

Title of report: Review of the Full Business Case for the Shirehall as a location for the future of Hereford City Library

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 26 October 2023

Cabinet Member: Harry Bramer, Cabinet member community services and assets

Report by: Corporate Director, Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Programme Manager

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 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

Central;

Purpose

To present the full business case for the Shirehall as a location for the Hereford Library and Learning Centre (HLLC) and compare against the full business case for the HLLC at Maylord Orchards.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **Cabinet approves the Shirehall as the location for Hereford Library and Learning Centre (HLLC);**
- b) **The full business case (FBC) be submitted to the Stronger Towns Board with a request to transfer the funding associated with the Maylord Orchards project to Shirehall;**
- c) **Subject to recommendations (a) and (b), the Stronger Town grant be accepted with permission to spend the full budget allocation of up to £3.005m with all operational decisions to progress the project to conclusion delegated to the Corporate Director Community Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Assets and the Deputy s151 Officer; and**
- d) **Subject to recommendation (a) the project to locate the HLLC at Maylord Orchards be terminated.**

Alternative options

1. Hereford Library remains in its current temporary location – this is not recommended as the Museum Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC) on Friars Street is a temporary site whilst a new permanent location is finalised. The MRLC was funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund specifically for museum service activities and a permanent change in function may compromise the funding agreement.
2. Hereford Library and Learning Centre (HLLC) is located at Maylord Orchards. This was the previous preferred location. 12 possible locations for the HLLC, including Maylord Orchards and Shirehall, were considered in the strategic review and presented to Cabinet in July 2023. Following this strategic review, Cabinet's preferred option was Shirehall and a full business case for this location has been developed using the same template as for Maylord Orchards. Whilst Maylord Orchards can remain an alternative option, it is to be noted that it scores less favourably than Shirehall against these criteria.

Key considerations

3. On 20 July 2023, Cabinet agreed the preferred location for the new Hereford Library and Learning Centre (HLLC) as the Shirehall and sought the development of a full business case (FBC) for Shirehall with authority to submit a Project Adjustment Request to the Stronger Towns Board ([Decision - Review of New Hereford Library and Learning Resource Centre Location - Herefordshire Council](#)). Cabinet agreed that the full business case for the Shirehall development should include the library works and all enabling works and be reported back to Cabinet in October 2023 where these would be considered against existing plans for Maylord Orchards.
4. The FBC for the Shirehall has been developed using the same Stronger Towns template as the Maylord Orchards business case in order to enable a comparison between the two locations and has been substantiated with evidence from the National Universal Library Offer and

Hereford Town Investment Plan. The template provides the necessary information for the Stronger Towns Board and meets the requirements of government's Green Book. The FBC covers the following areas:

- i. Strategic fit
- ii. Value for money
- iii. Financial viability (including any funding implications)
- iv. Stronger Towns outcome deliverability
- v. Statutory Duty compliance
- vi. Deliverability
- vii. Equality Impact potential

Case for change

5. The vision for the HLLC addresses the desired outcomes and objectives of the Herefordshire County Plan 2021-24, the draft Hereford City Masterplan 2050 and Big Economic Plan 2050. This proposed relocation places communities and culture at the very heart of future ambitions for 'Herefordshire's arts and heritage destination offer'. The project harnesses Herefordshire's County Plan vision to 'protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty and enhance quality of life and support tourism'. It also 'supports education and skills development' and fulfills the priorities of the Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2019-29 by creating 'connected and sustainable cultural infrastructure' that offers quality experiences, learning and career development opportunities for visitors and residents of Herefordshire alike.
6. The current location of the Hereford Library in Broad Street is no longer compatible with both the contemporary needs of users and this administration's ambitions to develop a world class library in the county. A library in a new location will be able to respond to the national Universal Library Offer issued by Libraries Connected, to promote:
 - a. A combination of reading, information and digital, culture and creativity, and wellbeing; and
 - b. Cultural enrichment, economic prosperity, digital access and digital literacy, written literacy, healthier and happier lives, and stronger and more resilient communities.

Delivering the Universal Library Offer necessitates new approaches in facility design and layout.

