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maker Space – with digital technology including 3D printing, music production, digital sewing machines, game design etc. which can also be configured as a Training Room • Consultation Room – with individual booths for 121 advice on health, personal money management, business start-up and so on • Sensory Room – specially designed space for children and adults with disabilities • Delivery Room, stock sorting space and equipment store • Staff office space, toilets and kitchen <p>The library and learning centre can be operated independently of each other, so that evening classes can take place in the Undercroft without the need for the Assembly Hall to be staffed. If the Adult Education Service requires a room larger than the planned Maker Space/Training Room, then rooms are planned to be available for hire outside of the Library footprint.</p>
--	---

2. Scope of Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location

This document sets out the terms of a review of city centre locations for the new Library and Learning Resource Centre. The purpose of the review is to ensure the project makes the best possible contribution to delivering a modern library service, facilities to support learning, and the regeneration of Hereford City Centre. The review will be approached from the perspective of seeking the site with greatest potential opportunity for the library and learning centre to provide public benefit, while taking account of any related financial, reputational and operational risks.

Background

1. In 2020 government selected Hereford to be eligible to seek up to £25m of funding to support regeneration and enable economic growth. A Hereford Stronger Towns Partnership Board was formed which oversaw the development of a Town Investment Plan (TIP) through extensive local community engagement, and inviting people to put forward project proposals for submission to government in the Plan, subsequently securing £22.4m.
2. The Hereford TIP recognises the need to re-purpose and regenerate the city centre, realising significant opportunities in art, culture, heritage, tourism and learning. The agreed programme includes a major redevelopment of the Hereford Museum & Art Gallery which shares a building on Broad Street with the central library, requiring the library to relocate.
3. A complementary project to create a future-fit library and learning centre has been developed and this was planned to be situated in Maylord Orchards. This has been approved with Stronger Towns funding of £3m and £500k from the Council. The plan was to redesign units and the atrium of Maylord Orchards to form the library and learning resource centre.
4. However, a number of factors have changed since the original project was identified in 2020. The demand for retail/ commercial space in Maylord Orchards has remained relatively high, other Town Investment Plan projects that were originally due to be clustered with the library in Maylord Orchards to create a cultural hub (Rural Media Digital Culture Hub, Powerhouse and Encore) are now locating elsewhere, the draft Hereford City Masterplan has identified a wide range of future needs for strategically significant sites across the city centre, and alternative locations have become available for redevelopment.

5. A review of the proposed location has therefore been requested to ensure the library makes the optimum contribution to the Council's priorities for the city and outcomes for the project.

Scope of the Review

6. The review will consider available publicly-owned city centre locations to establish their feasibility and desirability in delivering the greatest impact against the set criteria as alternative sites for the new library and learning centre.
7. It will review sites in relation to
 - Strategic fit
 - Value for money
 - Financial Viability (including any aid implications)
 - Outcomes
 - Statutory Duty
 - Deliverability
 - Legal implications
 - Equality impact

Review Process

8. The review will be carried out by an officer team comprising lead representatives from the Project Management Office, and Library, Finance, Legal and Property services, following the below steps:
 1. Initial high level consideration of available sites to narrow down to deliverable options
 2. More detailed consideration of prioritised sites identified
 3. Consultation with Stronger Towns Board
 4. Consultation with stakeholders
 5. Review of financial and legal position
 6. Formulation of recommendations for decision
9. Sites in scope of the review are :
 - a) Blueschool House
 - b) Broad Street – Hereford Museum & Art Gallery (HMAG)
 - c) Franklin House
 - d) Friars Street – Museum Resource Learning Centre (MRLC)
 - e) Maylord Orchards – units originally proposed
 - f) Maylord Orchards – alternative units
 - g) The Shire Hall – the Undercroft and Assembly Hall
 - h) 8 St Owen Street
 - i) Town Hall & 10 St Owen Street
 - j) 33-35 Union Street
 - k) 43 Widemarsh Street
 - l) Churchill Gardens

Criteria for Review

Strategic Fit

The review will consider the potential for each of the sites identified to contribute to creating a more vibrant city centre - a compelling destination for residents and visitors and for investment and trade and to delivering the outcomes above. With the alignment to the strategic ambitions within:

Big Economic Plan

Town Investment Plan

City Masterplan

Health and Wellbeing strategy

The Stronger Towns Fund business case for the library and learning resource centre set key outcomes of:

- Improving perceptions of Hereford by residents, visitors and businesses
- Increasing visitors to arts, heritage and cultural events and venues
- Assisting new learners

Value for Money

Each of the potential options will be considered and ranked in terms of its value for money in delivering the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the project, including the ambitions of the Stronger Towns Fund business case to provide:

- More accessible and improved facilities for skills
- Increased skills responding to local need
- Upgraded or protected libraries
- Delivery of new public spaces
- Community non-accredited learning

Financial Viability

A financial assessment will interrogate the total costs estimated with each option including:

- Risk to existing grant funding already approved
- Irrecoverable costs incurred to date
- Capital requirements to bring the site into use as a city library and learning centre
- Ongoing revenue requirements for operating the site as a city library and learning centre
- Potential sources of future external grant funding
- Any opportunity cost arising (i.e. potential loss of income from any future alternative use that could be made of the facility)
- The impact of any proposal on the business case for other projects in the capital programme and Stronger Towns portfolio
- Return on investment

Outcomes

The review will consider the potential to deliver outcomes against:

- Meet the vision of the project
- Universal Library Offers on site
- Impact on the city with regeneration
- Tourism
- Health benefits

Meeting the Council's Statutory Duty

The review will therefore need to consider the suitability of each site for delivery of library services including, but not limited to, public access to lending and reference materials, and the timescales for mobilisation of a new facility.

Deliverability

Sites will be evaluated against:

- Projected timescales for delivery
- Any planning considerations and the scope of works required.
- Availability of the asset

Legal Implications

The review will establish the legal implications associated with the alternative options for location of the library and learning resource centre: contracts for works have already been let by the Council and funding agreements are in place. Any legal obligations arising at some sites from historic covenants or historic funding.

Equality Impact

The review will include an Equality Impact Assessment and analysis of user data collected by the service. It will evaluate the accessibility of the proposed locations in terms of access to the building and transport connectivity.

Stakeholder Consultation

The review will offer opportunities for stakeholders to be involved and engaged.

Specifically:

- Joint Action for Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, representing library users
- Herefordshire Cultural Partnership
- NMite
- Internal service partners - Adult Education, Public Health and Economic Development teams
- Equality Compliance Manager
- Ward Member for Central Hereford
- Hereford City Council
- Hereford BID
- Stronger Towns Board
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

Timescale and Reporting

The library will relocate as planned to a temporary location in mid-July to enable the Museum and Art Gallery redevelopment.

