

Agenda

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 19 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:

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Agenda for the meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor Ellie Chowns**
Vice-chairperson **Councillor Ed O'Driscoll**

Councillor Bruce Baker
Councillor Frank Cornthwaite
Councillor David Hitchiner
Councillor Ben Proctor
Councillor Rob Williams

Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p>NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the committee.</p>	
3.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2023.</p> <p>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</p> <p>The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 9.30 am on Friday 14 July 2023.</p> <p>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</p> <p>Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</p>	13 - 24
5.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the public.</p>	
6.	<p>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL</p> <p>To receive any written questions from members of the council.</p>	
7.	<p>PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF THE FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISION ON REVIEW OF NEW HEREFORD LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE LOCATION</p> <p>To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet's proposed decision to select a preferred new location of the Hereford Library and Learning Centre.</p>	25 - 76
8.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>To note the following committee meeting dates:</p> <p>Wednesday 13 September 2023 10.00 am</p> <p>Wednesday 8 November 2023 10.00 am</p> <p>Wednesday 10 January 2024 10.00 am</p> <p>Wednesday 6 March 2024 10.00 am</p> <p>Wednesday 8 May 2024 10.00 am</p>	

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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

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- 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.
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- 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. The council's constitution is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution
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www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-

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.

Guide to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is a statutory role fulfilled by councillors who are not members of the cabinet.

The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

Council has decided that there will be five scrutiny committees. The committees reflect the balance of political groups on the council.

The connected communities scrutiny committee consists of 7 councillors.

Councillor	Party
Ellie Chowns (Chairperson)	The Green Party
Ed O'Driscoll (Vice-Chairperson)	Liberal Democrats
Bruce Baker	Conservative Party
Frank Cornthwaite	Conservative Party
David Hitchiner	Independents for Herefordshire
Ben Proctor	Liberal Democrats
Rob Williams	Conservative Party

Scrutiny functions

The committees have the power:

- (a) to review, influence policy or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (d) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area
- (f) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the council with respect to the discharge of those functions. In this regard crime and disorder functions means:
 - (i) a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and

- (ii) a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - (iii) a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area
- (g) to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised or to be consulted by a relevant NHS body or health service provider in accordance with the Regulations (2013/218) as amended. In this regard health service includes services designed to secure improvement -
- (i) in the physical and mental health of the people of England, and
 - (ii) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness
 - (iii) and any services provided in pursuance of arrangements under section 75 in relation to the exercise of health-related functions of a local authority.
- (h) to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area.
- (i) To track actions and undertake an annual effectiveness review

The remit of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

- Talk Business programme, advice and support
- Development investment plans - town, market town, rural, Hereford City
- Hereford Enterprise Zone
- Higher education development
- Adult and community learning programme
- Apprenticeships
- Fastershire programme
- Digital connectivity
- Heritage, culture and tourism
- Social value procurement policy
- Planning
- Licensing
- Regulatory
- Capital highway maintenance, asset management and infrastructure repair
- Council housing
- Statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers

Who attends scrutiny committee meetings?

- Members of the committee, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson.
- Cabinet members, they are not members of the committee but attend principally to answer any questions the committee may have and inform the debate.
- Officers of the council to present reports and give technical advice to the committee.
- People external to the council invited to provide information to the committee.
- Other councillors can attend but can only speak at the discretion of the chairperson.

Minutes of the meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 13 February 2023 at 9.15 am

Committee members present in person and voting: Councillors: Barry Durkin, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester (Chairperson) and David Summers

Committee members participating via remote attendance: Councillors: Felicity Norman

[Note: Committee members participating via remote attendance, i.e. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.]

Others in attendance:

M Averill	Interim Service Director Environment, Highways and Waste	Herefordshire Council
J Barnes	Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (ICS)
B Baugh	Democratic Services Officer	Herefordshire Council
J Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner	West Mercia Police
J Coleman	Democratic Services Manager	Herefordshire Council
R Cook	Corporate Director - Economy and Environment	Herefordshire Council
A Davidson	Assistant Director Prevention	Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue
Councillor C Davies	Ward Member for Bromyard West	Herefordshire Council
Councillor G Davies	Cabinet Member - Commissioning, Procurement and Assets	Herefordshire Council
A Deans	Interim Programme Director – Major Contracts	Herefordshire Council
D Freeman	Corporate Director - Children and Young People	Herefordshire Council
H Hall	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing	Herefordshire Council
Councillor J Harrington	Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Transport	Herefordshire Council
P Middlebrough	Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner	West Mercia Police
A Rees-Glinos	Democratic Services Support Officer	Herefordshire Council
H Speight	Higher Partnership Analyst	West Mercia Police
Councillor D Toynbee	Cabinet Member – Children and Families	Herefordshire Council
A Turton	Partnership Officer	Herefordshire Council
Councillor A Tyler	Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community	Herefordshire Council
Superintendent H Wain	Local Policing Commander	West Mercia Police

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Paul Andrews, Tracey Bowes, Toni Fagan and Kath Hey.

18. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor David Summers was present in the meeting room as the substitute for Councillor Tracy Bowes. Councillor Felicity Norman participated via remote attendance on behalf of Councillor Toni Fagan.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to the item 'Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership' item, Councillor Barry Durkin advised the committee that he was the Vice-Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.

During the item 'The Public Realm Services Future Operating Model', Councillor Jim Kenyon advised the committee that he had a non-pecuniary interest due to an association a sub-contractor.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

21. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 9 - 12)

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

22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions had been received from councillors.

23. HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this item was to undertake crime and disorder scrutiny function in relation to Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

The key participants were introduced and the Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community (and Chairperson of the CSP Board) gave an introductory presentation covering: the role and membership of the CSP; the CSP strategy, 'Our Plan to Keep You Safer' (2021-2024), which included the strategic priorities 'To prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' and 'To reduce the harm from Domestic Abuse'; the delivery of the strategy and funding arrangements; the structure of groups and sub-groups; data in relation to the strategic priorities; data on all crime trends and for comparative police force areas; positives and challenges in recent years; and an acknowledgement to all the partners, agencies and volunteers involved for their efforts.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) made opening comments about: CSPs predated PCCs; the value of scrutiny activity to check the effectiveness of the CSP; current PCC initiatives; the need to address behaviours and to support communities to be safe and resilient to stop crime happening in the first place; and the need to be resolute in the commitment to the strategic priorities.

