OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Children and Young People
Scheme Name	Schools Accessibility Works
Budget Holder	Head of Educational Development Children and Young People

Project aims and objectives:

Scheme description and demonstration of links to corporate priorities and savings plans.

There are nine known children that may require adaptions who are transitioning into schools. The schools that the children will ultimately be attending has not been determined. This will be ascertained as part of the admissions process which takes place at the start of each calendar year. The final places therefore will not be known until April/May 2024, however, these children will need an accessible school for September 2024

Councils receive no dedicated funding for adaptation, improvement or alteration at any schools. It remains the case, therefore, that central funding for accessibility improvements related to pupils joining or transferring to an individual school will need to be considered by the council. There is a requirement on schools to notify the council of access needs, and parents need to identify on school admission forms that their child has physical access requirements.

This project will seek to the following corporate priorities:

CO1: Ensure all children are healthy, safe and inspired to achieve
CO4: Protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people
EC3: Invest in education and the skills needed by employers
EC6: Spend public money in the local economy wherever possible

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Schools Accessibility Works	1,275				1,275
profession, internal fees and surveys	225				225
TOTAL	1,500				1,500
Funding sources					
Council borrowing	1,500				1,500
TOTAL	1,500				1,500
Revenue budget implications					
TOTAL					

Benefits and risks:

The anticipated benefits and risks of the proposed project plus risks of not going ahead with the scheme.

Benefits:

- Compliance with government guidelines

- Fit for purpose accommodation and associated infrastructure

- A fully accessible school that could meet the needs of all future children as well as staff and visitors.

Risks

- Adaptations will not be delivered in time for when the learner requires them

- Learners do not have the same choices/opportunities as their abled peers

Do nothing option

- Council does not fulfil their statutory duty to place children with SEN and/or disabilities in schools

- Impact on service delivery

- Reputational risk of the Council failing in its duty

- Learners could be placed in out of catchment schools leading to additional schools transport costs

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Children & Young People
Scheme Name	Children's residential homes for 11 to 18 year olds – Provider sourced staff and council purchased accommodation
Budget Holder	Darryl Freeman – Corporate Director Children & Young People

Project aims and objectives:

Following the cabinet decision of 23rd November 2023 approving the commissioning of two, two bedroomed children`s residential homes within Herefordshire, it was also approved for officers to undertake work to consider the option to develop an in house provision as a phase 2 approach. This project aims to develop an in house provision to further increase local sufficiency for children's placements in Herefordshire and achieve best value.

Herefordshire County Plan 2020-24 states:
"We intend to invest in new models of care, housing and accommodation to maximise the levels of personal independence these vulnerable people are able to attain while remaining in their communities. This might include new care homes, care villages, technology or specialist accommodation for vulnerable children and young people."

Our Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024 states that:
"For those young people requiring residential care we intend to develop more local quality provision within 2024-25 and improve percentage of children placed in area annually.

Herefordshire Improvement Plan for Children and Families 2023 highlights that **our role as Corporate Parent is a priority area of focus and promotes the following outcomes:**

"Children and young people are central to decision making and planning within the council. They trust that the council has their best interest at heart and will prioritise resources to meet their needs."
"Increased choice of placement to meet the needs of children in our care."
"Matching of placement will be available to ensure needs are met and reduction in short term placements."

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Purchase cost and mobilisation cost [2 x 2 bedroom houses]	424				424
TOTAL	424				424
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	424				424
TOTAL	424				424
Revenue budget implications					
Cost of purchasing property and adapting but a provider running the service (assuming 2 x 2 at 80% occupancy)	249	498	498	498	1,743
TOTAL	249	498	498	498	1,743

Benefits and risks:

Benefits: -

The provision within county is expected to deliver improved outcomes, promote placement stability through effective matching, control costs and allow for effective collaborative working across partner agencies.

