

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	To approve the commissioning of feasibility studies to increase primary and secondary school capacity and capital improvements for Westfield Special School.
Date of decision:	3 March 2021
Decision maker:	Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills
Authority for delegated decision:	The authority for the specified officer to take this decision is set out in the cabinet report approved on 21 January 2021 https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7531
Ward:	All Wards
Consultation:	<p>Cabinet debated and approved a report on the Schools Capital Investment Programme on 21 January 2021.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place with head teachers, Chair of governors, the Diocese/Archdiocese and ward councillors who agreed to the proposals.</p> <p>The cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets and the cabinet member for children & families have been consulted and are supportive of the proposals.</p> <p>Consultation has also taken place with special school head teachers and governors and the capital strategy consultative group, comprising a number of head teachers and council officers, in regard to the proposals for Westfield special school.</p> <p>Political groups were consulted on the schools capital investment programme and no objections or comments were received.</p>
Decisions made:	<p>To proceed to open tender for the appointment of a consultant to undertake the approved feasibility studies at identified primary schools, secondary schools and Westfield special school.</p> <p>Funding to be provided from the preliminary works budget at a cost of no more than £475k including all statutory and professional fees.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>Ensuring there are sufficient school places to meet parental demand is a statutory duty for the council. The council receive formula based government grant funding in the form of Basic Need to support the provision of these places in both primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>The 2016 – 2021 Schools Capital Investment Strategy is informed by a set of widely consulted principles and is applied to a detailed understanding of each of</p>

	<p>our schools and other establishments to provide clear options for improvement. This strategy has identified a number of areas that need development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity of the secondary school estate • Increase capacity of the primary school estate • Improved accommodation at Westfield special school. <p>Westfield special school caters for children with learning difficulties. It currently occupies a site that is non-compliant with government building bulletin guidelines for this type of provision and parts of the building are in poor condition.</p> <p>All projects identified will have a feasibility study undertaken to determine high level costs to obtain a perspective on its viability. The feasibility studies will inform how best to increase the capacity of the council's school estate where it is most needed and how the accommodation at Westfield special school could be significantly improved.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>The costs for the feasibilities are included in the Preliminary Works budget that has been approved by Council and in the cabinet decision on 21 January 2021.</p> <p>Timing is an issue, there are already pressures on places in some planning areas.</p> <p>The council has a statutory duty to provide enough school places. Some funding was provided by central government in 2018/19. The council could be criticised if they do not make best use of funding.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>A different set of investment works are prioritized. The works proposed have been determined based on the latest information in terms of the condition, suitability and sufficiency of the children & families establishments. The proposed works are addressing the known priorities and the council's statutory duties.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None</p>

Signed

Date: 3 March 2021

Ceri Morgan

Assistant director education development and skills