The principal topics of the debate included:

1. The purpose of the 'Channel Panel', as part of the Prevent strategy, to support individuals at risk of radicalisation.
2. The impact of healthy relationships education and initiatives in schools and how to evidence outcomes over the next twelve months, including comparative data from other CSPs and feedback from parents / guardians.
3. The issue of elder abuse in the county.
4. The influence of social networking and other media platforms in shaping relationships and behaviours.
5. Challenges associated with funding to deliver programmes in schools were outlined but it was acknowledged that there were other opportunities to promote key messages across broader society.
6. The PCC questioned whether the council was assured that it was deploying resources effectively to address the strategic priorities.
7. The work being undertaken by the CSP with education professionals and practitioners to raise awareness about the damage caused by emotional abuse and controlling behaviours in relationships. Reference was also made to the Drive campaign which aimed to deter perpetrator behaviour.
8. The need to promote sources of help and support to enable people to recognise and respond appropriately to all forms of abuse. The PCC emphasised that help and support was available, whether or not victims wished to report incidents to the police. It was acknowledged that messages had to be communicated in ways that were relevant to young people and the voices of young people should be heard.
9. The work of the police in terms of child exploitation and online protection.
10. The training undertaken by West Mercia Police and Fire and Rescue Service personnel on domestic abuse matters.
11. In response to a comment about improving pastoral support in educational settings, the Corporate Director – Children and Young People advised that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had considered an item on 'Children and Young Peoples Mental Health' which included a review of schools' pastoral support ([minute 31 of 2020/21 refers](#)). Later in the meeting, a committee member suggested that this topic should be revisited by that scrutiny committee.
12. Two strategic priorities had been identified but the CSP was responsible for, and had sub-groups undertaking activity on, a range of other issues. The Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services commented on the challenge for the CSP Board to manage its meeting time as effectively as possible.
13. The Chairperson noted that 'A Strategic Assessment will be undertaken every three years, while the HCSP Strategy will be reviewed annually by the HCSP Board to evaluate progress and ensure that the strategy adapts to changing needs.' (agenda page 58) and invited participants to identify what was working well and what was not working well as a partnership. In response:
 - The PCC commented on the need to respond and adapt to change, including the requirements and opportunities presented by the Serious Violence Duty.

- The Assistant Director Prevention noted on the value of collaborative working but considered that there was more work to be undertaken on data sharing.
- The Higher Partnership Analyst said that there was a need to understand what other relevant data was held by the partners and to ensure that there was robust evaluation of the initiatives being undertaken.
- The Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services commented on the quality of the data from police but this could not be shared with communities. A concern was expressed about the limited resources available to the Partnership Team to support the safeguarding boards and partnerships.
- The Local Policing Commander commented on the importance of considering measures of effectiveness before delivering any sort of initiative.
- The PCC also commented on the value of sharing needs assessments and other drivers for organisational activity.

The Chairperson invited the partners to consider whether they were doing enough to promote the work of the CSP.

14. Further to point 10 above, further information was provided about the training of Fire and Rescue Service personnel and the roles of signposting and safeguarding officers and prevention champions.
15. The use and synchronisation of different communication channels was explored further, including the involvement of Talk Community.
16. The potential of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology to detect and deter crime.
17. The function of Operation SNAP in handling video and photographic evidence from members of the public in relation to cycling and driving offences.
18. The PCC encouraged ward councillors to engage with local policing teams to identify opportunities to enhance visibility and accessibility.
19. The expansion of the Safer Streets Programme into other areas of Herefordshire.
20. The Corporate Director Community Wellbeing said that further consideration would be given to the contribution of the Talk Community hubs to the CSP strategic priorities. The Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community added that capital funding had been allocated to enhance the hubs.
21. The Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer advised that the ICS intended to attend all CSP Board meetings but there had been some meeting clashes.
22. The potential to support community groups and improve facilities in order to enhance community resilience.
23. There was a discussion about the outreach to parish councils, particularly given the comment in Appendix A to the report that 'Resources are not available to complete Partnership surveys and information gathering to gain the views of Herefordshire people on how safe they feel and what concerns them the most' (agenda page 36). The Assistant PCC noted that some parish councils did not appear to be aware of the CSP, indicating a need to improve dialogue.

With input from the Democratic Services Manager and other attendees, the committee discussed potential recommendations to the Community Safety Partnership and agreed the following resolution.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations be submitted to the Community Safety Partnership:

- a) **Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to explore the current role of pastoral care within educational settings in enabling young people / their peers to recognise, record and report / refer abuse in all of its forms.**
- b) **CSP to utilise wider synchronization of social media and research commonly used channels used by differing cohorts of society to promote key messaging, sources of help and support.**
- c) **CSP to approach ‘Talk Community’ with a view to sharing data and to strengthen their network for communicating sources of support and help.**
- d) **CSP to respond to the committee request to broaden and strengthen its reach within the community, and particularly outreach to parish councils.**
- e) **CSP to explore how the Safer Streets funding can be channelled as effectively as possible in the county’s rural areas.**
- f) **CSP to explore how we cultivate / new funding sources to further the priorities of the CSP.**

In addition to the recommendations above, the committee requested that the following actions be undertaken:

1. **CSP to present the evidence gathered on the healthy relationships education and its measurable impact on reducing domestic abuse / peer-on-peer / violence against women and girls in younger people.**
2. **CSP to present the evidence of the ‘Drive Campaign’ in relation to prevention of controlling and coercive behaviours / mental abuse related crimes.**
3. **CSP to explain how its priorities are changing as a result on new funding and interventions such as the serious violence duty and resulting strategy.**
4. **CSP to explain where improvements to sharing of data is enabling clearer understanding of trends and measures and how they influence operational practice.**
5. **CSP to explore innovative / smarter ways of working in relation to funding streams being deployed.**

[Note: There was a short adjournment before the next item.]