Economic Case

7. The redevelopment of Hereford Library is a core strand of the Hereford Town Investment Plan as it directly meets Stronger Town Interventions such as *Urban Regeneration, Planning and Land Use, Arts, Culture and Heritage, Skills Infrastructure* and *Enterprise Infrastructure*. It will provide an improved arts, cultural and heritage offer, and will also increase the number of start-ups and/or scale-ups utilising business incubation, acceleration and co-working spaces.
8. The Learning Centre will provide residents with access to learning services, addressing skills gaps and allowing them to seek higher value roles providing enhanced living standards.
9. Although both business cases provide a 'very good' Benefits Cost Ratio (BCR) of over 2, the ability of Shirehall to provide extra cultural and learning programmes provides for a higher BCR (2.7) than that of Maylord Orchards (2.3).

Financial Case

10. Stronger Towns approved a grant to support the HLLC in Maylord Orchards and £2,610,715.96 remains of that grant. If Cabinet take the decision, having compared the two FBCs, that

Shirehall offers the best opportunity to locate the HLLC, it will be necessary to request transfer of this funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The remaining element of council match capital grant funding of £394,655.08 will similarly be transferred creating a total funding envelope for the HLLC related works of £3,005,371.04. The Stronger Towns budget will fund all works associated with the installation of the HLLC including all architectural enabling works necessary to open the library service provision to the public, e.g. a service goods lift, book stacks and furniture, Sensory Room and Makerspace equipment, new blinds, stage works and accessible platform lifts within the Assembly Hall.

11. If the decision is to move the location of the library to Shirehall, then essential refurbishment works to the building will be required to enable the HLLC to function effectively. The cost estimate for these critical Shirehall refurbishment works is £4.2m (Phase 1). £1.2m is already approved in the capital programme and the additional £3m is to be included in the revised capital programme for consideration by full Council. Opening up the whole building through refurbishment and wider relocation of staff and services will maximise the HLLC offer, and bring a key strategic site back into full use. Therefore, it is proposed that these future refurbishment works would continue over a further four phases to 2029. The impact on the HLLC of the future works will be carefully managed to minimise noise and accessibility issues.
12. The cost of moving the library service from Broad Street to either Maylord Orchards or Shirehall will require an increase in budget as the footprint for the library in both locations will be greater and the Learning Centre is a new provision. For Maylord Orchards, the increase was estimated at £515,973 and for the Shirehall £390,077. Both business cases indicate that additional staffing will be required and this will form part of the annual budget planning for the service, alongside consideration of volunteer recruitment.
13. The difference in the costs to the service between the two locations, beyond staffing, mainly relate to rent/rates, service charge, utilities, cleaning and telephones associated with Maylord Orchards as a commercial centre. If commercial tenants occupy the allocated space in Maylord Orchards, then they would cover the service charge costs (costs of running the centre) and pay the non-domestic rates, with the council expecting to receive a rental income in the region of £55,000 per annum.

Commercial Case

14. The Council's external consultant 'Take the Current' has carried out a commercial feasibility study of the HLLC in both locations. On balance, the Shirehall location offers more opportunities to generate income through hire of space and a programme of events and activities for which the library can make a charge. The Maylord Orchard location does not offer the same opportunities to generate income, although some income would be achieved from space hire.
15. In both locations, other income will be generated from regular library services such as schools service, printing, inter library loans and minor publication retail offer. Through outreach services and online opportunities, the library service will offer additional significant reach across Herefordshire communities. Although many of the services are non-chargeable, the increased footfall into the city will have an economic impact.

Comparison of Shirehall FBC and Maylord Orchards FBC

16. Locating the HLLC in Shirehall would:
 - bring a valuable heritage asset back into community use
 - make more visible the civic, communal and built heritage of Shirehall, connecting to the wider cultural and visitor attraction aspirations of the city

- deliver 895m² total floor space, which includes a 435m² Library footprint, 174m² Learning Centre footprint and 286m² back of house, circulation and other space.
- maximise the potential to integrate the library, adult learning, health and wellbeing and other community services under one roof
- provide residents with new access to sensory learning, digital skills lounge, makerspace and business development advice in a series of dedicated spaces (these resources would not be achievable at Maylord Orchards due to space limitation)
- provide a dedicated events space on the Assembly Hall stage to enable the delivery of a broad-ranging and quality cultural programme to widen participation
- generate income through hire of spaces and events and programmes in the Assembly Hall (income to library service plus income provided to Property Services from hire of training rooms)
- retain the earmarked space in Maylord Orchards for commercial purposes

