

Worcestershire County Council

# Agenda

## Cabinet

**Thursday, 18 October 2018, 10.00 am**  
**County Hall, Worcester**

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## DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:  
**'Disclosable pecuniary interests'** and **'other disclosable interests'**

### WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

**NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you**

### WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
  - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

**NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI**

### WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
  - You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

### WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

### DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests** **OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

### DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
  - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

## Cabinet

**Thursday, 18 October 2018, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester**

**Membership:** Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Mr A T Amos, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs L C Hodgson, Ms K J May, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr A C Roberts and Mr J H Smith

## Agenda

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1	<b>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>	
2	<b>Public Participation</b> Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case Wednesday 17 October 2018). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed below.	
3	<b>Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting</b> The Minutes of the meeting of 27 September 2018 have been previously circulated	
4	<b>Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18</b>	1 - 6
5	<b>Future Use of The Grange, Kidderminster</b>	7 - 14
6	<b>Libraries Re-Modelling</b>	15 - 30
7	<b>Children at the Edge of Care and Children's Homes</b>	31 - 46

### NOTES

- Webcasting**

Members of the Cabinet are reminded that meetings of the Cabinet are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

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All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Tuesday, 9 October 2018

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**CABINET**  
**18 OCTOBER 2018****WORCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr A C Roberts

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Children, Families and Communities

**Recommendation**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) **receives the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18; and**
  - (b) **notes the progress of the work of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board.**

**Background**

2. The Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is responsible for publishing an annual report that provides an assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Worcestershire. The report also recognises achievements and is realistic about the challenges that remain.
3. The report is made available through publication on the Board's website. In addition, it is formally presented to the Chief Executive and Leader of the County Council. It was presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 14 September and the Health and Well-Being Board on 25 September 2018. It is sent to West Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner, to the respective Chairs of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Communities Board, and it is circulated to lead officers in key partner agencies.
4. In September 2017 Derek Benson, Independent Chair, informed Cabinet that whilst the WSCB had received assurance that strategies were in place to improve frontline practice, it could not yet be assured about the impact of these and therefore the child protection system remained a risk. The Board recognised the scale and challenge facing the Council and remained committed to working with all partners to bring about the necessary change required to improve outcomes for children in Worcestershire.
5. Derek Benson will again be presenting the WSCB Annual Report on behalf of the Board.

**Key points from the WSCB Annual Report 2017/18**

6. During 2017/18 Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board had a particular focus on a number of priorities, including:

- Children subject to Neglect
- Children affected by Domestic Abuse
- Children vulnerable to or experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Early Help and Thresholds
- Key messages in respect of Voice of the Child, Professional Curiosity and Resolution of Professional Differences (Escalation Policy)
- Critical Friends (Service Improvement Plan).

7. A Task and Finish Group was established in October 2017 to look at neglect in Worcestershire. During the year work commenced on the development of a Neglect Strategy which is to be implemented during 2018/19 with mechanisms in place for monitoring its impact on children and young people.

8. The Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy was launched towards the end of 2017 by the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and in support of this work a new multi-agency sub group for children and young people was established, chaired by the Assistant Director (Safeguarding). The Board completed a multi-agency case file audit (MACFA) on 12 children who had been exposed to domestic abuse five or more times. It found that in nearly half of these cases the court had made a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO), providing a window of opportunity for work to be completed with victims and children, but professionals were not always aware that this was the case. The Board has since received assurance that a more robust process is now in place to ensure that this information is shared between agencies in an expedient way to maximise the opportunities to support victims and to safeguard children. One third of all social work assessments and nearly half of all Child Protection Plans had domestic abuse as a factor.

9. The Board's Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategic Group, led by West Mercia Police, continued to co-ordinate the implementation of the CSE Strategy 2017-19. Changes were made to operational processes and systems during the year to improve decision making about individual children, and membership of the CSE Operational Group was reviewed to ensure all key agencies were represented, including Education which was a gap identified by Ofsted in 2016. The Board noted a number of concerns in respect of CSE: the absence of an up to date multi-agency CSE Problem Profile (reported to be due to the lack of analyst capacity), difficulties experienced by West Mercia Police in sharing data with partners due to issues with migration to their new data system, and concern about the capacity of commissioned support services for young people who have experienced CSE (at the time of writing the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner were in the process of reviewing the Contract).

10. The Board is able to provide assurance that partner agencies are engaged with the CSE agenda, that Designated Safeguarding Leads in nearly all schools have received CSE training delivered by the Board (with a plan in place to target any gaps), and that children are being identified as being at risk of or experiencing CSE. Two CSE investigations were initiated during the year involving potentially high numbers of child victims or witnesses. All schools were asked by the Board to implement the WSCB Whole School Approach to Healthy Relationships in support of the CSE prevention agenda, however the Board is not yet in a position to provide assurance that it has been widely embedded. Partner agencies have been asked to complete a further CSE self-assessment against a set of practice standards developed by the Board in order to evaluate progress across the partnership. At the time of writing the findings from this audit had not been finalised but the headlines are

that all agencies have graded themselves as being in a better position than one year ago (with action plans in place to improve practice where necessary), which is encouraging.

11. A Task and Finish Group was established in October 2017 to develop the action plan required to support the implementation of the Early Help Strategy approved in September 2017, and in March 2018 it was agreed that responsibility for delivery of the action plan would transfer to the relevant sub group of the Health and Well-Being Board. The Board will, however, retain a role in monitoring the effectiveness of early help and in supporting communications to partner agencies about the Early Help Pathway. The Board is in the process of developing its own effectiveness framework for evaluating early help in Worcestershire, to include feedback from practitioners and families, but is not in a position to provide assurance at this point in time. Through its quality assurance activity the Board is aware of examples of good practice, but is unable to draw conclusions from the relatively small sample size. As reported last year there remain questions about the effectiveness of wider universal services in the delivery of early help as there is no mechanism in place for capturing information about what is being offered to children and families other than when a service is delivered by a commissioned service. The Service Improvement Plan has identified the need for an improved robust dataset which will provide consistent and accurate information about early help provision going forward.

12. It is currently a statutory responsibility of Local Safeguarding Children Boards to publish guidance on the thresholds for making a referral to Children's Social Care. The revised Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance was approved in September 2017 and was referenced at Learning and Improvement Briefings for practitioners held during the Autumn 2017. A survey was subsequently circulated which asked partner agencies to confirm that the Levels of Need (Thresholds) guidance had been circulated to all relevant staff and commissioned services. The Board can provide assurance that the guidance has been actively disseminated by all statutory partner agencies (reaching approximately 13,000 practitioners) and that, in addition, all agencies have confirmed that their staff know the name and contact details of their respective safeguarding lead. Questions remain about the consistent application of thresholds by practitioners and the Board will continue to evaluate this during 2018/19.

13. This year has continued to see further pressure on the Family Front Door with the number of Contacts up by 10% compared with last year. Just over one third (36%) of Contacts became Referrals to Children's Social Care. The number of looked after children increased slightly (up 4.5% compared to last year), thought to be associated with a reduction in the number of children on Child Protection Plans where the Plan had not achieved the required outcomes and children had been moved into local authority Care. The number of Child in Need Plans also reduced this year, reflecting a positive approach to reviewing cases and addressing drift and delay. Performance in respect of completion of social work Assessments within time scale continued to improve. The Board was well sighted on the Service Improvement Plan and eight Board members were nominated to act as Critical Friends to provide support and challenge to the Children's Social Care improvement work stream leads. This input was acknowledged by the Director of Children, Families and Communities to have been constructive and helpful and will continue during 2018/19. The Board was also well sighted on the Service Improvement Plan dashboard presented at each Board meeting by the Assistant Director (Safeguarding), which provided opportunity for Board members to ask questions and receive assurance on progress.

14. Audit and case review findings in previous years had indicated that practitioners did not always have an understanding of the lived experience of children and young people or use this to inform decisions. Professional curiosity was often absent and explanations from parents and carers taken at face value, sometimes leading to disguised compliance. In

addition, there was evidence that practitioners were not always familiar with the WSCB policy for resolving professional differences of opinion. The Board undertook a number of initiatives to raise awareness of these key messages, including introduction of the Learning and Improvement Briefings (LIBs) at briefings for practitioners, and utilising the Board's newsletter and Practitioner Network. A subsequent survey sent out to partner agencies provided assurance that all statutory partners had disseminated the LIBs to relevant staff and commissioned services (again reaching approximately 13,000 practitioners). The Board was pleased to note positive comments made by Ofsted inspectors about the evidence of professional curiosity during one of their monitoring visits in 2018. During the coming year the Board will continue to look for evidence of practitioners listening to the voice of the child, exercising professional curiosity and employing the Escalation Policy when professional differences of opinion cannot be easily resolved.

15. Three cases were presented during the year for consideration of a Serious Case Review (SCR) and all three were found to meet the criteria resulting in SCRs being formally commissioned by the Board. At the time of writing one Serious Case Review has been completed but not yet published while the outcome of parallel processes are awaited. Learning from these SCRs will inform the Board's Learning and Improvement communications during 2018/19.