24. THE PUBLIC REALM SERVICES FUTURE OPERATING MODEL

Further to [minute 8](#) of the meeting held on 14 October 2022, the purpose of this item was to provide the committee with the outcome of a midpoint review of the council's public realm services and to invite comments and constructive challenge regarding the proposals to select and develop a Future Operating Model.

The Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Transport made opening comments about: the background to the public realm service contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) that had been awarded in 2013; the key features of the existing model; audits undertaken of the public realm contract which had identified issues with the effectiveness of contract monitoring on the council side; various model types had been considered by Cabinet Members and by a cross party member working group; it was considered that Model Five, 'in house client and technical staff with existing provider (single contract) for top up professional services and works', would deliver the council's objectives.

The principal topics of the debate included:

1. The initial implementation costs of the model and opportunities to deliver efficiencies to reach a cost neutral position with ongoing service costs.
2. The learning from bringing public rights of way and traffic management services back in house in April 2022, particularly in relation to communications and staff planning.
3. The transfer of technical and professional services staff from BBLP to the council.
4. Encouraging the public to report potholes, with an enhanced digital presence.
5. The future management of assets and the modernisation of the vehicle fleet.
6. The options appraisal identified that Model Five would provide value for money and would negate risks for the council.
7. The Cabinet Member - Commissioning, Procurement and Assets commented on the benefits of competitive dialogue with potential suppliers, including on social value and environmental objectives.
8. The improvements that had been made to contract management, informed by the Major Contract Improvement Plan, including enhanced constructive tension between the parties.
9. The interim arrangements and plans for the recruitment of permanent heads of contract management, highways, and transportation.
10. The value of public rights of way, including for population health and wellbeing, and the importance of engagement with volunteers interested in supporting and improving the network, subject to appropriate supervision and mitigation of risks.

[Note: With the assent of committee members, the Chairperson determined that the meeting should continue beyond three hours.]

11. It was noted that there was limited detail on the additional costs and challenges referenced in paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report (agenda pages 64/65). The Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Transport said that a preferred model had been identified but further decisions would not be taken until the new administration period. Comments were made about the importance of corporate memory and apprising councillors about the situation.
12. The need for flexibility in terms of potential suppliers for major infrastructure projects.

13. The need for clarity about the division of responsibilities between contractors and the council, and for the council to be the driver for communications and primary point of contact for the public.
14. With attention drawn to the statement 'The contract has a two year no fault termination clause which both parties can enact at any time, which is proposed to be retained' (paragraph 34, agenda page 68), assurance was sought about the contingency arrangements to retender the contract and mobilise within this timeframe in the event of the clause being triggered.
15. The new range of strategic performance measures could include working in partnership with the contractor on opportunities for commercialisation, innovation and new ways of working.
16. There was an intention to continue the cross party member working group and the members were commended for their input to date.

With input from the Democratic Services Manager, the committee discussed potential recommendations to the executive and agreed the following resolution.

Resolved:

That the following recommendations be submitted to the executive:

- a) **Herefordshire Council (HC) / Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) strengthen the publicity campaign to raise awareness of where / how residents of Herefordshire can report pot-holes.**
- b) **Clarification is given on how contracts are awarded and arrangements do not tie the council in to using just one supplier for major infrastructure projects.**
- c) **Considerations are built in to the new model for the in-house element of the council's operations to generate commercial income streams.**

In addition to the recommendations above, the committee requested that the following actions be undertaken:

1. **HC / BBLP more clearly communicate the opportunities for volunteers to support the work of HC / BBLP on, for example, litter picking, maintenance and improved access to local footpaths.**
2. **Paragraphs 18 to 19 of the scrutiny report be clarified to explain that budgetary pressures on contract delivery are 'future' pressures.**
3. **Assurances are given to the committee that internal expertise will be factored in to the new model that enables HC to assess the quality of major infrastructure and locality works to quality assure the work of our contractors.**
4. **Evidence is given to the committee that if the 'two year' no fault termination clause – if enacted – would enable HC to move in to new and adequate contractual arrangements within that two year period.**
5. **Assurances are given that corporate memory is built in to transition arrangements (from interim to permanent arrangements).**

6. That a note be made highlighting the progress toward the establishing the details of the new operating model post-election.

25. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme for the committee was received and it was noted that there were no further scheduled meetings of the committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2022/23.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm

Chairperson

Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: Questions from members of the public and responses, plus supplementary questions and responses

13 February 2023

Question 1

From: Valerie Markwick, Eardisley

As a resident in Herefordshire I am concerned about domestic violence and sexual assaults in our localities. We had a disturbing series of sexual assaults in Hereford last year. My question reflects one of the key concerns of the public meeting held on 28th September in Hereford, sponsored by Herefordshire Labour "Time to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls", of ensuring action taken delivers results. What are your plans to scrutinise and judge the effectiveness of the new safety campaigns Time for Change aimed at tackling the Community Safety Partnership's strategy priorities of domestic abuse and sexual assault?

Response to Question 1

The Time for Change campaigns have been funded by the Governments Safer Streets Campaign. Herefordshire and West Mercia Police have been successful with their bids for Safer Streets Funding. Thank you to colleagues who have co-ordinated and delivered the Safer Streets campaigns and to DI Julie Watson who provided this response below on behalf of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership.

"The time for change campaign is regularly evaluated. The first phase of the campaign - release of the video and the website, created through Safer Streets 3 funding, was subject to evaluation however we do not have access to the data pertaining to this at this current time.

Safer Streets 4 has taken the Time For Change campaign to run 3 sub campaigns –

- Christmas and New Year
- Student
- Under-represented groups

Each of the three campaigns will undergo independent evaluation for effectiveness and this is being completed by a market research company.