- The council would have full control of how the service was developed and delivered via specification
- The council would manage referrals into the service and support conversations around matching, managing risk and avoid placement of non-Herefordshire children. However, the provider would have the potential to veto subject to certain conditions i.e. safeguarding risk.
- Risks associated with sourcing property, maintenance and management would be shared
- Increased local options improving choice and matching
- Retention of local connection with family/community and access to services within adult social care and housing
- Improved outcomes for children and recognition of the need to maintain trusted relationships
- Increased access to local education and health services avoiding delay in assessment/ support
- Improved engagement with providers mitigating breakdown, complaints and reputational risk
- Improved referral uptake leading to effective care planning with timely step up/down
- Reduced number of placement moves experienced by children and young people
- Reduced costs associated with transport, contact, travel, notice and uplifts
- Reduced additionality of costs linked to spot/emergency arrangements
- Reduced risk of unregistered placements
- Reduced average length of placement prior to transition to family based care

Risks: -

Currently children are being placed into accommodation that does not fully meet their needs and is often out of area. Placement stability is fragile and matching cannot be managed fully. Costs are rising and quality cannot always be guaranteed. Placing children out of county creates challenges for maintaining family contact, local networks and disrupts education.

Herefordshire`s use of both in area and out of area residential have increased by circa 67% between 2020 and 2021 with in-area placements representing approximately 20% of all placements made [Note based on previously reported data]. Out of area placements are costly and work within the service is underway to use alternative placement methods, e.g. reunification, kinship placements, etc. However due to the complex needs of some young people, it may be in their best interest to be in an external placement which is in area rather than out of area. Young people placed out of area do not maintain the family and friendship groups easily which is not in their best interest.

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Economy & Environment / Community Wellbeing
Scheme Name	Planning and Regulatory Services software replacement
Budget Holder	Roger Allonby- Service Director Economy & Growth

Project aims and objectives:

Scheme description and demonstration of links to corporate priorities and savings plans.

The Economy & Environment Directorate currently use Civica APP as their dominant line of business system. It is used by numerous service areas, delivering many Statutory functions, including Planning & Building Control, Waste, Conservation, Environmental Health, Public Health, and Licensing. It is also used by the Home Improvement Agency and Strategic Housing (Community Wellbeing).

The current system has been in place since **2009** and is renewed annually at a cost of c£57k+ RPI (around £900k spent over lifetime, to 2023). The current contract period comes to an end on 31 March 2024 and is being extended to enable replacement. The implementation would take up to two years to cover all service areas currently in scope

The replacement of Civica APP is the highest Economy and Environment Transformation Plan priorities. It will also deliver multi-Directorate benefits, whilst replacing a business-critical system that is about to reach the end-of-life stage (as-such, there is no opportunity to upgrade the current software).

Starting the procurement and implementation as soon as is possible will reduce the risk of needing to extend the current Civica contract for more than a two-year period. It will also deliver significant operational benefits in terms of improved services to customers, improved data, enhanced communication tools, improve user output significantly, and reduce dependence on outdated and labour-intensive manual processes.

A modern back-office IT system for regulatory services should be able to further reduce duplication and manual inputting of work, offering an integrated digital by default and remote mobile working solution for all service areas. This should allow all service areas using the system to sustain current service level during current difficulties of recruitment and retention.

Whilst a new software system is yet to be identified, it can be assumed that with the improved efficiencies a new software system will bring will result in the potential reduction in FTEs. New processes will also be the enabler for major changes in ways of working and accruing benefits from the Economy and Place Directorate Transformation Plan.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Planning, Housing & Regulatory Services software replacement	698.0	698.0	0	0	1,1396.0
TOTAL	698.0	698.0	0	0	1,1396.0
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	698.0	698.0	0	0	1,396.0
TOTAL	698.0	698.0	0	0	1,396.0

Revenue budget implications					
New licenses and hosting (R)				108	
Current (and two year) licences (R)		78	78	-78	
TOTAL		78	78	30	

Benefits and risks:

The replacement of the now dated Civica APP with a modern software system is the highest Economy & Environment transformation priority. It is business-critical for the service users that have a duty to provide statutory services.