The key dates for the proposed review of its permanent future location are:

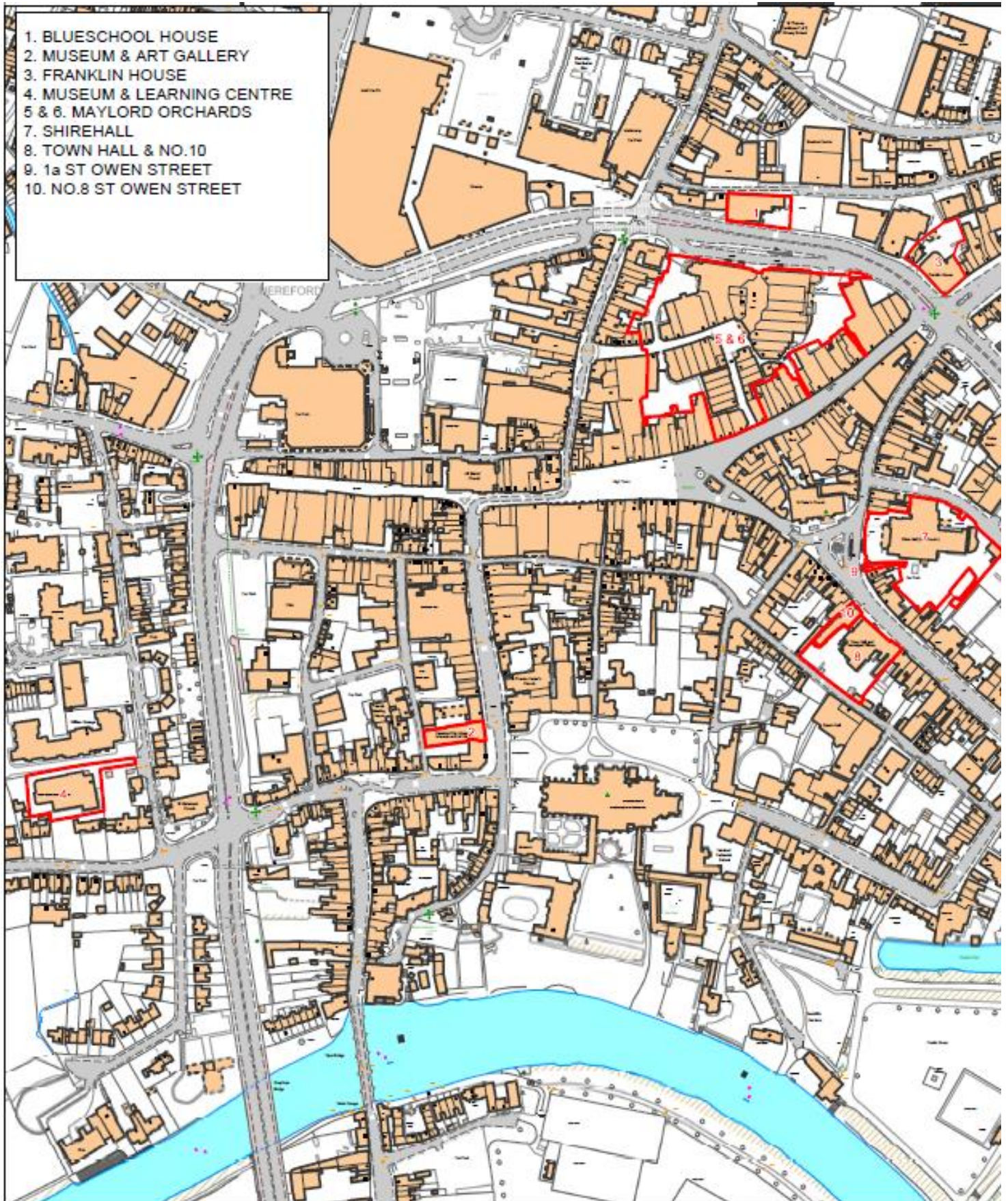
- 22 June 2023 review initiated and stakeholder consultation begins
 - 3-5 July 2023 draft reviewed and cabinet report finalised
 - 6 July 2023 Cabinet feeder meeting
 - 13 July 2023 papers sent out
 - 20 July 2023 for consideration and approval by Cabinet if required.
-
- **Contact Officers:** Val Birchall, Interim Library Lead,
val.birchall@herefordshire.gov.uk
Sue White, Programme Manager, susan.white2@herefordshire.gov.uk

3: High Level Review of Alternative Sites

High Level Feasibility Study												
		Site/Location										
Pass or Fail Questions	Answer Guide	Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford, HR1 2DU	Hereford Museum & Art Gallery, Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AU	Franklin House, Po Box 4, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR4 0XH	Fiars Street, Museum Resource Learning Centre (MLRC)	Units Originally Proposed, Maylord Orchards, Maylord St, Hereford, HR1 2DT	Undercroft and Assembly Hall, Shire Hall, Hereford HR1 2JB	Churchill House, Venn's Lane, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1DE	Town Hall and No10 St Owen Street	1a St Owen Street	No 8 St Owen Street	Alternative Units, Maylord Orchards Maylord St, Hereford, HR1 2DT Please see Sheet 3 'Alternative Site Review Maylord' of document
Is the building suitable to house a new library (Layout/Size)?	If 'No' Fail and discount this Site/Location	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
Can the site/location be made available for the project?	If 'No' Fail and discount this Site/Location	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	
Is the building currently accessible by all forms of transport?	If 'No' Fail and discount this Site/Location	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	
	Comments/Summary	Part of the site is currently leased out and therefore any opportunity under agreed terms to change this would not meet the relevant timeframes	The site/location is not a suitable size and with the new museum, insufficient space is available	Leased out to a partner-opportunities to utilise the site would not fall within required timeframes	The site/location is not a suitable size,	The site remains available as per original proposal but would reduce the available space.	The site is subject to major structural and infrastructure works requirement. Tenant in other part of building as advised that they are giving notice, making the site available for revised planning	Site/Location is not currently accessible by all forms of transport and in not directly in the City centre.	The site/location is not a suitable size,	The site/location is not a suitable size,	The site/location is not a suitable size,	

Additional Information which may be required for next stage of Evaluation	Answer Guide											
Does the site fit the Council Draft Strategic Ambitions	Simple Yes/ No or Not	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is this property currently vacant	Applicable response to provide relevant detail	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
If tenanted can they be easily be relocated?		N	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N/A	N	N
Is it considered to be free of Conservation Constraints (Internal)?		Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Is it free of Commercial Viability/Interest from other uses?		N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Is the site available now?		N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
Are only minor enabling works required?		Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Are there links for Public Transport?		Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is there access to nearby parking?		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is it free of any Legal constraints (Covenants)?		Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N