The Christmas and New Year campaign ran through December 2022 until 2 January 2023. This was a high profile campaign run through audio and visual channels – targeted audio messaging, billboard/kiosk visuals and editorial in local press. The audio advert alone was played over 117,000 times with completed listen through rate at just over 95%. This campaign was subject to evaluation with the feedback being positive. 19% said they had seen/heard a campaign in the previous three months which is strong market penetration for an early-stage campaign, and slightly higher than expected. 21.5% say they've heard of Safer Streets Herefordshire, and the same amount say they've heard of Time for Change. 98% of respondents who were aware of the time for change campaign say they are quite likely or extremely likely to take action if they saw a VAWG crime.

The Student campaign is currently live with the Under-represented groups campaign scheduled for March 2023 therefore we do not have feedback on these yet."

The feedback above evaluates the effectiveness of the media campaigns, however it does not totally measure changes in behaviour or if people feel safer/ less safe. This is something that the Community Safety Partnership, the Tackling Sexual Violence Priority Group and the Safer Streets Steering Group may wish to consider. Further evaluation may include a repeat of the original community survey that was carried out as part of the evidence gathering to support the original bid for

Herefordshire's Safer Streets funding. Behaviour change takes time and a variety of factors and interventions will contribute to that change.

Supplementary question a)

How will you cover the rural part of the county, the small market towns and the villages (some of which are expanding with new building, because you focus very much on Hereford and not the rest of the county)?

Response to supplementary question a)

The Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community: Thank you very much for your further question. Yes, Safer Streets is around the Hereford city centre at the moment but we are looking to go into the rural areas with our programmes so that we can tackle those areas as well. I do agree that we are Hereford-centric at the moment but we are aware that we need to go out further but, with the resources at the moment, that is very difficult.

Question 2

From: Jacqui Molloy, Suckley

As a resident in Herefordshire I am concerned about domestic violence and sexual assaults in our localities. We had a disturbing series of sexual assaults in Hereford last year. My question reflects one of the key concerns of the public meeting held on 28th September in Hereford, sponsored by Herefordshire Labour "Time to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls", about the quality of data available to make decisions and guide action by agencies. Are you satisfied that the quality of the data that the Community Safety Partnership receives on domestic violence and sexual assault is good enough to ensure a consistent co-ordinated response from all the agencies and enable evaluation by you and by partners against agreed standards?

Response to Question 2

The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership paper submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for Monday 13 February 2023 (Appendix A) subsection 17 Data Sharing identifies the need to strengthen community safety multi-agency data sharing arrangements by stating, "..... most of the data provided in the reports is police data only. This is a challenge the CSP has to overcome and undermines the potential value of the strategic analytical reports", and work is on-going to address this shortfall.

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner Community Safety Partnership (CSP) analytical team has provided two excellent police data thematic reviews for the CSP on domestic abuse and on violence against women and girls in Herefordshire*. (*Both marked Official Sensitive.) The sexual violence report informed the draft Herefordshire CSP Sexual Violence Strategy to be presented to the CSP Board in March 2023 which has identified outcomes and measures/ key performance indicators to address sexual violence which will enable interventions to be measured.

Supplementary question b)

Thank you for the response to my initial question. I would like to ask a supplementary in writing as I won't be present at the meeting and that is to ask what work is taking place to collect data from the other agencies and not just the police. As the CSP acknowledges that this is a "challenge it has to overcome and it undermines the potential value of the strategic analytical reports" is the scrutiny

committee clear about what the obstacles are to achieving better information on which the CSP can base decision making and resource allocation?

Response to supplementary question b)

The Chairperson of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: I think that is an excellent question. The best way to answer that question is to address the point that has been raised and ask the Community Safety Partnership 'what are the challenges?', so that we can get a better understanding of what those challenges are and we can perhaps, as a result of that conversation, make good recommendations to assist the Community Safety Partnership moving forward.

Question 3

From: Mike Tector, Ledbury

I am a resident of Ledbury, I am concerned about domestic violence and sexual assault in the county. I attended the public meeting on 28 September last year in Hereford, sponsored by Herefordshire Labour "Time to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls". My question regards concerns about ensuring full participation in the Community Safety Partnership by agencies attending and reporting. Are you satisfied that the partners in the Community Safety Partnership are fully involved in attending and reporting to meetings in 2022/23?

Response to Question 3

Response from Councillor Tyler Chair of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP).

The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Board is entrusted to address crime and disorder in Herefordshire. The CSP has agreed that tackling Violence Against Women and Girls is a Strategic Priority and all partners are committed to this priority.

As Chair of the HCSP I encourage all partners to engage fully at meetings of the Partnership and its sub groups in order to evidence the impact Partners, both as agencies and individuals, are having on addressing crime and disorder in Herefordshire.

Question 4

From: Sheila Marsh, Staunton on Wye

As a resident in Herefordshire I am concerned about domestic violence and sexual assaults in our county. We had a disturbing series of sexual assaults in Hereford last year. My question reflects two of the key concerns of the public meeting held on 28th September in Hereford, sponsored by Herefordshire Labour "Time to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls", of the importance of attitudinal change especially among men and boys, with priority to education in schools and colleges & of ensuring action taken actually delivers results. To assist scrutiny of this area, do you have access to data on how many schools have had the Purple Leaf Programme (and similar Herefordshire wide projects), how far these have changed attitudes and what further plans there are for whole school and countywide initiatives to ensure consistency in all settings?

Response to Question 4

The draft Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-2028 to be agreed by the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Board in March 2023 lists the first of three strategic priorities as Priority Area 1: Prioritising Prevention and has the following 4 aims:

1. Increase awareness and understanding of sexual violence and its drivers amongst professionals and the community
2. Challenge the myths, stereotypes and attitudes, that lead to sexual violence and stop people speaking out
3. Strengthen the capacity of educational settings, workplaces, leisure and entertainment venues to prevent sexual violence
4. Ensure that families, children and young people have access to educational resources on consent, healthy, respectful relationships and sexual violence

Clearly this will involve interventions such as Purple Leaf and programmes in schools to see how far these have changed attitudes and what further plans there are for whole school and countywide initiatives to ensure consistency in all settings.