Option	Short-list Y/N	Reasons
Do Nothing	N	The current software will inevitably be de-supported in the future. This would lead to a rush to procure and implement; In the meantime the services would need to work with an inefficient / broken system This would mean statutory duties could not be undertaken by HC
Do minimum (ie replace certain functionality in phases)	N	By not having a full suite of software options teams and customers would be impacted. Further IT solutions would have to be procured, likely to increase overall costs of support and integration
Full replacement of software suite	Y	Cost effective and quickest solution to ensure statutory service standards are maintained and potentially improved

The current software (Civica APP) is end of life and has not been developed by the vendor for some time. There are some major issues, such as:

- Remote / field working is very limited
- Search functionality is slow and limited
- Data extracts and reports take a significant amount of time to produce
- The system slows when 'many' users are logged in
- There are frequent periods of system downtime
- There is lack of integration to the Planning Portal
- The Private Water Supplies functionality is missing
- Lack of citizen self-serve functionality

BENEFITS: The benefits are that a new system will address these issues (above) enabling much more efficient working practices and improvement in service. This will inevitably include fte savings however these are difficult to quantify in advance.

Risk	Mitigation
Lack of HC resources, leading to lengthened implementation and need to extend current contract	Ensure appropriate and necessary resources and allocated to the implementation
No system solution agreed and in place before end of Civica APP life, teams would be unable to provide statutory services	Agree funding and begin procurement and implementation of a replacement solution asap
Civica issuing end-of-life notice for current software before new implementation project has started	Agree funding and begin procurement and implementation of a replacement solution asap
Inconsistent / no- use of HC EDRMS by services, causing double work on document 'loading' and testing	Progress other initiatives or projects to ensure all services in scope are using EDRMS by time of implementation
Poor data quality in current system	Conduct data cleansing before project implementation

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services
Scheme Name	Estates Building Improvement Programme 2024-27 & Building Works from 2022 Condition Surveys
Budget Holder	Andrew Lovegrove- Director Resources & Assurance

Project aims and objectives:

A three year programme of building improvement works 2024/27 which have been prioritised through the assessment of criteria primarily focussed on (1) identified risk, (2) health, safety or welfare of the building users (3) delivery of the aims within the council's county plan, (4) service continuity, through the delivery of property specific projects.

Key objectives include:

- Ensure that the Council's estate is maintained, safe and fit for purpose

- Address identified risks

- Reduce revenue expenditure by investing in buildings and reducing reactive maintenance

- Extend the lifecycle of Council assets and protect/enhance value

- Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

- Support the growth of our local economy

- Protect and promote our heritage

- Support reduction of carbon footprint

- To support the delivery of the County Plan

Allowing investment and undertaking a programme of improvement works will mitigate and prevent risk of failure and ensure the buildings remain open and fit for current use, thereby avoiding disruption to the delivery of services.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Building Improvement Works	1,518.3	607.3	340.0	0	2,465.6
Condition Survey Works	190.6	274.4	280.0	0	745.0
TOTAL	1,708.9	881.7	620.0	0	3,210.6
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	1,708.9	881.7	620.0	0	3,210.6
TOTAL	1,708.9	881.7	620.0	0	3,210.6
Revenue budget implications					
TOTAL					

Benefits and risks:

The anticipated benefits of the proposed programme are listed below:

- Reduced depreciation of buildings and assets

- Heritage protection

- Energy efficiency

- Sustainability

- Reduced revenue costs

- Protected service delivery

- Protected income

- Statutory Compliance

- Risk management / Mitigation

- Growth of our local economy

The programme seeks to reduce the risks identified on a project by project basis.

The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Impact on service delivery

- Rising costs – reducing the extent or quality of completed works

- Insufficient funding

- Loss of income

- Potential for serious physical injury

- Loss in value/deterioration of property assets

- Reputational risk

- Non-Compliance with statutory regulations

- Health and safety risks

The key project risks are:
- Statutory

- Financial

- Service

- Reputational

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services
Scheme Name	VMWare Host Replacement
Budget Holder	Andrew Lovegrove- Director Resources & Assurance

Project aims and objectives:

Scheme description and demonstration of links to corporate priorities and savings plans.

Replacement of Key IT Hardware operating the council's key line of business systems.

The primary objective for the project is to support the council's requirements to operate IT solutions in a secure manner protecting the Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability of the Councils data and service delivery. The authority is obliged to ensure that the underlying infrastructure is secure and that the systems hosting environment is maintained securely. Infrastructure must not be vulnerable to common cyber-attacks and this should be maintained through secure configuration and software patching.