4: Map showing location of alternative sites



6: Ground Floor Plan Maylord Orchards

Existing Building: Maylord Orchard

3.2 / Existing Ground Floor Plan



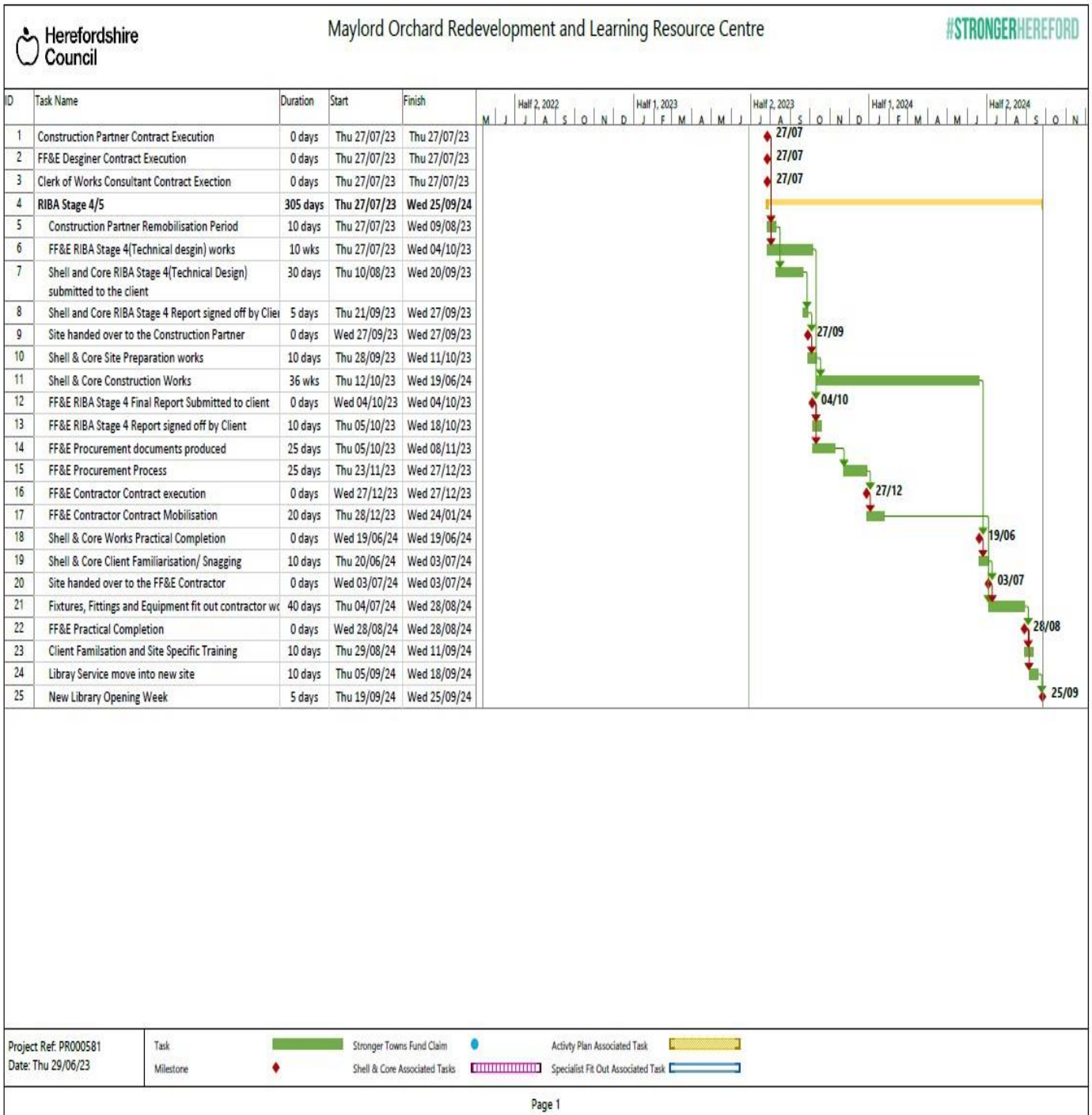
7: First Floor Plan Maylords Orchards

Existing Building: Maylord Orchard

3.3 / Existing First Floor Plan



9: Maylord Programme



10: Cabinet Decision 22nd of June 2023

[Printed decision Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location.pdf](#)
herefordshire.gov.uk



Title of report: Strategic Investment Proposal In The Central Ward

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 20 July 2023

Report by: Cabinet member economy and growth;

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Central;

Purpose

To agree the principle of Herefordshire Council investing in a project where the council is in partnership with Wye Valley Trust to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital and to authorise the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth to sign heads of Terms for both parties to agree the principles and to further explore options around a strategic investment partnership and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in the Autumn of 2023.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **authority is delegated to the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth to sign Heads of Terms between Herefordshire Council and Wye Valley Trust for a partnership to enable development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital;**
- b) **Cabinet authorises the development of an options appraisal to inform a business case of an investment model most appropriate to allow the project to progress and bring that back to cabinet for further authorisation in autumn 2023; and**

- c) authority is delegated to the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth to take all operational decisions relating to the above recommendations**

Alternative options

1. To not agree to signing Head of Terms – this is not recommended as the council is committed to partnership working and exploring investment opportunities when they arise. If the Heads of Terms are not signed then this exploration will be delayed thus delaying the opportunity for the Education Centre to be built.

Key considerations

2. Wye Valley Trust have a vision to make the Trust a destination for students and staff for high-quality education, a lasting positive experience and to support the recruitment and retention of staff.
3. With this being a priority for the Trust, they have developed a strategic outline case outlining the development of an integrated education centre for the Trust and local community that will provide:
 - a) Multi-professional education
 - b) Equitable learning for all staff
 - c) Life-long learning for all staff
 - d) An exemplar education facility available to a wide range of local community groups, serving the public, patients and service users
 - e) An education facility that is shared with partners and supports learning far beyond traditional healthcare education
4. One of Herefordshire Council's priorities as set out in the [County Plan 2020-2024](#) is to strengthen partnership working across Herefordshire and to become an enabler for economic growth by considering different ways of working with businesses/partners in Herefordshire. This proposed provision will provide an exemplar facility which will facilitate partnership working across patient and service user groups, charities, the voluntary sector, public service and the education sector. It will provide opportunities to partner with other organisations to create a vibrant learning space in Herefordshire.
5. The council is continuously working with partners to support strength based communities and this facility will become a community hub allowing for a variety of purposes, supporting the Trust's role as an anchor institution in Herefordshire.
6. Wye Valley Trust appointed an architect to undertake site feasibility for the centre and an identified site between the hospital and Hereford County bus station in hospital ownership has proved to be the best location for the centre. The detail of the feasibility can be seen in Appendix A.
7. The cost of the overall project is in the region of £10.5m and there is a funding gap of approximately £6m. The Trust have approached the council to see if a strategic investment partnership could be looked at to enable the project to progress onto a capital build.

8. This report is asking the cabinet to agree the principle of exploring an investment model for this exciting project and to sign Heads of Terms so that a business case can be progressed to look at the viability and options around a potential partnership and investment model to support the vision of the Trust. The business case will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in due course.