I am grateful to colleagues at Purple Leaf and the Safer Streets Steering Group with the following response below:

“We (Safer Streets) have delivered sessions to Years 6, 9 and 12 across Herefordshire providing training for 2,706 Children as part of Safer Streets 3 in Herefordshire. Feedback across all sessions and all learning outcomes has been overwhelmingly positive from both teachers and pupils and that schools have approached us for further delivery

..... Our Purple Leaf Education programme (specifically delivered in schools and settings where children are at risk of/ may have experienced exploitation) continues to run in Herefordshire. The programme is currently funding by West Mercia PCC and is due to continue the current contract until 31/3/24. Again, feedback from this programme is consistently positive.”

Information on which schools have received the support is not available at this time.

Addressing the question; “what further plans there are for whole school and countywide initiatives to ensure consistency in all settings?” there is ongoing dialogue with Safer Streets programme leads and commissioners, the West Mercia Sexual violence forum, and the HCSP tackling Sexual Violence Group as to future funding and commissioning. There have been commissioning challenges but I am informed that these are to be resolved. The outline plan is to continue delivery of these core subjects in Herefordshire through a train the teacher model.

Supplementary question c)

How is the change in attitudes being evaluated in the schools’ programmes (rather than simply positive, immediate feedback which is great but it does not tell us about attitude change)? Given the various commissioning challenges and ideas about ‘train the teacher’ as a way forward for this programme which takes the attitudinal change checking back another step. So I want to know really, what are the plans are for looking at attitudinal change in schools?

Response to supplementary question c)

The Cabinet Member - Housing, Regulatory Services and Community: It is unfortunate that we have not got more feedback actually. We do address that the Purple Leaf programme is making a huge difference in the educational programme but the outcome, looking at the attitudes from young people and how they perceive sexual violence, we are still waiting on that. I think that over time, in the next 12 months hopefully, we will see more information coming forward to see what changes there are in attitudes, because it is so important in our schools that we see that change amongst pupils.



Title of report: Pre-decision scrutiny of the forthcoming Cabinet decision on Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 19 July 2023

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

Central

Purpose

To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Cabinet's proposed decision to select a preferred new location of the Hereford Library and Learning Centre.

The draft Cabinet report and strategic review at Appendix A to this report sets out the approach undertaken and assessment of the review locations. Feedback from the engagement with stakeholders and risks / opportunities are set out in the appendices to the Cabinet report. The recommended location is set out in the Cabinet report. Those recommendations, along with any recommendations that the scrutiny committee seek to make, will be considered by Cabinet on 20 July 2023.

Recommendation(s)

That the committee determine any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive for consideration.

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options. Making recommendations on a forthcoming key decision under the constitution is set out in the scrutiny rules and described as pre-decision call in. It provides the committee with the power to examine the issues around the decision to be taken.

2. Having reviewed the documents and sought clarification of any issues from the Cabinet Member and supporting officers the committee may, having regard to the principles of good decision making either:
 - i. Determine to support the proposed recommendation to Cabinet; or
 - ii. Determine recommendations to the executive to consider specific additional information or actions to inform their decision-making.

Key considerations

3. The Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee has identified that the review of the new Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre location as a forthcoming decision on the forward plan is relevant to the remit of its committee. This is the first meeting of the committee following all out local elections on 4 May. The committee has decided, prior to its first meeting, to exercise its right to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of this Cabinet decision in advance of it being taken.
4. The draft report proposed set out in Appendix A, enabling the committee to consider the same evidence base and recommended route that will be considered by Cabinet on 20 July. The only additional information will be a verbal update to Cabinet (on 20 July) on any agreed recommendations made by this scrutiny committee at its 19 July meeting.
5. In undertaking pre-decision scrutiny, the committee will wish to be assured that the decision is being taken in accordance with the principles of good decision-making. When the council takes a decision it will:
 - a) be clear about what the council wants to happen, how it will be achieved, who is accountable for the decision and who is accountable for implementing it and monitoring implementation;
 - b) consult properly and have regard to the professional advice from its officers;
 - c) have regard to the public sector equality duty and respect for natural justice and human rights;
 - d) make the decision public unless there are good reasons for it not to be;
 - e) give due weight to all material considerations, only take relevant matters into account, and make sure the action is proportionate to what the council wants to happen;
 - f) explain what options were considered and give the reasons for the decision; and
 - g) follow proper procedures.

Community impact

6. In accordance with the code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure our outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources while still enable efficient and effective operations.
7. The council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision-making, policy development, and review.

Environmental impact

8. Whilst this is a standard meeting and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. For example, enabling hybrid attendance and live streaming at committee meetings which in turn may provide a reduced need for some participants to travel to council meetings.
9. The environmental impact section of the appended Cabinet report has set out the actions and measures the council will seek to undertake in considering their decision. The committee is able to make any additional environmental impact suggestions or recommendations it may so wish.

Equality duty

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

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
11. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.
12. The equality duty section of the appended Cabinet report has set out the actions and measures the council will seek to undertake in considering their decision. The committee is able to make any additional equality duty suggestions or recommendations it may so wish.

Resource implications

13. None associated with any scrutinising the Cabinet's forthcoming decision. However if there are any resource implications associated with any recommendations determined by this committee the executive will have to respond to these.

Legal implications

14. Overview and scrutiny committees were established by the Local Government Act 2000 ("The Act"). As set out in the council's constitution reflecting section 9F 2 (b) of the Act the scrutiny committee has the power to make recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive.
15. The effect of undertaking this function are as follows:
 - i. The committee may require members of the executive, other members or other persons and officers of the council, to attend before it to answer questions.