This project is to replace ageing computer server equipment with manufacturer supported equipment, to allow security and operational integrity to be maintained, in line with emerging vulnerabilities and Cyber Security threats.

The aim of the project is as follows:

- **Replace ageing server hosting equipment which provides the underlying hardware resources required to run the councils key line of business systems, with supported 'in life' equipment which is actively supported by the supplier for hardware failure and cyber security/vulnerability patches.**
- **Replace like for like with equipment that meets the current compatibility, interoperability and support requirements for the infrastructure. This will include additional overhead to mitigate against failure and capacity growth in line with current digital planning throughout the first 5 years of operation.**
- **Provide support and maintenance contract with the manufacturer or partner for a period of five years.**
- **Migrate services from existing hosting equipment to new supported equipment.**
- **Decommission and dispose of outgoing equipment in line with the authorities' security and environmental policies and obligations.**

This will support the Council with its strategy & planning towards digital transformation by providing a stable, modern and fit for purpose infrastructure, enabling the flexibility required to adapt to changing service delivery models throughout the short to medium term (i.e. the initial life of the equipment - 5 years).

Procurement will be through an approved Local Government Procurement Framework (CCS or similar) to ensure that best value is demonstrated.

Commissioning and migration activity will be carried out by the Councils contracted IT provider – Hoople Ltd.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
VMWare Host Replacement	247.5				247.5
TOTAL	247.5				247.5
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	247.5				247.5
TOTAL	247.5				247.5
Revenue budget implications					
TOTAL					

Benefits and risks:

The anticipated benefits and risks of the proposed project plus risks of not going ahead with the scheme.

Supported 'in life' equipment will provide:

- Continued Cyber Security protection through manufacturer support for vulnerabilities (i.e. loss of data or disruption to service through Ransomware, Malware & Virus exploitation)

- Continued hardware failure protection through manufacturer support for parts and components (i.e. loss of data or disruption to service through catastrophic hardware or component failure)

- Continued feature support through manufacturer software development. Potential for cost avoidance associated with exploitation of advances in technology.

- Reduces risk for potential loss of Confidentiality, Integrity and Availability of Council key Data due to Cyber Attack or Catastrophic Hardware Failure.

- Protects the Councils Data and Service Delivery obligations through fit for purpose equipment.

- Provides operational efficiencies with opportunity for reduced power consumption & improved performance due to technology advancement in modern solutions.

- Additional overhead to support future data growth/transformation in line with current planning.

OUTLINE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE

Directorate	Corporate Services
Scheme Name	Property Improvements in Care Homes
Budget Holder	Andrew Lovegrove- Director Resources & Assurance

Project aims and objectives:

A programme of building improvement works 2023/24 which have been identified through the assessment of criteria primarily focussed on (1) identified risk, (2) health, safety or welfare of the building users (3) delivery of the aims within the council's county plan, (4) service continuity, through the delivery of property specific projects.

Key objectives include:

- Ensure that the Council's estate is maintained, safe and fit for purpose

- Address identified risks

- Reduce revenue expenditure by investing in buildings

- Extend the lifecycle of Council assets and protect/enhance value

- Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

- Support reduction of carbon footprint

- To support the delivery of the County Plan

Allowing investment and undertaking a programme of improvement works will mitigate and prevent risk of failure and ensure the buildings remain open and fit for current use, thereby avoiding disruption to the delivery of services.

Estimated costs and funding sources:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project					
Care Homes Building Improvement Works 2023/24	550.0				550.0
TOTAL	550.0				550.0
Funding sources					
Corporate Funded Borrowing	550.0				550.0
TOTAL	550.0				550.0
Revenue budget implications					
TOTAL					

Benefits and risks:

The anticipated benefits of the proposed programme are listed below:

- Statutory Compliance

- Risk Management / Mitigation

- Protected Service Delivery

- Energy Efficiency

- Sustainability

The programme seeks to reduce the risks identified on a project by project basis.

The key risks of not doing the project are:

- Non-Compliance with Statutory Regulations

- Health and Safety Risks

- Potential for serious Physical Injury

- Impact on Service Delivery

- Reputational Risk

The key project risks are:

- Statutory

- Financial

- Service

- Reputational