16. During the year 25 Child Death Notifications were received, the lowest number since the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) process began in 2008. The Panel reviewed 25 deaths during the year and modifiable factors were found to be present in 11 of the deaths. Modifiable factors included lack of parental supervision, inaction following expression of suicidal ideation, maternal obesity, smoking and incomplete evaluation of previous miscarriages. National data for 2017/18 is not yet available for comparison purposes. An analysis of all Worcestershire child deaths categorised as 'Suicide or Deliberate Self-Harm' was completed and compared with findings from a recent national study into suicides, both highlighting the importance of supporting and responding to young people who have been told of another child's suicidal thoughts or behaviours. The Panel was particularly pleased to receive information about the work undertaken by one local secondary school to support students who might find themselves in this position.

17. The Board delivered 58 training events to 1308 practitioners during 2017/18. This multi-agency training continues to be rated highly by attendees who report an improvement in knowledge and confidence after attending training events. Post-training impact evaluations and audits also demonstrate that learning is transferred into the workplace and has a positive impact on children and families. 1389 practitioners completed an e-learning course with 97% being satisfied or very satisfied that the course gave them all the information they needed. This was a significant reduction in demand compared to previous years and in March 2018 the decision was taken by the Board to cease providing e-learning from April 2019.

18. The Section 11 Audit is a self-assessment by partner agencies of the extent to which they are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities as defined in the Children Act 2004. This year the Board conducted its Section 11 Audit using a new audit template which has been developed by a West Midlands working group. The Board can provide assurance that partner agencies continue to report good compliance with their safeguarding duties with plans in place to address any areas requiring improvement. A challenge event to be facilitated by the WSCB Independent Chair during 2018/9 will seek further assurance about the evidence provided by partner agencies to support their self-assessments.

19. There were 15 private fostering arrangements in place in 2017/18. This is lower than expected, but in line with the national picture, suggesting that there is a lack of awareness of



private fostering situations or of the need to notify them to the local authority for assessment. Since the report was drafted lead practitioners with responsibility for private fostering have been identified within Children's Social Care and there are developments in place to raise awareness. The Board will continue to monitor this during the coming year.

## **Conclusion**

20. The Board has concluded that at a strategic level there is a strong commitment to safeguarding children in Worcestershire. It has also received assurances that safeguarding arrangements are in place in partner agencies and that safeguarding responsibilities are taken seriously. In addition, the Board's contributory partners have made additional monies available following the Ofsted inspection to support improvement work despite operating within financial constraints.

21. Much of the Board's attention has this year focussed on Children's Social Care as lead agency for safeguarding children. In October 2017 Ofsted acknowledged that the local authority had taken steps to tackle its 'serious weaknesses' and was beginning to make progress to improve services for children and young people. By February 2018 Ofsted were acknowledging that 'whilst services for children in Worcestershire continue to require much work to be of a good standard, progress has been made since the last monitoring visit'. The Board is assured that robust monitoring arrangements are in place through Ofsted, the Children's Commissioner and Essex County Council (Improvement Partner) and that progress is being made by Children's Social Care through delivery of its Service Improvement Plan, whilst acknowledging that further work is required to ensure that children and young people in Worcestershire receive a consistently good standard of service. Partner agencies have a part to play in ensuring that they also respond robustly to children and families, especially where the threshold is not met for a Children's Social Care intervention but families require additional support through the provision of early help.

22. From September 2019 the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board will not exist and new safeguarding partnership arrangements will be in place. The Board will, however, continue to deliver its statutory functions until the new arrangements have been established. Assurance will continue to be sought from partner agencies during the coming year as outlined in the body of this report.

## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

23. Not applicable.

## **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

24. Not applicable.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

25. Not applicable as no recommendations are made.

## **Supporting Information**

- Appendix – Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18 (available electronically)

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

**CABINET**  
**18 OCTOBER 2018****FUTURE USE OF THE GRANGE, KIDDERMINSTER**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr A I Hardman

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Adult Services

**Local Member**

Ms T Onslow

**Recommendation**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Services recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) **notes that a detailed property analysis has indicated that the Grange is not fit for its previously intended purposes;**
  - (b) **agrees that 'The Grange' is not re-purposed as a long-term dementia unit and will cease to provide short-term recovery and rehabilitation beds and other short-term provision known as replacement or emergency care beds by 31 March 2019; and**
  - (c) **agrees that upon the consequent closure the asset is declared as surplus to requirements by the Adult Services Directorate.**

**Background**

2. On 8 February 2018, Cabinet agreed that there was no longer a need for retention of 'The Grange', Kidderminster as a short-term recovery and rehabilitation unit, given that the delivery of rehabilitation services will be primarily community-based. An opportunity was perceived, however, to re-purpose the Grange rather than dispose of the site. Cabinet decided, based on information within the report, to support the proposal that the Grange should be retained as a strategic asset in the form of a long-term residential unit for people living with dementia; with five beds commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) for short-term recovery and rehabilitation for people in Wyre Forest.

3. The previous report estimated that this proposal would lead to an immediate budget pressure of £257k - but in the medium term there would be a minor net revenue saving of £63k over 5 years through pursuing this option and based on the use of 29 beds for long-term care and 5 beds for the CCG as recovery beds – totalling 34 beds. The financial case was therefore quite evenly balanced between the 2 options of full

closure and repurposing. At the time of the decision, the Council was aware that there would be costs in preparing the Grange for continued use. For timing reasons this had not been fully appraised but it was anticipated that the cost of works would be met from within the Capital Programme with no revenue implications.

4. However, following the February decision, the information and details supporting this decision have changed and the business case for this decision has weakened significantly.

### **High Level Options Appraisal – The Jacobs Report**

5. Since April 2018, 'The Grange' has provided 10 short-term beds: 5 beds for time limited rehabilitation and recovery care and 5 beds for short-term replacement care. Following the February decision the Council commissioned through Place Partnership Limited (PPL) a 'high level options appraisal' from 'Jacobs' (see 'Supporting Information') of the suitability of the estate for the provision of long-term care as anticipated in that Cabinet report. This 'options appraisal' identified that the estimated cost of remodelling, refurbishment and repair of the Grange estate would cost the Council between £2.2m and £3.3m.

6. The February Cabinet report anticipated that 29 beds requiring care for dementia (plus 5 short-term rehabilitation beds) would be available (total: 34). However, the options appraisal states:

*"Despite investing in the refurbishment and re-modelling work in Option 1 and 2 there will inevitably be some limitations due to the nature of the existing building."*

7. These limitations are important as the report recognises:

*"The building is generally dated in décor and has outdated fixtures and fittings which are not suitable for people with dementia and create an institutional feel. The layout is confusing and has long, narrow dead-end corridors with low ceilings. The bedrooms are small and only 2 have ensuite facilities."*

8. The 'Options' report and associated drawings identify the following options for refurbishment and remodelling:

Option 1 Refurbishment: proposed plans show the reorganisation of the building to accommodate the 5 bed recovery unit and provide 33 dementia beds including some remodelling of the ground floor space to give 4 new good sized ensuite bedrooms. A total of 38 beds which departed from the 'brief' of 34 beds.

Option 2 Remodelling: as Option 1 but with more extensive remodelling to make better use of space and give some rooms of more appropriate size for their function. Small existing bedrooms are combined to form an improved bedroom size with new wet room ensuites giving 6 further ensuite bedrooms and 25 dementia beds. Some of the smallest rooms would have a large replacement window to bring more natural light and increase the useable floor area. Remodelling of the entrance area is also proposed to make a clear and welcoming environment. With the additional 5 beds for the CCG this is a total of 30 beds.

9. Both 'options' were evaluated using the Kings Fund document "Is your care home dementia friendly?" This is an assessment tool that contains a list of design elements known to support, encourage and enable people with dementia in care settings (see 'Background Papers'). Options 1 and 2 results in a total bed number of 38 and 30 beds respectively. The cost of Option 1 is estimated at a range of between £2.2 million and £3 million; whilst Option 2 is estimated at a range of between £2.4 million and £3.3 million. The operational view of Option 1 applying the Kings Fund assessment tool is that it would barely meet standards of care required for people with dementia. The operational judgement of Option 2 was that it would meet standards but that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as the regulator would have ongoing concerns and the Council would have commissioned a service that would not be perceived as 'best' or even 'good' practice.

10. The outcome of the high level options appraisal is that due to the age, design, fabric and structure of the existing building it is not possible to re-furbish or remodel the building in order that it delivers a service in line with recognised 'good practice'. In addition to the proposed estate changes in the Jacobs report, there are existing building limitations which remain key risks and will imminently require attention including:

- Works to mitigate the risk of fire spread (currently mitigated by increased staffing)
- Large flat roof in need of constant patching
- Central heating and boilers, the latter of which requires replacement
- Replacement of the lift.