Locating the HLLC in Maylord Orchards would:

- regenerate and repurpose key shopping centre units in the city centre
- benefit businesses in the shopping centre and surrounding area through additional Library and Learning Centre footfall
- allow the potential to increase and widen use of Library and Learning Centre by shoppers
- deliver 823m² total floor space, which includes a 374m² Library footprint, 105m² Learning Centre footprint and 344m² back of house, circulation and other space.
- generate income through hire of rooms and a small café operation in a city centre location (necessary to cover the service charges due)
- support aspirations for a cluster of cultural organisations that were planning to locate in the city centre (but this is no longer going forward)

17. Assessment of each location against the Stronger Towns business case criteria is set out in the table below

Criteria	Shirehall	Maylord Orchards
i Strategic fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports regeneration of redundant historic building stock in city centre • Supports Town Investment Plan projects, and Herefordshire Council strategic plans and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports regeneration of city centre in high street retail decline • Supports Town Investment Plan projects, and Herefordshire Council strategic plans and policies
Conclusion	Both cases meet the strategic fit of the Town Investment Plan and Council priorities	
ii Value for money (VFM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Stronger Towns/ Herefordshire Council funds spent on fit out and therefore the visitor experience • More learning and skills spaces afforded • Independently validated Benefit Cost Ratio: 2.7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Stronger Towns/ Herefordshire Council funds spent on build enabling (construction) works (less than 10% of overall budget cost would be on fixtures, fittings and equipment) • Independently validated Benefit Cost Ratio: 2.3

Criteria	Shirehall	Maylord Orchards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue uplift for staffing larger space than Broad Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue uplift for staffing larger space than Broad Street Additional revenue uplift for Maylord Orchard to cover rent/rates, service charges etc.
Conclusion	Shirehall provides much better VFM in terms of Stronger Towns and council capital investment and future revenue uplift.	
iii Financial viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of Stronger Towns funding required Dependent on full Council approving additional funding for essential refurbishment works to the building (additional £3m) Reduced expenditure on rent/rates and service charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding approved by Stronger Towns Board and Herefordshire Council Service charge applies Limits commercial potential of Maylord Orchards retail centre
Conclusion	Shirehall provides better future financial viability for Herefordshire Council (assuming transfer of Stronger Towns funding)	
iv Stronger Towns outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Regeneration, Planning, Land Use Development of abandoned/ dilapidated sites Delivery of quality commercial space in key locations Delivery of new public spaces Arts, Culture and Heritage New, upgraded or protected libraries New, upgraded or protected community hubs Skills Infrastructure Increase in capacity/ accessibility to new skills facilities Availability of new specialist equipment Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs Enterprise Infrastructure Increase in the amount of shared workspace and/or business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Regeneration, Planning, Land Use Delivery of quality commercial space in key locations (town centres) Delivery of new public spaces Arts, Culture and Heritage New, upgraded or protected libraries Skills Infrastructure Increase in capacity/ accessibility to new skills facilities Increase in the breadth of the local skills offer that responds to local skills needs

Criteria	Shirehall	Maylord Orchards
	development and innovation facilities	
Conclusion	Shirehall provides more/greater outcomes for the same Stronger Towns grant investment	
v Statutory compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) statutory compliance Offers more Library and Learning Centre footprint overall compared to Maylord Orchards to deliver service Design supports 'Universal Library Offer' approach reducing book stack levels and increasing other offers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets DCMS statutory compliance More linear metres of book stack included (due to design by specialist not yet completed)
Conclusion	Shirehall offers a greater degree of compliance to requirements set out by DCMS in terms of Universal Library Offer through the added facilities to extend the range of services etc that can be supplied/supported.	
vi Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned delivery in June 2026 Requires additional capital funding (£3m) to carry out essential refurbishment to the building to enable the HLLC to operate Subject to transfer of Stronger Towns funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned delivery in April 2024 Funds already allocated by Stronger Towns and Herefordshire Council
Conclusion	Subject to the additional funding for enabling works supported at Full Council and the transfer of Stronger Towns funding, there is an extended timescale for Shirehall but it will achieve wider community impacts.	
vii Equalities impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major impacts identified Accessibility improvements to the building to be undertaken as part of wider funded build works More offers for Special Educational Needs (SEN) families and users with learning disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major impacts identified Changing Places facility to be installed (separate project)
Conclusion	Although Shirehall will not have a Changing Places facility, the extra facilities for SEN families and users will provide an enhanced opportunity. A Changing Places facility could be considered within Shirehall in the future should opportunity arise and in development of the full use potential.	