Drivers for Investment

9. The government is committed to supporting the development of the skills needed by an advanced economy by working with employers to widen access to higher skills development. In 2021 the government published a white paper [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#) and the paper reports that there is a significant skills gap at higher technical levels. It explains that there are not enough technicians, engineers or health and social care professionals to meet the many vital challenges the country faces, from building a green economy to meeting the health and care needs of our ageing population.
10. The paper also explains how it is now known that many careers are now accessible through technical and higher technical qualification and higher-level apprenticeships, as well as through traditional degrees. But while these technical qualifications lead to good outcomes for individuals and the economy, colleges and independent training providers do not have enough support and incentive to offer high value training and education.
11. This project to build an education centre presents opportunities to close the gap of a lack of education providers who offer higher level training especially in the health and social care sector.
12. Herefordshire hosts a large County Hospital in Hereford that not only services Herefordshire residents but also services Welsh Border counties such as Powys and Monmouthshire. In recent times it has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. By having the opportunity to create an education centre on the premises of the hospital, this is creating a local skills improvement plan, providing a much need opportunity to train staff. This will support the Trust to respond to digitisation and new ways of working and contribute to the success of developing staff and also retaining employees.

Community impact

9. There is substantial positive community impact that will arise from this initiative. By investing in an education centre, Wye Valley Trust will be able to offer advanced staff training, which in turn will retain staff at the hospital with higher skills. This will reduce the need for patients to travel out of the County to specialist hospitals for treatment.
10. If staff can be retained and developed at the hospital more treatments will be available to local residents, resulting in a more efficient offer to patients.
11. If staff are retained at the hospital then the long term viability of the service is maintained.
12. The community will be able to use the centre with training and development on offer to Herefordshire residents, helping retain higher level skills within the County thus growing the economy.
13. The community hub model will strengthen the partnership working across the county resulting in more efficient services being provided to residents.

Environmental Impact

14. At this stage of the initiative there are no anticipated environmental impacts. However, if cabinet authorise the development of the business case then a review of the environmental impact will be completed at this stage.

Equality duty

15. 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.
16. In the business case development stage there will be an equalities impact assessment carried out which will detail information about if any groups of people with protected characteristics are at a disadvantage in the workplace or seeking opportunities in particular industries. If there is any national and local data we will note this in the impact assessment.

Resource implications

16. There are no resource implications at this point in the decision making. However, if cabinet authorise the development of a business case the resource implications will be reviewed as part of the business case development.

Legal implications

17. There are no legal implications at this stage..

Risk management

18. There are no identified risks at this stage. If cabinet authorise the development of a business case then the risks will be reviewed and reported through that process.

Consultees

19. Consultation has taken place with the Portfolio for Economy and Growth and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Service on 23 June 2023. Both cabinet members were in support of

the principles around the strategic investment proposal and it was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth would take the decision to the July 2023 cabinet for decision.

20. The ward member has been communicated to via email on the 4 July 2023

Appendices

Appendix A – Brochure

Background papers

None

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Sarah Buffrey	Date 29/06/2023
Finance	Wendy Pickering Karen Morris	Date 30/06/2023 30/06/2023
Legal	Emma-Jane Brewerton	Date 29/06/2023
Communications	Luenne featherstone	Date 28/06/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 11/07/2023
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 26/06/2023
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 30/06/2023
Approved by	Director for Resources and Assurance	Date 04/07/2023



Wye Valley
NHS Trust



A State-of-the-Art Education Centre for the Hereford Community

Bringing educational provision & community support under one roof

Artists Impression...

Following a review of training space requirements on the County Hospital site, it has been determined there is a need to establish a state-of-the-art facility to provide education and training to benefit the whole of the Hereford community. Our dedicated education facility will significantly increase the site's current training and library space within the Trust from 1,092 m² to 1,800 m².



Community services play a key role in keeping people well, in treating and managing illness and conditions, and supporting people to live their best life. Our single, purpose-built education centre will dissolve historic divides between primary and community health services, whilst maximising learning opportunities for learners across all sectors and services.



Bringing educational provision & community support under one roof

Contents of this proposal...

Our proposal to develop an integrated education centre for the Trust that will not only provide multi-professional education and equitable learning for staff, but give the people of Hereford access to community health education, includes:

<p>1</p> <p>INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND INFO</p> <p>An introduction to the project that sets out our vision and principle aims on the proposed development to a dedicated education and training facility for the Hereford community.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>CURRENT POSITION</p> <p>An overview of what education services the Trust currently provides and why the facility needs to be developed to extend and advance medical education and community support.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>PROPOSED SERVICE / CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>The proposal sets out a review of the training space requirements & the need to provide training & community support accommodation on a site that extends 1,800m².</p>
<p>4</p> <p>OUTLINE ASSESSMENT OF BENEFITS</p> <p>The benefits this crucial project intends to deliver are: quality, operational, workforce, health & wellbeing, financial, acceptability, reputational & strategic. These points are detailed in this section.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>NEXT STEPS</p> <p>We look at the next steps that potential funders will need to take to be part of this exciting, pioneering project to develop multi-professional education and community support in the Hereford community.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>CONTACT INFORMATION</p> <p>If you have any further questions regarding this brochure, do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information. We share the contact information for anyone wanting to participate in this exciting project.</p>

1. Introduction

& Background Information

Aim

Our vision is to create an integrated and inclusive education centre for Wye Valley NHS Trust that provides the space and resources we need for staff education as well as giving patients and carers access education and support.

Our education centre will include:

- + State-of-the-art teaching facilities
- + Increased capacity for multi-professional education
- + Equitable training and development opportunities
- + Space and facilities for community wellbeing programmes

We aim to make the Trust a go-to destination for high quality education for students and staff, providing a lasting positive experience. The Education Centre will play a critical role supporting the recruitment and retention of our staff.

The proposed development is to build a dedicated education and training facility on the County Hospital site. By increasing training and library space within the Trust from 1,092 m² to 1,800 m², we aim to expand and enhance the high standard of education we already deliver.



The project will also have significant benefits for the wider Hereford community. In addition to providing space and resources for staff education, the building will enable us to offer inclusive support and education services for patients and carers.

For example, diabetes education, veteran support, disability network meetings and healthcare career advice for young people.

2. Current Position

The Trust currently provides the following education services:



The proposed development is to expand & enhance the education we deliver by building a dedicated education & training facility on the County Hospital site

- Medical Education
- Nurse / Allied Health Professional / Healthcare Scientist Education
- Leadership & Management Development
- Clinical Education Fellow programme
- Hereford Academy of Simulation Training & Ergonomics (HASTE) – Academy
- Resuscitation Services – adult & paediatric resuscitation courses
- Advanced Practice Academy Teaching Programme (ACPs & PAs)
- Generic Skills Workshops (multidisciplinary senior staff)
- Functional Skills Qualifications
- Healthcare Support Worker development – trainee nursing associates (TNAs) & Registered
- Nurse Degree Apprenticeships (RNDA)
- Apprenticeships (level 2 to level 7 across the whole workforce)
- Knowledge & Library services
- Statutory & Mandatory Training
- Corporate Induction
- Wellbeing resources



Artist's impression of the new simulation suite

Collaboration

The Education Directorate works in collaboration with the Foundation Group, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (ICS), multiple higher education institutes, Health Education England (HEE) and NHS England & Improvement (NHSEI).