11. The standards and norm acceptable in 1975 when The Grange was first built have changed dramatically and the building as it approaches its 44<sup>th</sup> birthday has inherent problems that are difficult to address (as proposed in the PPL report) including: room sizes; few bedrooms with en-suites or private toilet facilities; previous adaptations that are functional; space that is redundant and not used; very narrow corridors meaning that, for example, some large wheel chairs would have difficulty negotiating the space and people who needed to be accompanied could only use the corridor if there was no one else also attempting to move through that part of the building.

12. A 30-bedded unit with these design and structural issues would not provide the economies of scale associated with a larger unit and would therefore be very costly compared to the market and as PPL stated would always have 'limitations'. All of these issues, which have recently emerged, have a significant detrimental impact on what was an evenly balanced financial case for the proposed re-purposing and re-design. The decision is made more difficult by the knowledge that the need for long-term residential dementia provision will not diminish, after all, the demographics for Worcestershire have not changed:

- Higher than average number of older people aged 65 or over (21.2% vs 17.3% England)
- 65+ projected to grow by 34% between 2015 and 2030
- 4859 people in the county on the Dementia Register predicted to increase by two thirds by 2030.

## **Financial Impact**

13. The financial impact of repayment of borrowing the capital for improvements and staffing of the Grange under 'Option 2' would mean that the unit cost per night of each bed would exceed the average market price for dementia care in the Wyre Forest area (£1,068 per week compared to £787 per week). It is important to note that these figures are based on a 95% occupancy rate. The potential weekly bed night cost of the Grange would therefore not represent best value to the Council and its tax-payers and so the February decision needs to be reconsidered in the light of the new information. It should be noted that the short-term care at the Grange can be purchased from the external provider market.

14. The option based on making a capital investment in the Grange also has to be understood and considered in the context of the Council's current financial position. If the Council proceeded with the investment, it would incur a capital cost of up to £3.3m with an associated cost of borrowing; it would be paying 35% above the market price for care; and it would also set a 'benchmark' price at which the Council is prepared to pay for care in Wyre Forest, which would likely have an inflationary effect on the market.

15. The current Adult Services Budget includes provision of £1.311m for the annual cost of the Grange made up as follows:

	£m
Staffing	1.032
Premises Costs	0.094
Other running costs	0.104
Net Operating Budget	<u>1.230</u>
Central Overheads/Recharges	0.081
Total Net Budget	<u>1.311</u>

### Provision of Care

16. The Grange is currently providing care for a maximum of 10 people. All of the people are receiving short-term care whether they be people discharged from the Acute (5 beds funded separately through the Better Care Fund (BCF)); or people requiring short-term replacement or emergency care. No service users live at the Grange. The Unit is operating with a number of vacancies but is funded against a staffing structure for the 34 bedded model. These staff are required, despite the low numbers receiving care, because of identified staff needed should the unit have a reason to evacuate speedily.

17. Current forecast running costs are slightly below budget due to savings in certain demand-driven budget lines such as catering.

18. If the Council were to fully cease care at the Grange the impact on current bed provision would be:

- Long-term care – this is not applicable as long-term care is not provided at the Grange
- Short-term 'Rehabilitation and Recovery' beds - in discussions with the CCG, it has been agreed that 5 'Rehabilitation and Recovery' beds would be commissioned from the independent care sector, ensuring that even with the proposed closure of the Grange, the residents of Wyre Forest continue to

receive the same rehabilitation 'offer' within the Wyre Forest area following discharge from hospital and this will continue to be funded via BCF

- The short-term replacement care or emergency care (5 beds) can be found from other providers and purchased from the market place.

## **Summary**

19. Due to the ongoing capital investment issues the Council is paying for a fully staffed unit with low occupancy, and purchasing care from the market for those who would otherwise be in the Grange. This has been mitigated by utilising capacity to provide short-term care but this duplication is unsustainable.

20. Option 1, above, is not viable. The investment of £2.2 - £3.3 million, for Option 2, would still not provide an efficient, effective or modern care service due to the reduced capacity to 30 beds and the remaining structural design issues of the building. Option 2 would also be approximately 35% more expensive than the purchase of alternative care in the market.

21. The Council has a general duty to ensure it delivers best value and this has added imperative given the Council's current budget position. The Grange, even with capital investment, is unable to deliver value for money as it would not be competitive with the external market. The future provision of people with dementia needs will be addressed in a future Cabinet report. In the meantime, the Council will continue to purchase appropriate and safe care from the independent sector as currently.

22. It is therefore recommended that the Grange is not re-purposed as a dementia unit, and that it ceases to provide short-term beds and thus closes by 31 March 2019.

## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

23. The Council will continue to meet the needs of service users and ensure that their assessed eligible needs will be met at alternative provision to the Grange. If Cabinet approves the recommendations, Adult Services will not be placing at the Grange from 31 January 2019 in order to limit the impact of any potential disruption and moves.

24. The current net operating cost of The Grange is £1.230m excluding central overheads. The current short-term use of 5 beds at the Grange is funded through BCF and this has not been assumed as an ongoing income line to unit. BCF will be used to purchase these beds in future from the market. There is therefore, no requirement to purchase additional market placements to replace the remainder of the current unused beds within the Grange.

25. The closure of the Grange would therefore generate an ongoing cost reduction against current forecasts of £1.230m from 2019-20 recurrently which would mitigate some of Adult Services' financial pressures. This is based on an anticipated closure date of 31 March 2019. If the actual closure date is later than this the savings in 2019/20 will be reduced by approximately £0.100m for each month the unit remains open.

26. Against this ongoing saving there will be short-term redundancy and actuarial pension costs for which corporate funding is being sought.

27. Upon closure of this service the property would be declared as 'surplus to requirements' and transfer from Adult Services to be held corporately pending disposal or alternative use.

28. Upon the recommendations being accepted and endorsed the following actions would be put in place:

- All people who are receiving care at The Grange are short-term placements and will move on in line with care plans
- Appropriate consultation with recognised Trade Unions and staff would take place in accordance with Worcestershire County Council Employment Policies and Procedures.

### **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

29. A Privacy and Impact Assessment has been completed and the outcome was that this was low risk. This has been discussed with the Information and Governance Manager and been approved.

30. Upon acceptance of the recommendations appropriate policies and procedures will be enacted and taken for the transferring and archiving of all residents/services users' personal data and information.

31. A Public Health Impact Screening Assessment has been completed. The result of the 'impact assessment' was 'neutral' or 'unknown'. This is mainly because the small number of people in receipt of short-term care would be allowed to finish their rehabilitation. The outcome, of which, for the individual, would be either to return home or seek alternative care provision in line with the recommendations of their support programme.

32. The February Cabinet report noted that there is an increasing need for residential placements for people with high needs dementia and this has been reported before through Cabinet. This provision is, in the majority, met through spot purchasing and the external market. The Adult Services Market Position Statement is being drafted and it is anticipated that this will highlight the need for new commissioning approaches to meet this demand.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

33. Cabinet will be well aware of the need to demonstrate that the Council has met its Public Sector Equalities Duties.

34. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed in respect of these recommendations. The screening did not identify any potential equality considerations requiring further consideration during implementation. As a result, the loss of provision for people with protected characteristics is balanced and met by other services.

### **Supporting Information**

- Jacobs Report: 'High Level Options Paper' May 2018 – available electronically



## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

### Specific Contact Points for this report

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Adult Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Cabinet Report: 'Future Use of the Grange, Kidderminster' – 8 February 2018

'Is your care home dementia friendly?' an assessment tool produced by the Kings Fund (2014)

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**CABINET**  
**18 OCTOBER 2018****LIBRARIES RE-MODELLING**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mrs L C Hodgson

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Children, Families and Communities

**Recommendation**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) **recognises its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service in Worcestershire;**
  - (b) **agrees to continue with the innovation and transformation programme, launched in May 2011, with an updated set of key principles outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14, and continue to work with partner agencies and community groups in order to provide a service within the future Medium-Term Financial Plan envelope;**
  - (c) **agrees to the updated set of potential options for library service points as outlined in paragraph 24 and that these are used as the model to shape the future of all library provision in Worcestershire;**
  - (d) **notes the headline findings of the Libraries' Needs Assessment and proposed recommendations for the library service delivery offer as outlined in paragraphs 25-32;**
  - (e) **authorises the Director of Children, Families and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities, to finalise consultation documents and commence public consultation and engagement on the proposed options for libraries service points described in paragraph 38; and**
  - (f) **receives a further report following the outcome of the public consultation process in order to reach decisions about the future of relevant libraries.**

**Background**

2. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (Section 7). Local authorities have the scope to offer wider

library services beyond the statutory service to other user groups, and the Act allows for joint working between library authorities.

3. The Act does not try to define what a Library service is, but when considering how best to deliver the statutory duty, each library authority (upper-tier local authorities) is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

In fulfilling its duty under the s7(1), a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability, amongst other things:

- a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and (s7(2)(a))
- b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service (s7(2)(b)).

The general duty under s7(1) of the 1964 Act does not extend "to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area".

4. Worcestershire County Council currently meets its statutory duty through the services delivered via twenty-one static libraries, two fully volunteer-run community library links based in village halls at Welland and Martley, a mobile library and a range of digital services and digital content that are accessible on the Council's library web pages.

