

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	To approve the proposal to expand Peterchurch primary school, and the establishment a Special Educational Needs provision from September 2026
<b>Date of decision:</b>	20 July 2023
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Head of Educational Development
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<p>The authority for the specified officer to take this decision as set out in the Children and Young Peoples scheme of delegation line 91.</p> <p><a href="https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50111047/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Scheme%20of%20Delegation.pdf">https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50111047/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Scheme%20of%20Delegation.pdf</a></p>
<b>Ward:</b>	Golden Valley North;
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>Peterchurch Parish Council has previously been consulted on the current proposal to rebuild the school on its current site. It strongly supported that approach. The parish council takes the view that the current position is preferable because it is in the 'heart of the village', close to many of the other village amenities. It has requested that the swimming pool be retained if possible. It supports the proposal to put the electricity cables underground. It would be interested in having a joint use agreement for the management of the playing field/open space that may be provided on land adjacent to the school site to the east which is part of the Hawthorn Rise proposed development. This land would be provided to the community under a Section 106 planning agreement should the development go forward.</p> <p>The governing body and headteacher of Peterchurch Primary School are supportive of rebuilding on the current site. The school leaders and the children and have been involved with the developed design from the outset.</p> <p>The ward member has been consulted and is supportive of the proposed new build school and welcomed the addition of the Nurture Hub and the benefits it will bring for the children of the wider Golden Valley. ,</p> <p>This proposal has been discussed with the cabinet member for children's and family services and young people's attainment and the cabinet member for commissioning, procurement and assets. Both were supportive of a new build with the inclusion of a Nurture Hub.</p> <p>An updated political consultation presentation took place on 3 October 2022 which was attended by Councillors from the Liberal Democrats, Independents for Herefordshire (IFH), and the Green Party. A number of comments were received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was an acknowledgement that prices have gone up and that they will likely rise again. Therefore, the school now needs to be built at pace (IFH) and avoid</li> </ul>

	<p>budget creep (lib dems) with the green party stressing how important it is that we now get on with this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were supportive comments for the addition of the Nurture Hub with the IFH stating that it is brilliant to see and that it should be non-negotiable and that in the past we have been short-sighted in our planning of school buildings so it is good to see that it is going ahead. The green party added that it is an excellent development.</li> <li>• There was collective agreement that the swimming pool needed further consideration and needed involvement with the talk communities' hub (green party), parish and the school (IFH) with a fully costed business case (Lib Dems).</li> <li>• The issue of getting the children safely to school was raised with the absence of any crossings a real concern (IFH and the green Party) because the alternative means some local parents are opting to drive.</li> <li>• A question was asked about what will happen in regard to teaching while the construction is taking place (green party). It was confirmed that the current school would remain in use until the new build was completed.</li> </ul> <p>A community consultation event took place at Peterchurch School on 28th February 2023 where the proposed design was exhibited. 70 parents and children attend. Everyone was supportive of the new build. There was disappointment that the swimming pool was not being retained. Other feedback related to the need for a pedestrian crossing and better parking.</p> <p>The school performed a consultation from 26 May to 3 July 2023 for which they received no responses.</p>
<p><b>Decision made:</b></p>	<p>To approve the proposal to expand Peterchurch primary school, by way of a new build, which will increase the capacity of the school from 105 to 140 and the establishment of SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision from September 2026</p>
<p><b>Reasons for decision:</b></p>	<p>Ensuring there are sufficient school places to meet parental demand is a statutory duty for councils. This means that councils must make population and pupil forecasts in order to anticipate changes in demand. Where additional places are required the council is responsible for securing them. This applies to maintained schools, voluntary controlled schools, voluntary aided schools, free schools and academies.</p> <p>Every year the council is required to make a school capacity (SCAP) return to the Department for Education (DfE). This includes information about the number of children on roll in each school planning area by age, as well as details of the capacity of schools. The data from the SCAP return has, over recent years, identified building pressure on primary places in the golden valley.</p> <p>On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022, Herefordshire Council agreed to rebuild Peterchurch Primary school on its current site, with an investment of over £10m.</p> <p>The rebuild of the school will increase the capacity of the school from</p>

	<p>105 to 140 and will include a Nurture Hub which will accommodate a further 8 learners. Increasing the capacity of the school, will help reduce this pressure on places in the golden valley.</p> <p>There is an increasing need for SEN spaces. The proposed Nurture Hub will provide a flexible space that can be adapted to support the needs of the Golden Valley and the wider county. The hub can be used to give dedicated support to additional learners, for example, with social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and/or low level autism.</p>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p>	<p>Sections 13 and 14 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education Acts 2006 and 2011), sets out that, the Council has a general statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available to meet the needs of the population in its area. The Council must also promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. In order to discharge this duty the Council has to undertake a planning function to ensure that the supply of school places balances the demand for them.</p> <p>The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to promote choice and diversity when carrying out their strategic duties in relation to the provision of new school places. The proposed works set out within this report satisfy the legal duties imposed upon the Council and will ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote diversity and increase parental choice for school places.</p>
<p><b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do nothing – not recommended, A programme of maintenance work will need to be carried out over the next three years at a cost of approx. £600K, which is a significant amount of the modest maintenance grant supplied by government. In addition to planned work the council would expect to incur further costs for reactive work in line with the previous three years. Given the extent of the dilapidation at the school, further health and safety issues could arise for which the council could be held liable. Children will continue to learn in an unsuitable environment.</li> <li>2. Close the school – not recommended. The council would have to follow the statutory process as defined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which has additional requirements when considering the closure of a rural school. This is a long 5 stage process which will include a published consultation with clear rationale for the closure, alternative options and the impact on the community to name just a few matters that would need to be addressed. There is no capacity in the neighbouring schools to accommodate all the children currently on roll at Peterchurch Primary School, additional capacity would therefore need to be provided – at a cost. The nearest five primary schools are 4.9, 5.3, 6.8, 7.2 and 7.6 miles away from Peterchurch which would involve providing transport to enable the children to attend, this would again come at a cost and would have an impact on the environment. Given the above, it would be hard to justify that Peterchurch Primary School is no longer required and the only option is the closure of the school.</li> <li>3. Acquire a new site adjacent to Fairfield High School and rebuild Peterchurch Primary School there – this option has</li> </ol>

	<p>been explored in great detail and has been deemed as unviable. A study identified that significant transport and drainage infrastructure would be required. In addition, there was a lack of support from the local parish and schools.</p> <p>4. Build the school as a full form of entry (30 per year group, 210 capacity) - This is not recommended at this time. There are capital cost benefits to building the extra capacity now compared to the future. For example, to build it now would cost £741k compared to 5 years' time when it is estimated it will cost £873k. However, this additional capacity is not projected to be required in the Golden Valley in the near future. Should the addition classrooms be built and the school not fill, this would become a financial burden on the school as it would have to pay business rates on the unused space and keep the additional space maintained. In the alternative, if the space was to fill, due to parental preference for example, this could make other schools in the Golden Valley unviable.</p> <p>5. The Nurture Hub is not included in the initial rebuild - Although this would save £328k in construction costs, this is not recommended. The proposed Nurture Hub would offer a resource to offer intensive early intervention for children in the Golden Valley with social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The aim would be to use the model currently being piloted in other geographical areas of the county. The nearest hub currently is in Ross-on-Wye and the travel costs to get children to Ross-on-Wye would exceed the cost of the Nurture Hub provision.</p>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date: 8 May 2023

Head of Educational Development