The Trust already trains undergraduate medical students from the University of Birmingham in a very successful partnership. We are proud to have received excellent feedback on this programme so far.

Since 2021, medical students from Aston Medical School have attended specialist placements in Hereford. In 2022, students from the Three Counties Medical School expanded our provision even further.

We have links with several universities for the training of nurses, Allied Health Professionals and Healthcare Sciences. Additionally, we partner with some of the following institutions for example to provide valuable apprenticeship opportunities:

Birmingham City University
Coventry University
Worcester University
University of West England



Artist's impression of the new lecture theatre

Recent Developments

Clinical Education Fellow Programme

In August 2020, the Trust expanded its fellow programme, moving from four junior doctors to 12 fellows. The team included junior and middle-grade doctors with a range of specialities, as well as a pharmacist, nutrition fellow and digital fellow.

These posts are 50% education and 50% in the post holder's clinical specialty. This enables fellows to benefit from continued clinical development.

The Trust benefits from reduced Medical Locum Agency spend. For example, we saved £376,110 in the financial year 2020/21, with even more ambitious plans taking place in 2021.

Apprenticeships

The Apprenticeship Levy has provided opportunities for individuals to access training programmes. Within the Trust, we have 65 existing and new staff that have started an apprenticeship programme since April 2020.

In total, we have 133 apprenticeships ongoing across Nursing, Allied Health Professions (AHPs), Administration, Scientific, Therapeutic and Technical staff.

Through Workforce Development funding, we've also invested in upskilling, new ways of working and developing leadership within the Trust. This has benefitted Clinical Support Staff (including healthcare support workers), Healthcare Scientists, Physician Associates and other scientific, technical and therapeutic staff.

COVID-19 Upskilling

During the first wave of Covid-19, our education team provided Covid-specific skills training to 500+ staff members. We received outstanding feedback on the training, which enabled staff to rapidly deploy exactly where they were most needed.

Participants were equipped with the skills to understand the known science around Covid pathology at that time, to use PPE correctly and safely, to help patients with 'prone' positioning, and practice responding to Covid emergency calls through simulation scenarios.



Artist's impression of the new IT suite

Demand

In addition to existing demand, it is expected that there will be increased demand for education and training services over the next five years. This is a result of workforce growth, as set out in the NHS People Plan.

Within our local area, this is expected to result in:

- An increase from 42 to 66 Junior Foundation Doctors allocated to the Trust over the next three years
 - An increase in senior trainees from 54 to 68 over the next three years
 - An increase from 132 to 305 Medical Students allocated to the Trust per year over the next five years
 - An increase in Nursing placements — in 2022 alone, the number of student nurses and midwives we're training has increased by 24% to 400 compared to 2021
 - An increase in apprenticeships. In 2019 we had 85 apprenticeships. We now have 133 and expect this number to continue to grow
 - An increase in technology-based training (e.g. simulation teaching)
 - There is also significant unmet demand that the Trust is currently unable to meet, due to the restrictions of our existing facilities. An expanded and enhanced Education Centre would help us address this challenge.
- the development of educational services.