5. The vision of Worcestershire Library Service is to meet local need and strengthen local communities through the provision of resources, information and guidance that improve reading & literacy, develop skills and promote health & wellbeing in safe and welcoming community spaces that provide a platform for community participation.

6. Worcestershire Libraries' service offer is aligned to the Society for Chief Librarians (SCL) Universal Service Offers and has been designed to meet national library outcomes identified by the Libraries Taskforce in 2016, as well as delivering against Council priorities.

7. The role of libraries within Worcestershire communities has been changing for over a decade and continues to evolve within a challenging financial environment. Traditional library services of book borrowing, computer access and family activities & events are now delivered alongside a comprehensive adult learning programme, targeted reading and literacy schemes, job clubs, job fairs, health and wellbeing services and a varied volunteering programme.

8. Increasing participation in Worcestershire Libraries' digital service offer means that library customers no longer need to visit a library to access all library services. Over 70%

of all renewals and reservations are made online and 2017/18 saw an increase of over 80% in e-book and e-audiobook borrowing.

9. Against a backdrop of increasing digital library access and a national trend of slowly declining participation in traditional library services, almost 50% of Worcestershire Libraries have seen an increase in visitor numbers since 2015/16. This is a result of Worcestershire libraries taking on an increasing role as community hubs, offering 'one stop' access to a range of community services. A wide reaching property re-modelling programme has seen 14 libraries co-located with other Council and third party customer facing services and with a range of partners including: Worcester University, Worcestershire schools, Council service centres, Job Centres, health centres and tourist information services. These co-locations have helped to deliver efficiencies that sustain Worcestershire libraries, whilst ensuring they remain at the heart of community service provision.

10. In 2017/18 there were 2.7 million visits across the full range of statutory Library provision in Worcestershire. Worcestershire library members have access to 650,000 books and audio visual items, which generated over 2.4 million issues (2017/18); and to 4,500 e-books, e-audiobooks, and e-magazines which generated 58,930 downloads in 2017/18 (49% up on 2016/17). The cumulative total of weekly opening hours across the 23 static library locations is 874 hours, ranging from 94.5 hours a week at The Hive to 8.25 hours a week at the community run library link in Welland. The Mobile Library served over 175 villages across Worcestershire and the Library Service at Home delivered books & resources to the homes of more than 400 residents who are unable to get to their local library or a mobile library stop. The Hive is the 8<sup>th</sup> most-visited library in Great Britain and remains unique in being delivered through a University/local authority partnership.

11. The 2018/19 gross budget and base budget for the Library Service is shown below:

	<b>Gross Base Budget (Inc. all Hive based services) £000</b>	<b>Gross Base Budget (WCC Library services only) £000</b>	<b>Net Base budget (WCC Library services only) £000</b>
<b>2018/19 with The Hive</b>	10,868	8,859	3,760
<b>2018/19 without The Hive</b>	3,883	3,883	2,342

- The Hive is Worcestershire's flagship library accommodating a number of services alongside the integrated public and University library, and with £2.009m worth of costs attributable to other Council service i.e. Worcestershire Hub and Archives & Archaeology.
- £300k of Libraries' overall base budget is funded by Public Health ring-fenced grant and a service level agreement is in place between Public Health and the Library Service, ensuring innovative use of Public Health money to maximise the use of libraries to fulfil duties of promoting independence, improving health and well-being and narrowing health inequalities
- £650k of premises-related income is generated each year through rental income from services co-located in library buildings and from library meeting room hire

- 70% of the overall service budget is spent on staff, with the remaining 30% covering premises, hardcopy and electronic content (books, newspapers, magazines, AV material, online reference sources), IT, service support and service development costs.

## Next phase of transformation

12. Considerable progress has been made over recent years in modernising Worcestershire's library services and ensuring value for money. Over £3.7m of efficiency savings has been achieved since 2011/12, when the Libraries Transformation Programme was first launched by Cabinet in May 2011. A range of transformational approaches have been implemented including: a comprehensive property re-modelling programme; a series of staff and management restructures; a reduction in the Mobile Library service; investment in self-service technology; introduction of consortium stock purchasing and direct book delivery.

13. The next phase of transformation continues to build on the key principles agreed in May 2011 which were:-

- (i) Engaging local communities to help shape and deliver the library service;
- (ii) Changing the way libraries look in the future. For example, integration with other services, greater community involvement, use of technology (self-service), increasing the number of community collection points and moving away from the traditional library offer;
- (iii) Recognising that there will be a flexible model of providing library services across the County; and
- (iv) The ability to seize opportunities as they arise in discussions with local communities.

14. For this phase of transformation it is also suggested that a further key principle is added which places a greater focus on ***encouraging individuals, families and communities to do more for themselves - where possible - making informed choices and planning for the future, leading to greater self-reliance rather than dependence*** to further support the ambition within the Council's Corporate Plan.

15. As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) there is a savings target for the Library Service of £1million from 2018/19 to 2020/21. The table below shows the current profile of these savings across the MTFP. The savings for 2018/19 are on track for delivery therefore the focus of this next phase is on 2019/20 – 2020/21.

	Previous MTFP Savings	Revised MTFP savings (Sept '18)
<b>2018/19</b>	£200,000	£200,000 (actually achieved £360k)
<b>2019/20</b>	£500,000	£340,000
<b>2020/21</b>	£300,000	£300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>

16. To meet these savings targets identified for libraries in the Council's MTFP, an approach is required that will substantially transform library service delivery models

whilst balancing need and promoting wider engagement and use of services, within an existing library transformation strategy which puts emphasis on engaging with local communities and implementing new technologies and service delivery models.

17. Previous legal challenges to decisions by other local authorities concerning libraries indicate that major changes to an authority's library service delivery model must be made in the context of a strategic review that is in turn informed by a needs assessment. It is considered that only through the strategic review and needs assessment process, can an authority demonstrate that any proposal to fundamentally change the service delivery model would continue to secure the delivery of a comprehensive and efficient service.

### **Libraries' Needs Assessment - Overview**

18. Worcestershire's libraries needs assessment provides a locally devised framework to describe the relative need for library provision across the county, in terms of demographic need, library location and library use. This will support the identification of a library transformation approach, which ensures that reduced resources are prioritised to meet greatest need according to this framework.

19. The needs assessment lays the foundations for designing that approach in a way that meets the seven common design principles identified by the Libraries' Taskforce for developing, and by implication, transforming library services:-

- i. meet legal requirements
- ii. are shaped by local needs
- iii. focus on public benefit and deliver a high-quality user experience
- iv. make decisions informed by evidence, building on success
- v. support delivery of consistent England-wide core offers
- vi. promote partnership working, innovation and enterprise
- vii. use public funds effectively and efficiently.

20. It also sets out the County's current library service provision and service offer, considering how well it is reaching its resident population; identifying areas of under-representation which will be taken into account when developing transformation options for libraries. It also considers the value for money of the County's libraries and initial public views on current library provision, including preferences for possible new library service delivery models.

21. The needs assessment is based on desk research and on feedback from an initial public engagement survey which ran for four weeks from 9 July 2018 to 5 August 2018. A full, 90 day public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken from October 2018 to February 2019 to engage local communities in shaping decisions about future library transformation.

22. All aspects of the Council's statutory public library service is within scope of this needs assessment. Provision of non-statutory library services to prisons, schools and the music sector is out of scope and are being reviewed separately.

23. The needs assessment derives its findings from a body of evidence that includes:

- Demographic profiles (age and socio-economic) of library active users and library catchment populations, sourced from ACORN, which categorises neighbourhoods in terms of the characteristics of their resident population
- Indicators of deprivation levels in library catchment populations sourced from LSOA profiles using Office for National Statistics (ONS) data
- Distances and travel times from each library to its closest three service points sourced from AA Route Planner
- Patterns of active library user visiting behaviours to their home library and other libraries sourced from the County's Library Management System
- Patterns of library activity sourced from the Library Management System, MyPC computer booking system and locally collected library data
- Views of local residents sourced from responses to a public engagement survey.

24. Prior to detailed consultation with local stakeholders the Council will assess the strengths, capacity and costs associated with different library service delivery models and will undertake a full appraisal of those models which will include, but will not be limited to:

- i. Maintaining current provision
- ii. Reducing opening hours
- iii. Implementing 'Open Libraries' (unstaffed, self-service periods in libraries with potential to extend opening hrs)
- iv. Transitioning community supported libraries to fully community run libraries
- v. Introducing new, community and/or partner run libraries
- vi. Co-locating with new community services
- vii. As a last resort, closing libraries.

### **Libraries' Needs Assessment – Findings**

25. As highlighted in paragraph 17, in the absence of a standard methodology that measures the absolute level of need for a library in the context of statutory duty, an authority must make a value judgement with regard to assessing need for its library services.