Community impact

18. The project to develop a new, innovative and modern Library and Learning Centre will create a mixed development to support the regeneration of the city centre, and will improve the opportunities and wellbeing outcomes of the population through enhanced cultural facilities. The new library will be a hub for cultural activities and will broaden the groups being reached and provide a much improved quality of experience.
19. The Learning Centre will not only provide basic skills learning, but will also enable users to access technical equipment through the Makerspace to upskill at entry level and catalyse entrepreneurship and business start-up.
20. The Learning Centre will also contribute to a wide range of outcomes for individuals and the wider community including personal and social, educational attainment, economic regeneration, and improved health and wellbeing. As well as supporting adult learning, the facility could provide space for health and wellbeing clinics which provides an opportunity to reach our most vulnerable groups, supporting 'health on the high street' as part of the national direction for NHS services.
21. The Sensory Room will provide learning potential for disabled adults and children, enabling a safe space for them to learn and for parents and carers to connect. It will also provide necessary quiet space for those users who require it during a visit.
22. The combination of increased skills and advice/support in one location has the capacity to increase the income potential which is vital within the current economic climate and particularly within Herefordshire, which struggles with social mobility and below average incomes.

Environmental Impact

23. 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.
24. The refurbishment of the Shirehall and installation of HLLC will seek to deliver the council's [environmental policy commitments](#). Options for renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaics (PVs) are limited due to heritage conservation, however, an array could sit on the site of the current CCTV extension, once demolished. These have been included within Phase 2 works as non-essential but desirable. LED lighting and intelligent lighting controls are also included within Phase 2 build works. The library has been designed to make best use of natural daylight to minimise the use of artificial lights during the day. Blinds will be installed to control the sunlight. Listed building constraints prevent adding insulation lining to walls, however roof spaces and flat roofs being recovered can be insulated. Windows will be repaired but are likely to remain single-glazed due to listing constraints.
25. In both locations, all audio-visual (AV) display and electrical equipment will be LED and designed with energy-reduction aims in mind. The exhibition equipment will be on an individual control system so that they can all be switched off when visitors are not in the building. AV hardware and software can be programmed so that they can go into low power mode with a screensaver when not being used during opening hours.
26. In terms of Maylord Orchards, as noted in the original approval report, the LLC was largely an internal fit out of a small part of an existing building. Therefore, it would not be possible to significantly enhance the environmental standards of the building as a whole. However, the project would have sought to achieve the highest environmental standards wherever possible.

Equality duty

27. 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.

28. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes.

29. The HLLC in either location will be open to all, aiding the development of skills to enable people to access higher value employment opportunities and improve their health and wellbeing. Adult Learning Services will deliver courses to improve people's skills. In both locations, there will be space to work with partners to deliver events and activities to promote positive health and wellbeing agendas.

30. The HLLC will be made fully accessible to modern standards as part of the design. Staff and volunteers will be trained in diversity, inclusion, mental health, dementia awareness and neurodiversity, and in the delivery of activities for different needs.

Resource implications

31. The cost of the HLLC project in the Shirehall location is £3,005,371.04.

32. The cost of the Shirehall Phase 1 refurbishment works is £4,200,000 to enable the HLLC project. This involves critical works to resolve fabric and safety factors (compliance, mechanical and electrical works, replacement boiler and heating system alterations, roof and skylight repairs, access, damp ingress, ceiling and structural repairs).

33. The table below summarises the funding streams and the total budget available for the project:

Type	Source	Total Amount
Public Sector	Stronger Towns Fund	£2,610,715.96
Public Sector	Herefordshire Council	£394,655.08
	Total	£3,005,371.04

34. The council is committed to ensuring the services have the appropriate levels of staffing and overheads which will require additional revenue funding within the future model for the library provision. Detailed business planning will continue to be developed for the services to ensure transition to the future model and delivery of the service.