Existing Facilities

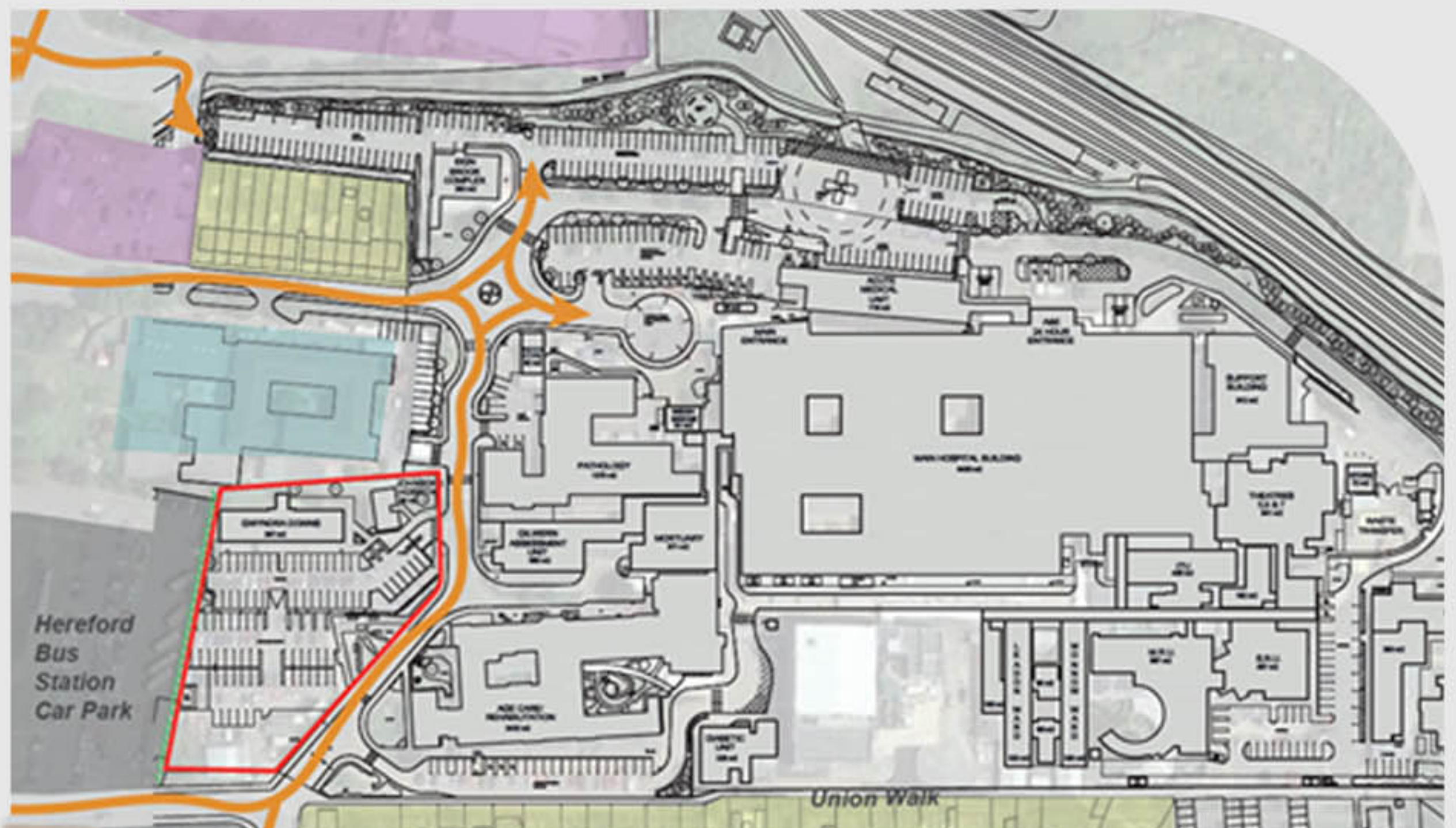
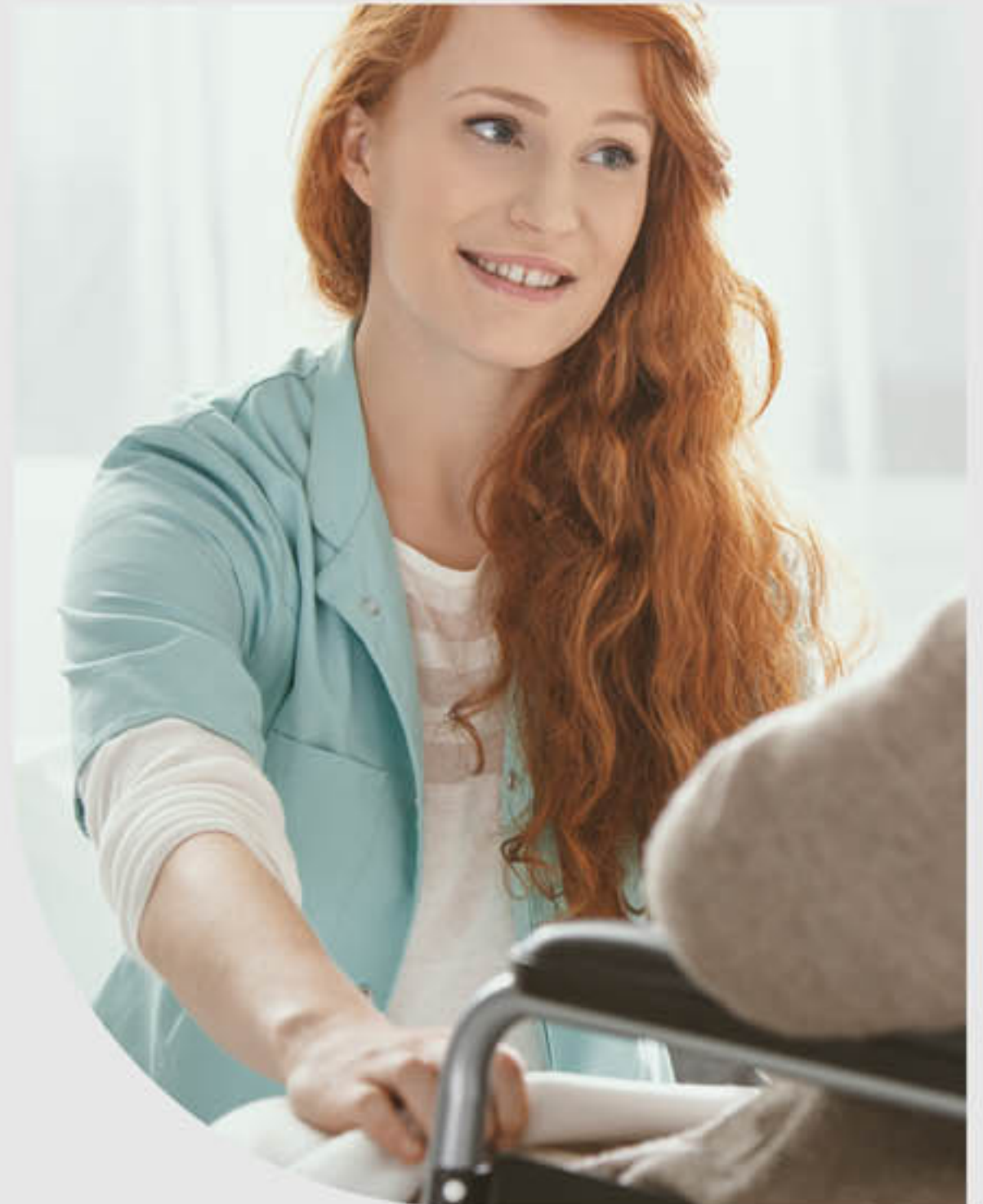
Wye Valley NHS Trust provides education across the workforce from a range of facilities within the organisation.

We currently have education and training facilities spread across a number of different buildings. These include the John Ross Postgraduate Medical Centre (PGMC), Education & Development Centre (EDC) and Johnson's Hospital for resuscitation training.

However, many of the areas are small rooms in old buildings, which inhibits the development of modern training facilities.

Historically, training has been done by separate staff groups – for example, doctors carried out training separately to nurses. But now that we have teams where a range of professionals work together to deliver high quality patient care, we need to train together for some of our learning.

Bringing all our education provision under one roof will enable shared learning opportunities, with the aim of enhancing the safety and quality of patient care and community support.



3. Proposed Service / Capital Development

Indicative Schedule of Accommodation:

Clinical Skills & Resuscitation	218 m ²
Simulation & Wet Room	287 m ²
Training Rooms	343 m ²
Meeting Rooms	27 m ²
Lecture Theatre	196 m ²
Admin & Reception	187 m ²
Library & IT	225 m ²
Toilets	47 m ²
Food Hall & Kitchen	271 m ²
Total m ²	1,800 m ²