26. The Libraries' Needs Assessment, included in the supporting information, identifies four characteristics of library use, library location and demographic make-up that indicate different aspects of local community need for libraries and which, in combination, build a picture of the overall relative need for Worcestershire's libraries:

- I. Deprivation: indicates local need to access services which improve health & wellbeing, literacy, learning, digital skills and employability;
- II. Service isolation: indicates the relative geographic isolation of each library and accessibility of alternative library provision for its customers (Worcestershire only);
- III. Exclusive use of home library site: indicates the relative reliance on the home site library by its catchment population in terms of visiting patterns to the home-site library and alternative Worcestershire libraries;
- IV. Library activity levels: indicate the reach of each library in terms of the number of: visits, issues, active users, computer use, events attendees and adult learners.

27. Each library (including community run library links at Welland and Martley) has been ranked against the four individual indicators of need. These individual rankings have



then been brought together to produce an aggregate ranking score for each library. Full details can be found in section 6.5 of the Needs Assessment document.

28. A separate exercise has been undertaken in the Needs Assessment to compare each library's percentage share of total service activity in 2017/18 with its percentage share of total library service net expenditure 2017/18. The gap between the two percentages is an indicator of the value for money of each library.

29. To meet its statutory duty the Council must deliver an efficient library service and will consider the value for money of each library when designing its approach to transformation. Value for money data is not, however, an indicator of the population's need for the County's library services and it has therefore been excluded from the overall ranking of library need. It will, however, be considered in the final decision on proposals for libraries and addressing poor value for money is one of the recommendations arising from the Needs Assessment and listed in paragraph 32. Full details can be found in section 7 of the Needs Assessment document.

30. Headline findings of the Needs Assessment are:-

- Libraries with the highest aggregate need are Evesham, Tenbury, Redditch, Kidderminster, Malvern and The Hive. These libraries have high levels of service activity and high proportions of home-site only users as well as mid to high level deprivation
- Tenbury Library's geographical isolation and very high proportion of home site only users places it amongst libraries with highest aggregate need, as does Woodrow Library's high level deprivation and high proportion of home-site only users (despite its close proximity to Redditch Library)
- Libraries with the lowest aggregate need include Catshill, Upton, Bewdley, St John's, and Warndon. These libraries on the whole have low levels of deprivation (other than Warndon), service activity and home-site only users
- Fully volunteer run Library Links at Welland and Martley have low aggregate need for similar reasons
- St John's Library, which has mid-level deprivation, has very low levels of home-site only users and is located at very close proximity to The Hive
- Warndon Library, which has high levels of deprivation, also has a relatively low aggregate need ranking due to its very low levels of home-site only users and many choosing to use The Hive as an alternative
- Bromsgrove library, the main library for Bromsgrove District, has a mid-level aggregate need ranking, largely due to its close proximity to two Worcestershire libraries at Catshill and Rubery and its mid-level ranking of deprivation and home-site only users
- Redditch, Malvern, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove and Evesham provide the most value for money. These are the County's main libraries that have high levels of service activity and have benefited from premises-related income or savings arising from a Libraries' property re-modelling programme. Hagley and Warndon libraries and the County mobile also provide good value for money
- Least value for money libraries are The Hive, Woodrow, Alvechurch, Bewdley, St John's and Rubery
- PFI arrangements at The Hive and Alvechurch Library reduce flexibility to re-model and re-structure at these service points

- Age groups are fairly well represented in the active library user population; the most under-represented age groups being 25-64 (-10.6%), 0-4 (-2%), 75+ (-1.7%) and 65-74 (-0.6%)
- Socio-economic groups are very well represented in the active library user population as a whole, although there is high under-representation of more deprived groups at both Warndon and Woodrow Libraries (-30% and -26%)
- The frequency of library visits increases with age and deprivation
- Current library services identified by the public as being most important are: a free to lend book collection; availability of staff support; being able to travel a short distance to the library; safe and welcoming community space and free computer/wifi access
- Preferred approaches from the public for keeping libraries open are to make them available for community and business use; to deliver other community services, and to co-locate with other services. Least popular approaches are reducing opening hours, implementing open libraries, and implementing community run libraries.

### **Recommendations for further Library Service Transformation**

31. The full libraries' needs assessment can be found in the supporting information. It concluded that in defining its approach to further library service transformation, the Council is led by legal precedent, comments made by the Secretary of State in his Superintendence role and the outcome of High Court Judgements, which define a legal landscape for library change in which:

- there is no clear or absolute definition of what constitutes a, 'comprehensive and efficient' library service as described in the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act; nor is there an agreed mechanism for defining the need for that service
- the only way that a library authority can demonstrate that the transformation of its library service will continue to meet its statutory duty of delivering a 'comprehensive and efficient' service, is through a strategic review of that service which is underpinned by a needs assessment
- an authority must make the required value judgements to establish a needs assessment framework which describes the need for its library service
- a 'comprehensive and efficient service' is not determined by the number of libraries provided; but must be understood in the context of available budget.

32. Against this legal background, and based on findings from the needs assessment, the following recommendations are put forward to shape the County's approach to further library transformation.

#### **(a) Prioritise need**

The needs assessment has identified the relative aggregate need of each Worcestershire library in terms of four indicators of demographic need, library location and library use, and library activity levels as described in paragraph 26. The Council's transformation approach should prioritise resources on those libraries that have been identified as having the greatest aggregate need when all four indicators have been combined. The ten libraries with the greatest and lowest need in the County are:

	<b>Libraries with greatest aggregate need</b>
1	Evesham
2	Tenbury
3	Kidderminster

	<b>Libraries with lowest aggregate need</b>
1	Catshill
2	Welland (Library Link)
3	Upton

4	Redditch
5	Malvern
6	The Hive
7	Wythall
8	Droitwich
9	Pershore
10	Woodrow

4	St John's
5=	Martley (Library Link)
5=	Bewdley
7	Warndon
8	Broadway
9=	Rubery
9=	Bromsgrove

**(b) Address under-representation**

The needs assessment has identified demographic groups (both age and socio-economic) in the local population who are under-represented in active library user populations and the service should focus resource on improving library participation of those groups. For example:-

At a library level older age groups (65-74 and 75+) are most under represented at Woodrow, Warndon and Upton while the 0-4 age group is most under-represented at Redditch, Warndon and Broadway.

At a local level the highest under-representation of any group is of residents from most deprived postcodes is at Warndon (- 30.8%) and Woodrow (- 26%). This is followed by the under-representation of second most deprived postcodes at Warndon (-12%).

**(c) Address poor value for money**

The needs assessment has considered the value for money of each library in terms of its share of total service activity compared with its share of net service expenditure, and has identified the relative value for money of each library. The County's library transformation approach should seek solutions that reduce costs and/or increase participation in libraries which are currently least value for money:

	<b>Most value for money libraries</b>
1	Redditch
2	Malvern
3	Kidderminster
4	Bromsgrove
5	Evesham

	<b>Least value for money libraries</b>
1	The Hive
2	Woodrow
3	Alvechurch
4	Bewdley
5	St John's

**(d) Continue to deliver national service offers**

The Council's current library service offer is aligned to Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) Universal library offers and is designed to deliver Libraries Taskforce outcomes.

When designing its library transformation approach, the Council should ensure that the service offer continues to reflect these national standards and to deliver a minimum service offer that reflects resident's priorities.

**(e) Ensure that public and stakeholders shape library transformation**

Working with partners such as District, Town and Parish Councils and the Department for Work and Pensions has proved invaluable in shaping the previous library property re-modelling programme. In this next phase, the Council should therefore continue to work

with partner agencies and community groups to identify local solutions to sustain library provision.

Feedback captured by the County's Phase 1 public engagement survey indicates those aspects of current library service provision that are most valued by the public and those that it considers should comprise the minimum library service offer in the county.

Based on initial public feedback the Council should continue to invest, through the book-fund, in a comprehensive book lending collection which has been identified as being of primary importance to the public.

	<b>Most important aspects of current library provision</b>		<b>Library services that should be included in minimum library offer</b>
1	free book lending collection	1	free book lending collection
2	support from staff	2	safe and welcoming community space
3	being able to walk or travel a short distance to the library	3	free computers and internet access
4	library events & activities	4	reference collection
5	free computer and internet use	5	signposting to information sources & services

**(f) Seek income generating opportunities**

Irrespective of the transformation approach adopted at each library, opportunities should be sought across libraries to generate service income including: reviewing fees and charges, rent from new co-located occupiers, from making libraries available for community and business hire outside opening hours or through the delivery of wider public services such as the Council's Customer Services offer.

**(g) Improve the Public Computer Network**

To ensure a public computer network offer and self-service offer that is fit for purpose and consistent across libraries, the Council should invest in an upgrade programme for its computers, printers and self-issue kiosks. Prior to upgrade the service will conduct a review of the pattern of take-up of its computers and printers, to ensure the scale of the public computer network is appropriate.

There has been a steady reduction in public network usage over the last 3 years. Computer usage peaked in 2008 and at its highest was at 50% of available hours. Customers are able to use their own devices with free and easily accessible Wi-Fi available at all library sites. In considering replacing the public network computers, it will be important that the usage data is considered. Recent analysis suggests a reduction of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> could be considered, excluding The Hive.