- ii. The executive are under duty to consider and respond to any recommendations and provide a written response.
- iii. Where the scrutiny committee has called-in a key decision before its due date, the decision cannot be called-in again after the decision has been taken unless there have been material changes to the decision that were not recommended by the scrutiny committee.

Risk management

- 16. None in relation to this report; scrutiny is a key element of accountable decision making and may make recommendations to the executive with a view to strengthening mitigation of any risks associated with the proposed decision.

Consultees

- 17. None in relation to this report. However, consultation undertaken as part of the forthcoming Cabinet decision is outlined in the appended Cabinet report.

Appendices

Appendix A The forthcoming Cabinet decision report, Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location, including:

Appendix 1 – Strategic Review

Appendix 2 – Appendices to the Review

Background papers

- 18. None.

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**
- 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>
Health and Wellbeing strategy	
<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>	
Maylord Orchards	The Shirehall Assembly Hall and Undercroft
<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>

Stronger Towns Fund Outcomes
<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

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

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.

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.

The Stronger Town timeframes would still apply to the project.

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.

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

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).

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.

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

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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>
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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:

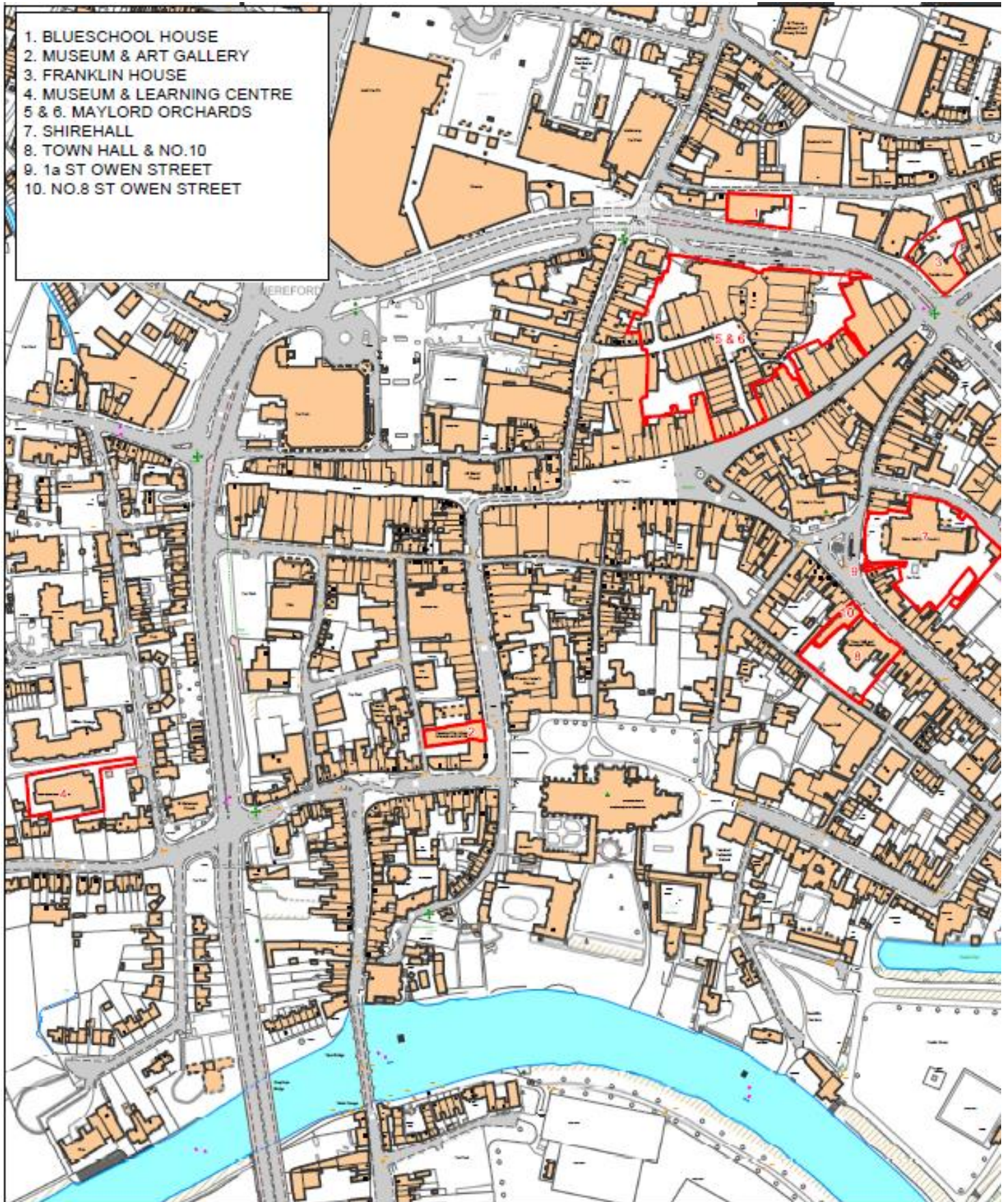
- 22 June 2023 review initiated and stakeholder consultation begins
 - 3-5 July 2023 draft reviewed and cabinet report finalised
 - 6 July 2023 Cabinet feeder meeting
 - 13 July 2023 papers sent out
 - 20 July 2023 for consideration and approval by Cabinet if required.
-
- **Contact Officers:** Val Birchall, 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,	