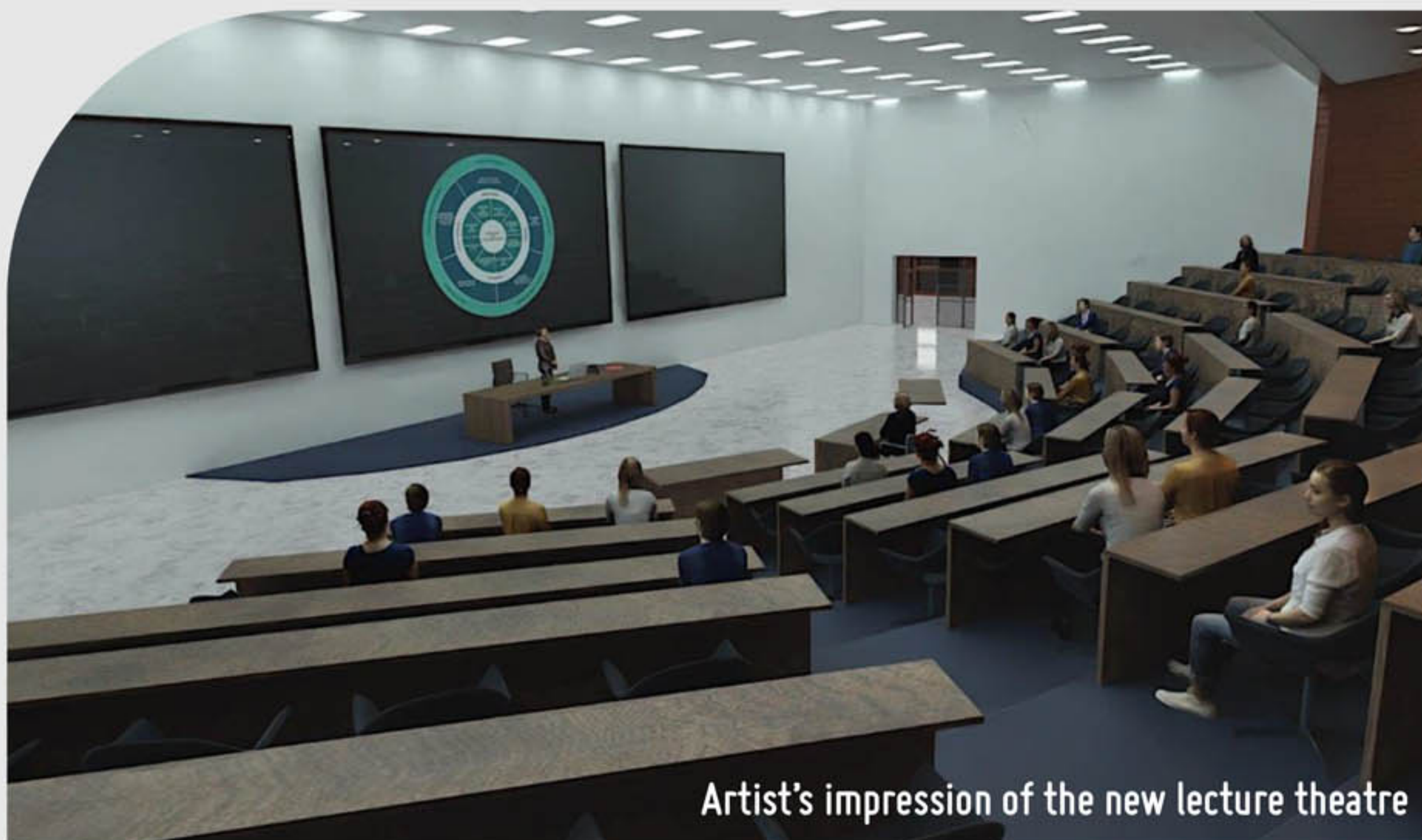
Following a review of our training space requirements, we established that there is a need to provide total training accommodation of 1,800 m².

This reflects a significant increase on the 1,092 m² training and library space currently available within the Trust.

The proposed development is to expand and enhance the education the Trust delivers, by building a dedicated education and training facility on the County Hospital site.

We plan to utilise the former Orchard Site (currently used as a contractor's compound) at the entrance to the County Hospital site.

This is primarily due to its accessibility for hospital staff, patients and other users from across the community.



Artist's impression of the new lecture theatre

Artist's impression of the new information & library area



The new development will include the following dedicated spaces:

A state-of-the-art simulation ward area, with the ability to run four-patient scenarios for fully immersive high fidelity multi-disciplinary team (MDT) training.

An IT suite co-located with library and information services.

A 200-seat lecture theatre with flexible layout to allow large plenary and smaller breakout sessions.

Several large clinical skills rooms equipped with clinical models and simulation equipment. These will be vital for examination and procedure training, plus all the requirements to deliver Resuscitation Council courses for adult and paediatric care.

Classroom sizes suitable for large and small groups, plus study pods and smaller rooms for educational supervision, coaching and feedback.

Administration areas and office space for the education team, including hot desks and a dedicated welcoming reception.

Facilities for refreshment and toilets.



Our estimates (based on current funding and conservative assessments of additional future income) suggest that current revenue would support such a development.

What's more, the increased income that would result from expanding our capacity would provide additional income to support future education and training.

A single, purpose-built and community-focused Education Centre on the County Hospital site would fulfil the following aims:

Deliver high quality multi-professional education, supported by one integrated team

Make education accessible to all staff, from our most junior students to our most experienced leaders

Promote a culture that maximises the learning opportunities for staff and students across all sectors and services

Provide access to equitable, high-quality support for all learners, aligned with current education programmes. Plus, ensuring adequate preparation for future healthcare careers

Maximise the passion, expertise, strengths and commitment of the education infrastructure and wider partnership networks

Provide essential education, training, support and services to benefit the whole of the Hereford community





Artist's impression of the new simulation suite

4. Outline Assessment of Benefits

The benefits this crucial project intends to deliver are:

Quality

- State-of-the-art teaching facilities
- State-of-the-art Knowledge & Library Services open 24/7
- Equipping the workforce to improve patient care
- Attractive learning environment

Workforce

- Preparing & upskilling the workforce with the correct skills to meet the organisational & role requirements
- Developing staff into new roles and developing competencies to work at top of licence
- Enhancing our ability to recruit staff & retain them locally

Operational

- Increased capacity for delivering multi-professional education
- Better utilisation of courses
- Freeing up current facilities for other users
- Enabling regional education providers to deliver locally to our staff

Health & Wellbeing

- Space & facilities for wellbeing programmes for staff, to meet NHS requirements (for example, the Midlands Wellbeing Charter for Doctors)
- Responding to staff survey feedback, asking for space & facilities for staff to unwind
- Creating dedicated space, resources & facilities to offer inclusive community support, wellbeing programmes & education services for patients & carers in the local area

Financial

- Capacity to generate income from external sources
- Capacity to increase income from HEE through the education contract
- Reducing unnecessary travel & associated expenses for staff

Acceptability

- Wye Valley Trust (WVT) staff provided with a single, clinically adjacent location
- Strong support from our regional partner higher education institutions for an enhanced site at WVT for education



Reputational

- Making our Trust an attractive organisation for potential students & staff to work & learn
- To lead & test new concepts for service & workforce as a trailblazer

Strategic

- Supporting our strategic, annual objectives, along with our workforce & estates strategies




5. Next Steps...

It is proposed that the next steps are to:

- + Commission an architect
- + Identify & approach potential funders
- + Develop an Outline Business Case (OBC)





Junior doctor numbers will increase from 42 to 66 for the most junior Foundation Doctors over the next 3 years. In that time frame we will also increase the more senior trainees from 54 to 68

In 2019 we had 85 apprenticeships, we now have 133 and expect this to continue to grow

In the last 2 years we have increased our physio students from 36 to 64 and occupational therapy students from 21 to 35 per year

In 2022 we are training 400 student nurses and midwives, an increase of 24% from the previous year

Medical student numbers will increase from 132 per year to 305 per year over the next 5 years



Wye Valley NHS Trust

Wye Valley NHS Trust
The County Hospital Stonebow Road
Hereford
HR1 2BN

Phone: 01432 355444

www.wyevalley.nhs.uk

A teal banner at the bottom of the page. On the left side, there is a photograph of several hands of different ages and skin tones being held together in a supportive grip. The rest of the banner is a solid teal color with white text.