**Proposals for Library Service Points**

33. As indicated in paragraph 24 each Library service delivery point has been tested against 7 potential delivery options:-

- i. Maintaining current provision
- ii. Reducing opening hours

- iii. Implementing 'Open Libraries' (unstaffed, self-service periods in libraries with potential to extend opening hrs)
- iv. Transitioning community supported libraries to fully community run libraries
- v. Introducing new, community and/or partner run libraries
- vi. Co-locating with new community services
- vii. As a last resort, closing libraries.

In addition to these 7 options, consideration has also been given to general staffing efficiencies and income generation activity which includes co-location with other organisations.

34. The table over the page puts forward transformation options by library that reflect prioritisation of service resources on libraries with the greatest aggregate need. Whilst every effort will be made to identify a sustainable service solution for all libraries, closure will remain an option, as a last resort, for those libraries where it has not been possible to identify such a solution and where efforts to identify service wide income generation opportunities have not been successful. If closure does become an option, consideration will also be given to the value for money delivered by the library and the extent to which its service offer meets national library outcomes. This will feed into the decision report in Spring 2019 and a second phase of consultation on proposed closures will follow.

35. Subject to the conclusion of the democratic process, the formal consultation will be launched on 29 October 2018 and will run for over 90 days taking into account Christmas and New Year, ending on 2 February 2019. As part of this consultation a programme of wider engagement with community groups and partners will commence to help facilitate community groups to come together and get more involved in the direct running of library provision. This will also include identifying opportunities for the co-location of services and sharing space with other organisations so services remain at the heart of communities. The ambition is to actively encourage local communities to seize this opportunity and identify local solutions. Therefore, wherever possible, the pace of the consultation will be determined by the interest of local communities in putting forward community-led solutions.

36. Residents, stakeholders and staff will be invited to give their views and make suggestions on the future of library services in Worcestershire based upon the recommendations in the Cabinet report. Local communities will be given an opportunity to comment on their local library service and to help shape solutions, particularly around how a community run library could operate and the Council is keen to hear from anyone who might wish to get involved with the future of their library. The consultation is aimed at all Worcestershire residents and approaches will be taken to encourage responses from residents who are not library customers and from groups who are less likely to respond.

The consultation feedback will be collated via an Online Questionnaire.

The consultation will broadly consist of:

- Questions relating to county-wide actions and themes, for example, promotion and increase of income generation opportunities at Library Service points
- Outline proposals by library group, with detailed questions designed to ensure residents have all the necessary information to hand, to make informed comments.

The consultation will be promoted through a range of channels including:

- engaging with customers in libraries and on the mobile library
- Council Member and Key Stakeholder Briefings, outlining all key information and initiating community discussions for potential solutions
- engaging with stakeholders and target user groups
- information on the Council's website
- press and social media campaigns
- displaying posters and consultation material in all libraries.

The results of the consultation will be made available on the Worcestershire County Council Website in April 2019. This is to allow for a period of robust analysis of the data collected.

37. Following the consultation a full review of findings will take place, adjustments will be made, and final recommendations will be presented to Cabinet for approval in Spring 2019.

38. Proposed options for library service points:

Need Ranking	Cost efficiency ranking	Library	Maintain current provision	Reduce opening hrs	Implement Open Library (and extend opening hours)	Transition to full community library	New co-location	New community run library	Ranking Highlights
1	5	Evesham	X						Low deprivation. high level of home site only use, high activity, 6.3 miles to closest library
2	15	Tenbury		X	X		X		No deprivation, high home site only use, mid activity, 13.7 miles to closest library
3	3	Kidderminster	X						Mid level deprivation. mid level of home site only users, high activity, 3.6 miles to closest library
4	1	Redditch	X						High activity, Mid level deprivation, high level of home site only use, 2 miles to closest library
5	2	Malvern	X						Low deprivation. mid level of home site only users, high activity, 7.4 miles to closest library,
6	21	The Hive	X						High deprivation, highest activity, high home site only users, 0.8 miles to closest library
7	11	Wythall		X	X				No deprivation, high number of home site only users, mid activity, 5.1 miles to closest library
8	9	Droitwich		X	X		X		Low deprivation, mid home site only users, high activity, 5.2 miles to closest library,
9	13	Pershore		X	X				No deprivation, mid-level of home site only users, mid activity, 7 miles to closest library,
10	20	Woodrow		X			X		High deprivation, 2 miles to closest library, low activity, high level of home site only users,
11=	12	Stourport		X	X				Mid level deprivation, low level of home site users, mid activity, 4.4 miles to closest library,

Need Ranking	Cost efficiency ranking	Library	Maintain current provision	Reduce opening hrs	Implement Open Library (and extend opening hours)	Transition to full community library	New co-location	New community run library	Ranking Highlights
11=	6	Hagley		X		X			No deprivation, high level of home site only users, low activity, 5.8 miles to closest library
13	19	Alvechurch		X	X			X	No deprivation, 3.7m from closest library, mid activity levels, high home site only use
14=	4	Bromsgrove			X				Low deprivation, mid home site only users, high activity, 1.9 miles to closest library
14=	16	Rubery		X	X		X	X	No deprivation, high level of home site only users, mid activity, 3.7 miles to closest library
16	10	Broadway		X		X			No deprivation, mid-level home site only users, low activity, 6.3 miles to closest library
17	7	Warndon		X	X		X	X	High deprivation, low level of home site only users, mid activity, 2.5 miles to closest library
18=	18	Bewdley		X	X			X	Low deprivation, low number of home site only users, low-mid activity, 3.6 miles to closest library
18=		Martley	X						No deprivation, 7.5 miles from nearest library, low home site only use, very low activity levels
20	17	St John's		X	X		X	X	Mid-level deprivation, very low level of home site only users, mid activity levels, 0.8 miles to closest library
21	8	Upton-upon-Severn		X		X			No deprivation, low level of home site use, low activity levels, 7.4 miles to closest library
22		Welland	X						No deprivation, 5 miles from nearest library, low home site only use, very low activity levels
23	14	Catshill						X	No deprivation, low home site only users, low activity levels, 1.9 miles to closest library, close to 3 libraries, poor value for money



## **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

39. A reduction in staffing hours is likely to result in compulsory redundancies for front-line library staff. This reduction will also have an impact on the Library management structures, where reductions would also be made to ensure the management remained efficient. Formal consultation will be held and due process followed with staff at the point of implementation.

40. Details of the financial savings and budgets are set out in paragraphs 11-17. The cumulative impact of the proposed changes is expected to realise the £800K savings.

41. At this stage in the process the recommendations within this report seek to consult wider and consider the feedback on the options set out in this paper. The majority of savings will come from staff and property-related costs. However, at this stage as no decision is being taken no further comments on the timing or likelihood of savings or cost can be provided. Following consultation and approval of options financial advice will be updated to feed into the decision making process.

## **Privacy, Public Health, Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments**

42. The potential Public Health and Equality Impacts of current proposals will be jointly assessed and recorded. There are clear synergies regarding the potential impact for Protected Groups (listed in Equalities legislation) and residents who could be impacted from a Public Health perspective. A joint assessment will enable the Council to identify and better understand the combined impact of proposals.

## **Supporting Information**

- Appendix - Libraries Needs Assessment – available electronically

## **Contact Points**

County Council Contact Points  
County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report  
Hannah Needham, Assistant Director of Families, Communities and Partnerships  
Tel: 01905 843658  
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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and background papers for the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 May 2011

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**CABINET**  
**18 OCTOBER 2018****CHILDREN AT THE EDGE OF CARE AND CHILDREN'S HOMES**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr A C Roberts

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Children, Families and Communities

**Local Members**

Ms P Agar, Mr R W Banks, Mr B Clayton, Mr A I Hardman, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Prof J W Raine, Mrs E B Tucker, Ms S A Webb

**Recommendation**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:**
  - (a) **notes the context around children at the edge of and moving into Local Authority care and the current mix of service provision in Worcestershire;**
  - (b) **agrees the development of an Edge of Care Outreach Service to support children to live at home with their families where it is safe do so;**
  - (c) **approves in principle the revised approach to in-house children's homes as set out in the report;**
  - (d) **approves the consultation process with children, young people and families and stakeholders in relation to the revised approach to children's homes, and authorises the Director of Children, Families and Communities to finalise the consultation documentation and undertake such consultation;**
  - (e) **approves engagement with children, young people and families and stakeholders to inform the new model of the Edge of Care outreach Service; and**
  - (f) **delegates decision-making in relation to the proposals for specific children's homes to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families, having regard to the outcome of that consultation.**

## Introduction

2. Worcestershire Children's Services were judged inadequate by Ofsted following a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection in October/November 2016. The Council responded to this with the development and introduction of a fundamental and detailed Service Improvement Plan that has resulted in sustained improvement in the quality of practice across all aspects of the service. Ofsted have described a positive trajectory of change over their last five monitoring visits.

