

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

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

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors Dan Hurcomb

Group leaders / representatives in attendance Councillors Terry James, Bob Matthews, Ellie Chowns and Liz Harvey

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Louis Stark, Toni Fagan, Ellie Chowns, Liz Harvey and Pauline Crockett

Officers in attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Assurance, Corporate Director - Children & Young People, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment, Director of Governance and Legal Services, Corporate Services and Corporate Director Community Wellbeing

1. LEADERS OPENING REMARKS

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

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

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

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

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

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2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES

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

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

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

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 15 - 16)

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

7. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

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

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

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

8. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK

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

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

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

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

Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that:

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

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

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

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

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

It was unanimously resolved that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was unanimously resolved:

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

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

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

10. QUARTER 4 BUDGET & PERFORMANCE REPORT

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

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

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

Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that:

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

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

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

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

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

The meeting ended at 4.32 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 22 June 2023

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

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

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

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

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

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

Response

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

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

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

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

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

Supplementary question

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

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

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

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

By when and how will these be expedited?

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

Response

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

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

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

Question 2:

To: Cabinet Member, children and young people

Maggie Steel, Hereford

In the Ofsted Monitoring Visit Feedback report we read:

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

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

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

Response

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

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

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

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

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

Supplementary question

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

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

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

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

Response

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

Question 3:

To: Cabinet Member, children and young people

Ms. Currie, Hereford

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

Response

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

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

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

Supplementary question

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

Response

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

Question 4:

Liz Wallace, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

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

Response

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

Question 5:

Mrs Helen Astley, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

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

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

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

Response

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

Question 6:

Gemma Davies, Kings Caple, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

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

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

Response

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

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

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

Supplementary question

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

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

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

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

Response

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

Question 7:

Peter McKay, Leominster

To: Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure

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

Response

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

Question 8:

Nina Shields, Herefordshire

To: Cabinet Member, community services and assets

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

Response:

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

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

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

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

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

Response

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

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