35. The table below indicates the shift in revenue expenditure for the service. (Please note that costs presented are based on current year values and have not been uplifted to reflect pay inflation).

	Current library service budget (Broad Street)	Maylord Orchards	Shirehall
Income			
Grants	£1,570	-	-
Facilities	£2,500	£1,500	£1,500
Printing / Photocopying	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
NMITE management system (off-off payment)	£7,000	-	-
Hire of staff (Colwall Library)	£7,000	£11,600	£11,600
Admin charge/ Travel Expenses	£375	£1,100	£1,100
Inter Library Loans Charge	-	£200	£200
Lettings	£3,000	£2,500	£2,500
Schools Service	£33,000	£33,000	£33,000
Commission	£500	-	-
Catering	-	£11,178	*
Adult Training Room	-	£42,180	*
Events Hire	-	-	£6,000
Events and Programming (Day)	-	-	£4,860
Events and Programming (Evening)	-	-	£16,478
Retail	-	-	£1,400
Sensory Room Hire	-	-	£26,580
Makerspace Hire	-	-	£26,500
Total Income	£58,975	£107,258	£135,718
Expenditure			
Payroll	£1,095,830	£1,474,929	£1,474,929
Overheads (Sensory Room and Makerspace)	-	-	£15,000
Overheads (Events Hire)	-	-	£2,280
Overheads (Events Evening)	-	-	£4,560
Book Fund	£206,000	£210,000	£210,000
Inter Library Loans	£3,555	£3,750	£3,750
Subscriptions	£1,791	£1,791	£1,791
Rent/Rates	£1,100	£42,000	£1,434

	Current library service budget (Broad Street)	Maylord Orchards	Shirehall
Service Charge	£19,844	£38,000	£19,844
Computer Expenditure	£79,266	£80,000	£80,000
Buildings Maintenance	£585	£5,000	£1,000
Promotion / Events	£5,530	£20,000	£20,000
Advertising (Recurrent)	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500
Advertising (Non-recurrent)	-	£1,500	£1,500
Utilities	-	£58,000	-
Insurance	-	£3,000	-
Training and Recruitment	-	£6,724	£6,724
Cleaning / Refuse	£660	£17,370	£660
Telephone	-	£5,000	-
Equipment	£2,330	£3,000	£3,000
Stationery / Postage	£20,900	£21,000	£21,000
Materials	£6,002	£5,000	£5,000
Furniture/ Fittings	£950	£5,000	£5,000
Vehicle Costs	£6,680	£7,500	£7,500
Mileage	£3,954	£2,500	£2,500
Agency Staff	-	-	£29,155
Security	-	£5,000	£5,000
Other	£2,800	£6,000	£3,000
Total Expenditure	£1,460,277	£2,024,564	£1,927,127
Net Revenue Expenditure	£1,401,332	£1,917,306	£1,791,409
Variance		£515,973	£390,077

* Note income generated received by Property Services

36. The table below shows the predicted drawdown according to the programme for both council capital and Stronger Town funding streams for Shirehall only, and the following table indicates the additional revenue pressure across the cycle of the project.
37. If the decision is taken to locate the HLLC in Shirehall, there will be a requirement for a longer period of temporary accommodation for the library. This may have an additional revenue implication for the service and options for this are being worked through.

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Stronger Towns Fund</i>		675	1,936	2,611
<i>Herefordshire Council Capital</i>	180		214	394
TOTAL	180	675	2,150	3,005

Additional Revenue budget implications *	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Additional revenue</i>	0	0	390	390
TOTAL		0	390	390

*The above table is revenue net position and is dependent on a growth bid through the budget setting process for 2026/2027 onwards.