3. The inadequate judgement has had significant impact across the system and part of the continued development of the Service Improvement Plan is to ensure that Worcestershire's system is appropriately balanced to achieve our ambition for a good children's service.

4. This report focuses specifically on children in the care of the Local Authority (often referred to as Looked After Children) and proposes a changed approach to prevent children entering care where it is safe to do so. A fundamental principle for our practice will be to ensure that we have the right children in care and that we work with families and extended families to care for their children with our support.

## National position on Looked After Children numbers

5. Nationally there has been significant increased demand pressure on children's services, including the numbers of children in care.

6. There are 11.8 million children in England and 3 in 10 of these are living in poverty. Between 2010 and 2016 there has been an increase in children assessed as being in need by 5%, an increase of looked after children by 10% and an increase of children subject to a child protection plan by 29%. For every £1 spent on prevention, £4 is spent on care (ADCS Position Paper: A Country that Works for all Children October 2017).

7. The West Midlands region has also experienced an increase in Children in care numbers over the last year. In response, the region is developing an approach to managing risk and demand to allow an appropriate debate with partners and Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

8. The purpose of Children's Services is to improve outcomes and life chances for vulnerable and disadvantaged children so that they develop well in secure family settings, have good educational opportunities and health care and grow to be responsible adults making best use of their abilities.

9. The increase in demand over the last decade at a time of reduced local authority funding has meant a reorientation of funding onto children in care. The language of 'risk' and 'safeguarding' has shaped the agenda rather than a focus on child protection and effective ways for improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged children. In reality 'risk' is often used as a word for professional anxiety and when such anxiety is widespread organisations and professionals will revert to risk averse and more interventionist and punitive approaches. Such approaches increase demand without making the overall children's system safer or able to deliver better outcomes for children.

10. Every child deserves a childhood where they can thrive not just survive. To do so some children and families will need help and support from the state to secure their wellbeing and keep them safe from harm. The challenge for every local authority is to ensure that there is a balanced service offer in the community so that only the right children come into its care.

### **Worcestershire County Council position on Children in Care numbers**

11. Worcestershire has experienced the same degree of upward pressure on demand for services as the national position. In addition, there have been demand pressures as a result of the Ofsted judgement which heightened anxiety across the partnership represented on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and resulted in the need to intervene for those children who had previously not received the right intervention at the right time. The local and the national position have combined to see increasing numbers of children taken into care.

12. There are a number of factors that contributed to the inadequate judgement. These included: lack of experience and stability in management and leadership; high caseloads; poor managerial support, challenge and supervision for social workers and poor decision making for children requiring help and protection. The judgement created high anxiety and low confidence in the workforce. Consequently a risk averse culture of practice among front-line social work teams and managers emerged. This results in a rise in higher levels of intervention as this is seen as the safest option when managing the needs of young people who are presenting a range of challenging and risky behaviours.

13. The current position with our children in care is that our numbers are high compared with both our statistical neighbours and the England position as a whole. At this stage of our improvement plan, it is timely to revisit the previous strategy for children in care and the response to meeting needs in the most aspirational and appropriate way.

14. The Council engaged Essex County Council as its Improvement Partner and this support and challenge for the Improvement Plan has been beneficial. There have been political and managerial discussions with Essex about their approach to supporting children to live in a risk enabled way with their families rather than moving into care.

15. In 2010 Essex was rated inadequate by Ofsted and by 2014 they were rated as good. Part of the Essex approach to improvement was to focus on numbers of children in care and to rebalance their system. Table 1, below, shows that in 2011 the Essex rate per 10,000 children in care was higher than Worcestershire's (WCC), when both authorities were higher than our statistical neighbours (SNs). In the time since 2011, Essex has reversed the national trend whereas Worcestershire has increased at a faster rate than both England and statistical neighbours.

Table 1: Children in Care rate per 10,000, 2011 to 2017, Essex, Worcestershire, Statistical Neighbours and England average.

CiC per 10k	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Essex	54.00	50.00	42.00	38.00	34.00	33.00	33.00
WCC	51.00	52.00	56.00	56.00	60.00	60.00	66.00
SNs	46.10	48.00	49.00	48.20	49.00	50.80	50.60
England	58.00	59.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	62.00

16. Changing this culture in Worcestershire requires experienced stable leadership and management at all levels. It requires staff to feel supported not just challenged in their professional task of managing risk and most importantly it requires a Child-Centred culture of practice where all decisions are made in the best interests of the child with an understanding of immediate and longer term outcomes. All of these have been a part of our service improvement plan and are key features in our proposed development of an Edge of Care service.

### **Current Service response to Children in Care**

17. There have been significant capacity pressures in recent years due to both the growing numbers of children in care and the complexity of their presenting needs. 56% of our current cohort of children in care is aged from 11 to 17 and 44% aged from birth to age 10. It is not unusual for us to take adolescents into care in order to respond to the significant risk of harm resulting from mental health, self-harming, violence and risk taking behaviour demonstrated by these young people. The approach recommended in this report is to revisit the current service offer and develop a different approach that can respond more effectively to these presenting needs.

18. The majority of our children in care are placed with foster carers and broader family arrangements. However, there is a significant number living in residential care. Part of the strategy over recent years has been to invest in an increased number of in-house residential homes in order to mitigate the high cost of external residential homes. This strategy was based on the fact of a lower unit cost of a Worcestershire County Council home (£2,700 per week) than an external bed (£3,900 per week). The approach was supported because the Council's in-house residential homes have consistently been judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted and are run by a dedicated cohort of staff.

19. A fundamental part of our service improvement has been "culture of practice" moving away from a rescue/protect culture to developing a workforce confident in managing risk and a strength based model to our social work practice with families. The strength based model identifies the strengths and brings support and challenge to parents in meeting their parental responsibilities.

20. The previous approach to our children in care and specifically placement services had been to focus on the highest cost placement i.e. residential care. The

approach was based on the need to provide high quality care in a residential home that could replicate a "family home" experience for the child. As a result the service approach was to develop more high quality in-house residential provision at a lower cost than external provision.

21. The revised approach set out in this report takes a wider perspective on how Children's Services can best meet our statutory duties and responsibilities to achieve effective long-term outcomes for children. The edge of care strategy is inter-related with our work on Placement Sufficiency, quality and timeliness of Assessments of Need, quality and timeliness of permanency planning for children in care and ensuring all resources are meeting need at best value.

22. At this stage of our improvement programme, it is timely to review this strategy and critically examine the most appropriate way to meet need, the emerging evidence about the best way to deliver positive outcomes and the financial analysis behind the current plans to increase our own stock of residential homes. This review is designed to meet the needs of children in need of safeguarding in the most appropriate way to support positive long-term outcomes for them as well as reviewing financial viability.

23. At the end of August 2018, 12% of our children in care were living in residential homes (95 of 819 at that point in time). 27 of these young people were living in Worcestershire County Council homes with the remainder in a mix of private and voluntary, in and out of county homes. Two young people have been living in welfare secure provision due to the complexity of their need.

24. The unit cost analysis for in-house homes was based on 100% occupancy. However this is rarely the case in reality. Occupancy levels at the end of August 2018 were 84% (27 of 32 beds filled). This is a reasonable occupancy level given the need for very careful matching of new referrals to residential homes and a factor that Ofsted will consider during their inspections due to the need to balance the needs of existing residents. This factor narrows the financial benefit of in-house provision compared with independent sector where we only pay for the children and young people placed there.

25. A further consideration is the level of complexity and need our homes meet. Many of the young people we accommodate cannot safely be supported in our homes. This is not the fault of the service, rather it is a function of the type of demand we most frequently struggle to meet and the risk posed to existing children who have been settled long-term in our homes. So in our current model of provision there will be vacancies in homes whilst we place externally because there is a mismatch between the presenting needs of the child and the service on offer and needs of current children in specific homes. The proposed new approach will mean the Council continues to place children in external residential care on a case by case basis. This will be in response to specific needs to meet the care plan for the child involved. This is set out in the Council's Sufficiency Plan which highlights that foster care, wider family care and special guardianship arrangements are at the heart of the approach to provide care for children who cannot remain with their families.

26. Analysis of children coming into care identifies extremely complex behaviours including self harm, targeted and indiscriminate violence, child sexual exploitation,

county lines (drug trafficking) and the ongoing damaging effects of parental mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

27. It is also helpful to review the effectiveness of our approach to residential care. There will always be a need to accommodate some children in residential homes in order to respond to their needs and manage risk in the most appropriate way. However, we do have a higher than expected percentage of children in residential care rather than family-type arrangements.

28. Ofsted have feedback to us that they have seen drift and delay and lack of aspirational care planning for some of our children in care. Because our homes are good quality, there was an inevitable focus at the start of our improvement work to respond to the immediate demand at the front door rather than moving quickly enough to achieve more permanent family arrangements for children in our homes. It is now the right time to review this position and ensure that we are aspirational and ambitious for all our young people in care. Our proposed new approach will be founded in evidence of effectiveness and will ensure that we meet our statutory duties to meet the needs of children.