NOTE: The pictures used in this document are
artist's impressions of the new building



Title of report: Strategic investment proposal on a special purpose site in the Dinedor Hill Ward

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 20 July 2023

Report by: Cabinet member community services and assets;

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

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

Dinedor Hill;

Purpose

To agree the principle of Herefordshire Council investing in an initiative where the council is in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (HWGTA) to enable further development of vocational work based skills across the county, and to authorise the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Assets to sign Heads of Terms for both parties to agree the principles and to further explore options around a strategic investment partnership, and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in autumn 2023.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **authority is delegated to the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Assets to sign Heads of Terms between Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association**

for a partnership to enable further development of vocational work based skills across the county;

- b) Cabinet authorises the development of an options appraisal to inform a business case of an investment model most appropriate to allow the project to progress and bring that back to cabinet for further authorisation in autumn 2023; and**
- c) authority is delegated to the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Assets to take all operational decisions relating to the above recommendations**

Alternative options

1. To not agree to signing Heads of Terms – this is not recommended as this will delay Herefordshire Council working in partnership with HWGTA to further develop vocational skills within Herefordshire when there is a skills gap in vocational skills across Herefordshire. The national intention is to grow the offer to our residents in terms of skills development and by not doing this we are limiting opportunity in Herefordshire.

Key considerations

2. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association Ltd (HWGTA) have been training apprentices and delegates to develop skills, knowledge and behaviours for 56 years, making a significant contribution to the Herefordshire economy. The centre has been so successful that it has outgrown its current operating centre and there is a requirement for a new centre to enable growth. Outgrowing their current premises and requiring a new site has meant that the association has been given the opportunity to rethink their premises strategy.
3. In 2020 HWGTA scoped out a proposal to move to Skylon Park but at the time of scoping it was not financially viable. However, in 2022 a revised offer was made for the current site making the project feasible once again so a full design process was instructed which is now complete. The intention is to move to Plot 7 on Skylon Park and build a new Centre of Vocational Excellence.
4. Due to inflation and construction pressures there is an estimated funding gap of approximately £2m, however, until this is tested through the tender process the actual firm cost is unknown. As an independent training provider HWGTA are not eligible for further education capital grant funding and other grant streams have been exhausted.
5. HWGTA approached the council to see if the council would like to explore an investment opportunity with the association based on some shared objectives around developing local people, increasing skills in the county and ultimately driving up productivity and economic growth.
6. Skylon Park has developed over the years and has grown into the business quarter in Hereford. It's gone from strength to strength and through investment has been able to turn brown field sites into green field sites ready for development which Herefordshire Council own.
7. Plot 7 at Skylon Park is adjacent to the newly built Shell Store and the New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering (NMITE) Skills hub for timber technology. The Shell Store presents incubation space for new businesses to develop and has a café facility which is widely used. It hosts many business meetings and conferences and provides space for several different initiatives.
8. Adjacent to the Shell Store is the new NMITE skills hub which is a learning centre of excellence for timber technology. This space is used by the NMITE students regularly. What is materialising

in this quarter of the park is a real sense of a learning skills village, new businesses developing, students learning ground breaking engineering so the vacant plot 7 lends its self very well to becoming a new centre of vocational excellence.

The National Context

9. On 28 April 2022 the Department for Education passed new laws through the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 stating ways that it will help transform the skills and training landscape across the Country. The law sets out that schools will be required to make sure all children get to meet people that provide technical education routes such as apprenticeships, T Levels or Traineeships, making sure they understand a wider range of career choices, not just academic routes through university.
10. The legislation will help economic recovery and growth by making it easier for people to get the skills they need to secure well paid jobs in industries with skills gaps, such as health and social care, engineering, digital, clean energy and manufacturing. It will also give more people the opportunity to get jobs in their local areas, by requiring employers and colleges to work together to identify the skills needed within communities.
11. The Act underpins the government's transformation of Post-16 education and skills as set out in the [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#) and help level up and drive growth across the whole country.

Regional Context

12. Herefordshire is part of a local enterprise partnership with Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin called the Marches Growth Hub. The partnership has some very clear priorities of which skills development is part of. There are three key priorities set out:
 - a) Business Growth – creating an exceptional business growth environment through access to finance and incentives to innovate
 - b) Skills Development – Supporting employers to develop themselves and their workforce and to provide employment opportunities
 - c) Infrastructure and Places – Its our mission to provide an infrastructure framework fit for tomorrow business need
13. The vision is, “Together we are developing a vibrant regional economy, putting business at the heart of our work and removing barriers to growth through investment in our key projects”.

Local context

14. Herefordshire Council's County Plan has some clear objectives around skills development. It states that we are committed to encouraging continuous investment in our local workforce and culture of lifelong learning in our community. It states that we will strengthen the use of our assets. Work with organisations to be more creative in how we use and share our collective assets, increase our local investment, encourage the development of new businesses and explore new methods of financial support.
15. Herefordshire Council is committed to exploring opportunities around skills development across the County, and by enabling organisations like HWGTA to grow and develop is contributing positively towards growing the opportunity and offer in terms of skills development to all Herefordshire residents contributing to the economic circle of skills and growth in Herefordshire.

Community impact

16. Through this investment in a skills development opportunity it is likely that the county will attract high quality and better paid employment and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation
17. The initiative will develop a more adaptable and higher skilled workforce
18. By enabling HWGTA to grow and develop through investment, jobs will be created and a more local skilled workforce will develop which in turn will attract business opportunities into Herefordshire.

Environmental Impact

There are no known environmental impacts caused through this decision at this point.

Equality duty

19. 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.
20. In the business case development stage there will be an equalities impact assessment carried out which will detail information about if any groups of people with protected characteristics are at a disadvantage in the workplace or seeking opportunities in particular industries. If there is any national and local data we will note this in the impact assessment.

Resource implications

21. There are no resource implications at this point. The intention is to bring back a business case to an Autumn 2023 cabinet which will then outline the resource implications around the investment opportunity.

Legal implications

22. There are no legal implications at this stage.

Risk management

23. There are no risks currently associated with this decision. It is anticipated that when a business case is brought back to cabinet outlining options around the investment model, risks will be identified.

Consultees

24. There has been consultation with the Portfolio for Economy and Growth and the Portfolio for Community Services and Assets of which both are satisfied with the proposal as set out in this paper. There was a meeting on 15 June 2023 where by it was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Assets would take the decision to cabinet in July 2023.
25. Herefordshire Councils Corporate Leadership Team supported the proposal at a meeting on 27 July 2023
26. The local ward member for the Dinedor Hill Ward has been consulted with via email on the 04 July 2023

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Sarah Buffrey	Date 29/06/2023
Finance	Wendy Pickering	Date 29/06/2023
	Karen Morris	Date 30/06/2023
Legal	Emma-Jane Brewerton	Date 29/06/2023
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 28/06/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 11/07/2023
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 30/06/2023
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 30/06/2023
Approved by	Director for Resources and Assurance	Date 04/07/2023