Capital Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Construction costs			997	997
Client contingency		138	138	276
Principle Designer			10	10
Project Management Costs		40	40	80
Clerk of Works Fee			10	10
Sensory Room			25	25
Makerspace hardware, tooling, materials			40	40
Accessibility provision			30	30
Business IP Centre set-up allocation			20	20
AV hardware, additional electricals, software installation			120	120
Surveys	30			30
Exhibition Infrastructure and Display			85	85
Orientation and signage			35	35
Main Contractor Design Fees – Stage 1	50			50
Main Contractor Design Fees – Stage 2		50		50
Preliminaries		82	82	164
OH&P		32	32	64
Inflation			54	54
Professional Fees		76	76	152
Client Development Costs		34	34	68
Project Risks		21	21	42

Contingency	100	202	301	603
TOTAL	180	675	2,150	3,005

Legal implications

38. If the recommendations are approved Stronger Towns Funding and Council approval of capital funding will be required to deliver the project.
39. The project is also dependent on achieving listed building consent for the proposed works.
40. The works will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and the Public Contract Regulation 2015.

Risk management

Risk	Mitigation
Delays to project delivery and additional cost	The project team is working closely with Herefordshire Council procurement team as is Mace Ltd procurement team, who understand the current market to mitigate this risk.
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Stronger Towns Board do not support Shirehall project/committed spend not achieved by March 2025	We are working closely with both parties involved to ensure they are updated throughout the Cabinet decision process.
Rise in inflation may result in an increase in costs	Value engineering may be required. Scope may need to be reduced. Additional funding may be required. Feasibility assessment will ensure financial reassurance.
Specialist contractor requirement/ volatile construction market	There is a generous contingency for this project within the budget. For the Shirehall, extensive surveys and site investigations have been carried out to understand the building and its requirements.
The library does not meet statutory requirements	The design team will continue to work closely with the Library service to ensure the new design provides the spaces and area required to fulfil its statutory obligations.

Consultees

41. Key stakeholders have continued to be engaged following from the original review of Shirehall as a potential location. As well as the Stronger Towns Board, this has included the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership (which includes a wide range of organisations representing the cultural sector in the county, including The Courtyard), internal delivery partners including library staff as well as Talk Community, Health and Wellbeing, Public Health and Post 16 Adult Learning Services, Hereford Business Improvement District, NMITE, Hereford City Council and the Joint Action on Herefordshire Libraries (JAHL) group, representing service users.

42. A number of site visits have also been provided to the Shirehall building for all council members and stakeholders to allow people to walk the space and ask questions about the overall potential of the building. Responses were positive and a number of partners offered suggestions for opportunities where they could work with the service and potentially utilise the bookable spaces in other areas of the building as well. Specific comments received included statements such as, '*Sounds exciting*' and '*exciting opportunity*', while one comment stated '*this project might breathe a fresh lease of life into both the building and the library service*'.
43. The political groups' consultation took place on 10 October 2023. Issues raised were:
- Accessibility – it was confirmed that there are lifts throughout the building which will be replaced or brought back into use. Accessible toilets will be introduced throughout the mezzanine levels.
 - Clarification that the phase 1 costs for the essential refurbishment works to Shirehall are £4.2m. An estimate of the total cost for the five phases of refurbishment work was requested.
 - Clarification on the floor space footage figures – the actual floor space for the library and learning centre for both locations is included in the report.
 - Clarification that if the decision is made to locate the library in the Shirehall, Maylord Orchards would remain a commercial space.
 - There was a suggestion that there should be one overall business case as there is a connection between the two projects and the one impacts the other.
 - The cost of keeping the temporary library for two years in the Friar Street unit as the Shirehall, if approved, would not open until June 2026, has been addressed in the report.
 - Clarification requested on the cost of design works. Detailed design works were not commissioned for Maylord Orchards and therefore there is no cost associated with that.
 - Potential impact on the library of ongoing phased building work in the Shirehall has been addressed in the report.
 - There was a query on the building maintenance costs of Shirehall. The figures identified in the report relate to the cost to the service of building maintenance – which will be higher for Maylord Orchards than the Shirehall.
 - A comment was made that Maylord Orchards is coming to the stage where it would require a major refurbishment and therefore capital investment.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Full Business Case Shirehall Redevelopment Library and Learning Centre
Appendix 2 Full Business Case Maylord Orchard Redevelopment Library and Learning Centre

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published

Governance	John Coleman	Date 06/10/2023
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 03/10/2023
Legal	Emma-Jane Brewerton	Date 01/10/2023
Communications	Wayne D J Rabin	Date 22/09/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 09/10/2023
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 25/09/2023
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Approved by Hilary Hall Date 18/10/2023

[Note: Please remember to overwrite or delete the guidance highlighted in grey]

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.