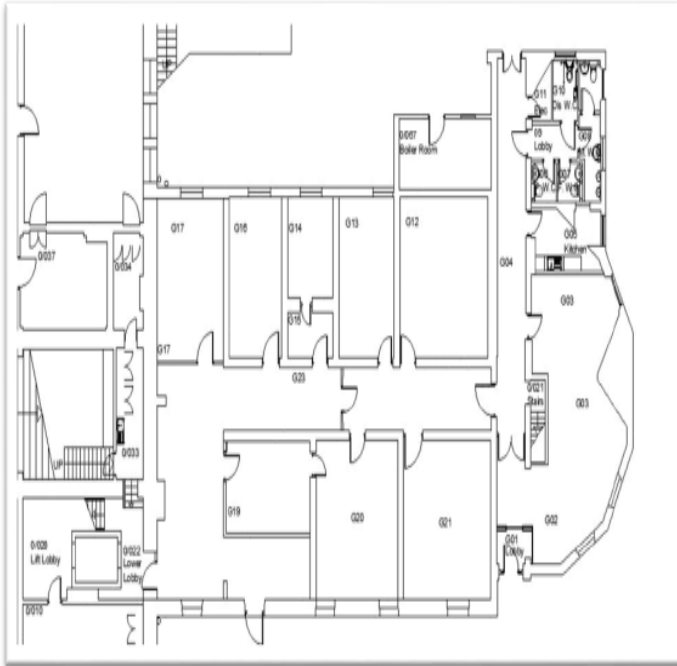
Additional Information which may be required for next stage of Evaluation	Answer Guide											
Does the site fit the Council Draft Strategic Ambitions	Simple Yes/ No or Not	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
is this property currently vacant	Applicable response to provide relevant detail	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
If tenanted can they be easily be relocated?		N	N/A	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N	N	N/A	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



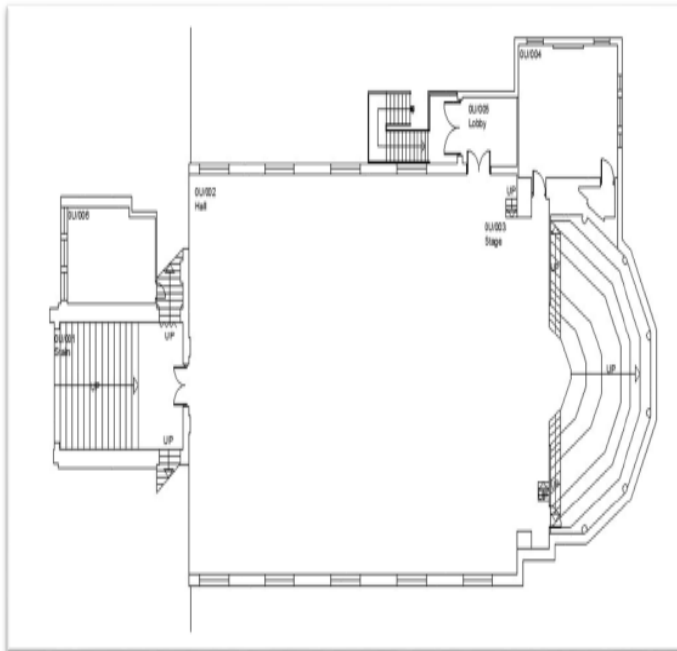
5: Floor plans Shirehall:

GROUND FLOOR

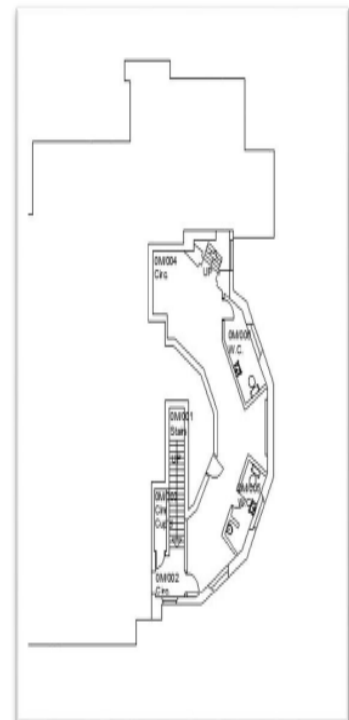


**SHIREHALL
Undercroft and Assembly Hall**

MAIN HALL - UPPER GROUND FLOOR



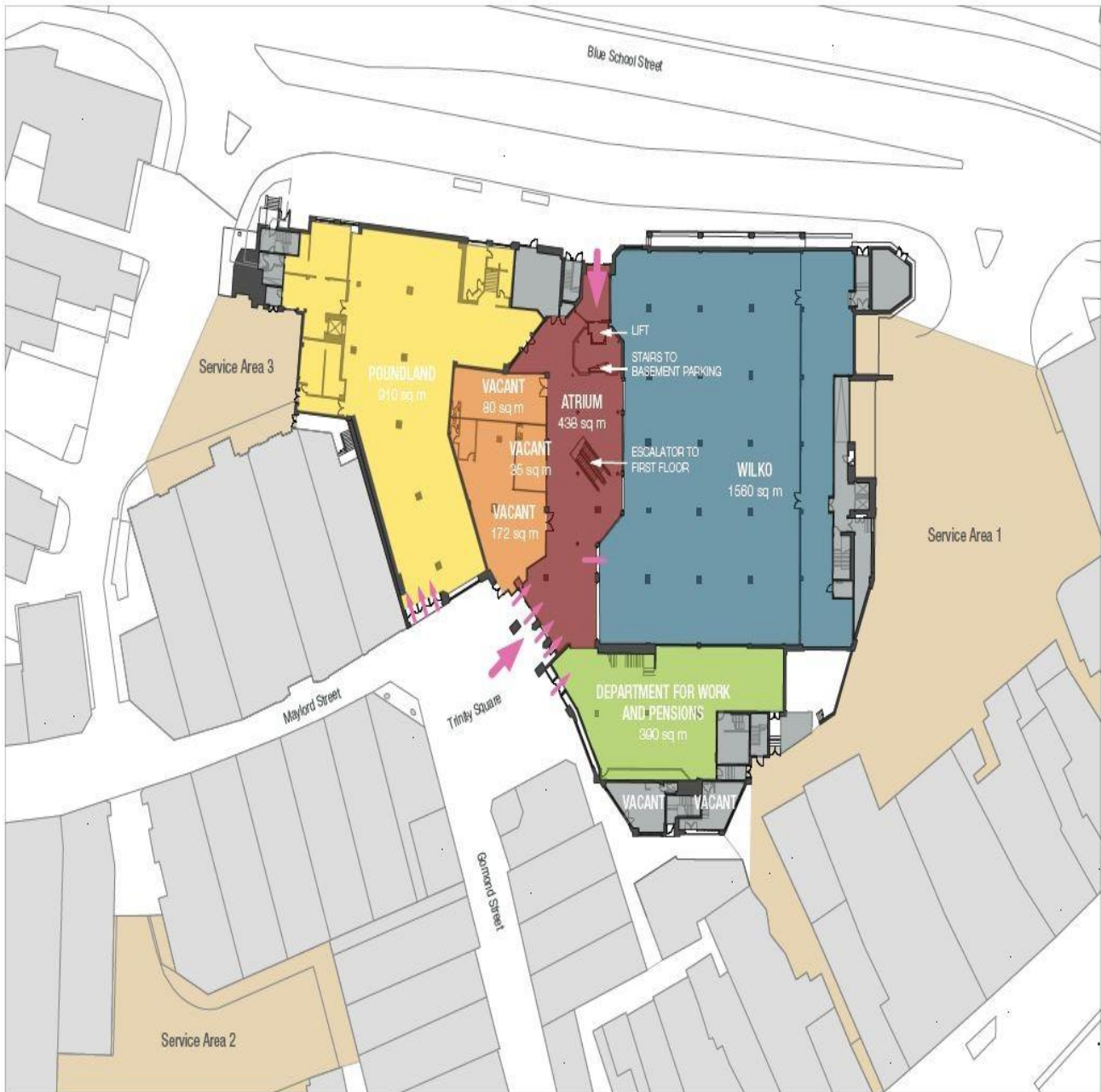
UNDER STAGE AREA



6: Ground Floor Plan Maylord Orchards

Existing Building: Maylord Orchard

3.2 / Existing Ground Floor Plan



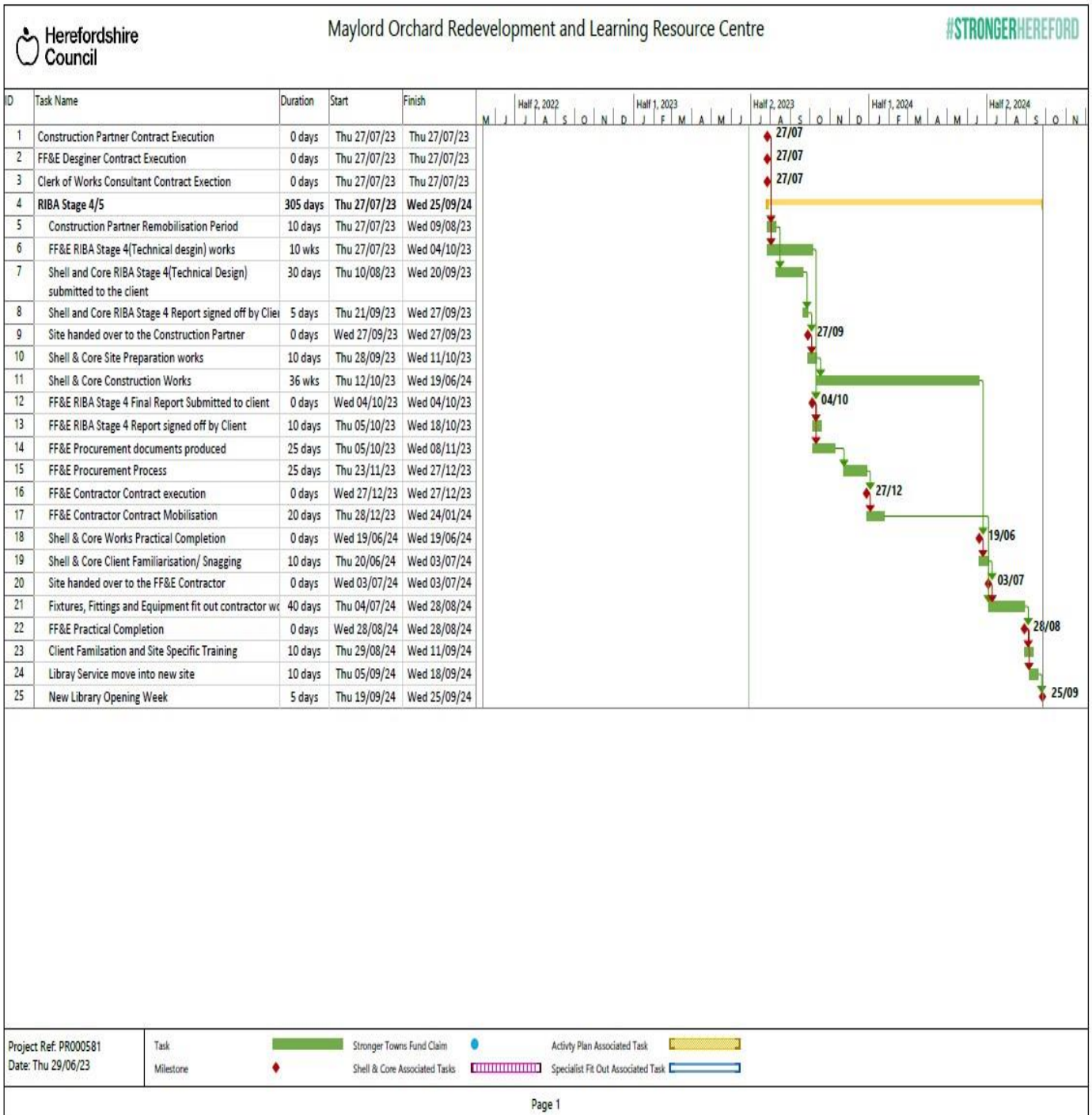
7: First Floor Plan Maylords Orchards

Existing Building: Maylord Orchard

3.3 / Existing First Floor Plan



9: Maylord Programme



10: Cabinet Decision 22nd of June 2023

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