### **Learning from Essex approach to In-house Residential Care**

29. Essex has shared their experience from their approach to residential care to inform our thinking. In 2011 they ran a secure unit and ten children's homes. Currently they run two short break homes for children with disabilities. Yet their overall numbers of children in care reduced significantly even though they closed their homes.

30. The Essex homes were consistently rated good by Ofsted, but once placed, children stayed in the homes. Some of the reasons for this were that everyone was positive about the standard of care, social workers prioritised children at 'greater risk', it was already 'paid for' and no alternatives were explored.

31. Essex reviewed their sufficiency strategy, contracted with independent homes and reinvested the savings from closing the homes into prevention services. This was a key part of their strategy to support children to remain with their families.

32. Part of the change of approach was cultural and they found that their overall numbers of children in care reduced, including those placed with external homes.

33. A key factor of the Essex investment in prevention focused on using an evidenced-based approach to family work known as '*Brief Intervention*' with the aim of providing a major boost to reducing the numbers of teenagers in care. This activity was targeted at Level 4, Specialist and Intensive Support Services (referred to as 'late early intervention' by Essex lead member for Children's Services).

34. The service combines solution focussed methodology and a commitment to a strength-based engagement with families. The approach notices the impact of culture, beliefs and the 'scripts' that organise people in different contexts. The aim is to '*get alongside*' young people and families where there are complex problems to identify 'workable' solutions and help improve the relationships they share with each other. The principle is that of enabling Social Workers to develop skills in evidenced based work with teenagers and their families.



35. The revised approach resulted in a 7% decrease in the number of children entering care (mostly in the age 10-15 range), a 6% increase in the number of children leaving care with a further 3% of those leaving care because of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).

### **Revised approach to Edge of Care in Worcestershire in order to improve outcomes**

36. Children in need of support and protection require the intervention of services to enable them to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health, care and development. When that reasonable standard of care and development cannot be achieved through the provision of care by their parent or person with parental responsibility then it is the duty of the local authority to receive the child into its care.

37. A child on the "edge of care" is deemed to be a child who is at imminent risk of becoming a child in the care of the Local Authority due to escalating child protection concerns.

38. Professor Eileen Munro in her report "A Child Centred System" (May 2011) highlights the importance of support services and the crucial role they play in the child protection system in offering help to children and families either before problems develop or when there are low level problems, thereby reducing the risk of escalation. The report argues that these support services can do more to prevent abuse and neglect or reduce its severity than services provided only when abuse and/or neglect has become severe.

39. There are significant outcome benefits in relation to emotional, educational and employment outcomes for children and young people if they are able to remain within their family setting. Reviewing the range of service availability for a number of good and outstanding Authorities demonstrate that community-based services are important to work with families to achieve positive change, delivering a restorative approach to social work practice.

40. In addition to Essex brief intervention service, the evaluation of the No Wrong Door project in North Yorkshire has demonstrated benefits for children and young people aged 12 to 25 who are on the edge of care or recently moved to independent living.

41. This service is delivered through multi-disciplinary teams working to develop strong relationships with children and young people referred to the service.

42. The evaluation of this innovation project has demonstrated a positive impact on children in care numbers. Comparison between two cohorts of children shows that the No Wrong Door project children have been more likely to leave care and the majority (86%) of children referred to the NWD service have continued to remain out of the care service.

43. Young people will almost always have better life chances if they are enabled to remain within their families, rather than entering the care system. This evidence supports the development of an Edge of Care Support Service that will work with families to stay together rather than to move into care.

44. For many children and young people there are additional emotional challenges associated with being received/placed into care. The loss and rejection from the family and separation from community/friends and the pressures associated with having to adapt and adopt to any new care arrangement can cause additional emotional trauma. The care planning process in itself can become a focus of the intervention and take time and energy away from valuable direct work addressing from the real cause of the problems. We believe that time and emotion spent on the new issues being faced by the child and family is time better spent on working through the family breakdown.

45. For some children and young people entering care can lead to an increase in the types of behaviours that led to the need for a placement in the first place. A lack of structured support can result in families feeling that they can no longer support their 16 and 17 year olds in their homes resulting in homelessness and the need to find alternative accommodation for these children at a cost to the authority.

46. Preventing children and young people coming into the care system where it is in their interests is dependent on families being supported early in the onset of emerging family pressure with intensive support at their time of crisis. Evidence suggests that effective family preservation strategies which place a heavy emphasis on conflict resolution can reduce risks associated with school disengagement, youth homelessness and other issues likely to affect the futures of Worcestershire children and young people.

47. This evidence is helpful to understand the balance of the Council's Children Service. A consequence of high and growing numbers of children in care has been to shift financial investment into meeting care costs at the expense of preventative community-based services that will work in a positive way to support children and their families to remain together. The benefits of this are evident in better long-term outcomes for children and more cost effective use of resources. Intervening at the right stage in the least intensive way is positive for most families, although there will always be children who absolutely do need to come into and will benefit from Local Authority care. The important factor is to ensure that only these children come into, and remain in, care rather than others who come in by default due to the absence of an alternative and effective service response.

## **Proposed changes**

48. Although our strategy for improvement is sound and has delivered positive results, we are committed to continuing to develop the way we deliver services to achieve the continued improvement that others have seen. This includes investing in early help and support services, whilst reducing the level of residential care

49. The development of an Edge of Care Service is recommended as a key part of the revised strategic approach to supporting families to stay together. The design for this service would be based on the principles and evidence of similar services, including North Yorkshire and Essex. The service requirements for Worcestershire would be for three teams of multi-disciplinary staff, including social workers and family support workers as part of the service. Just as important as professional expertise will be the ability to develop positive relationships with children and families and work in a solution-focused way.

50. Detailed work on roles and structures for the Outreach Service would be developed subject to Cabinet approval.

51. There is also the need to ensure that there is access to a sexually harmful behaviours service to support those young people who continue to expose themselves to risk of harm through behaviours that are often the consequence of CSE and other damaging experiences. If approved by Cabinet this service will be developed and scoped with input from the Director of Public Health to determine the most appropriate way to ensure this support is available

52. The Edge of Care Service is anticipated to cost approximately £1.9m per annum. These services can be funded from savings from home closures. This would still deliver a net saving to the Council of between £0.5m and £1.2m, whilst providing a child centred service offer to allow effective support in the community.

53. Worcestershire currently has 12 residential homes.

54. It is proposed to reduce this capacity by six, leaving six in operation.

55. Four of the homes provide long-term and short breaks for children with disabilities and it is proposed that these will continue to be an important component of the sufficiency strategy for these children and their families. These homes are:

- (a) Vale Lodge, Evesham
- (b) Moule Close, Kidderminster
- (c) Providence Road, Bromsgrove
- (d) Greenhill Lodge, Worcester.

56. Separate work has been undertaken in relation to support for children with disabilities and is ongoing as part of the SEND improvement programme. Residential places for children with disabilities are considered through that programme of work given that the service meets a different set of needs than the other eight homes.

57. Two of the homes (Downsell Road in Redditch and Hill View in Malvern) currently provide short stay places for children in challenging circumstances and it is proposed to stop providing short stay facilities and meet needs through the Edge of Care Outreach Service. The rationale for closing this type of provision is that they can encourage children, young people and their families to see residential care as an attractive option particularly at times of challenge in the family setting. The homes are high quality, with good facilities and supportive staff which can, perversely, mean that young people have more of an incentive to move into care than work through their challenges and their parents can feel relief that their children are receiving great care. Our new approach would provide an outreach service into the family setting to support the family to stay together, which the evidence supports as leading to better long-term outcomes for the children.

58. There are six homes designed to provide care for children with complex social and emotional difficulties. These are:

- (a) Old Hollow, Malvern,

- (b) Tenbury,
- (c) Rivendell, Bromsgrove,
- (d) Oak House, Worcester,
- (e) The Riddings, Bricklehampton
- (f) Orchardene in Pershore.

59. The landlord of Old Hollow has advised the Council of their intention to sell the home so this home is already scheduled to close in the coming months. There is no proposal to replace this home. The Tenbury Home is not currently open and there is no proposal to open it.

60. It is proposed to close a further two homes as they would not be required as part of our sufficiency strategy, provided that appropriate outreach and support services are in place and working effectively. Residential care places, where required, will continue to be purchased from the independent sector.

61. Two homes would be retained to enable sufficient capacity for those young people currently in our residential care for whom residential care continues to be in their best interests. This position would be reviewed a year after implementation of the changes to the overall service mix to evaluate effectiveness in delivering good outcomes for children and young people.

62. Of the homes provided by the Council, the decision on which two to retain will be based on the needs of the children currently living in the homes in order to minimise impact on their care plans. The timing of any closures would also be considered in the light of children's needs and ensuring their views are considered following the review of their needs and support from advocates.

63. The details of each home and funding costs are listed in the Appendix to this report. This is a confidential Appendix due to the commercial sensitivity of the information included.

## **Financial analysis**

64. Closing homes will reduce financial expenditure as long as the numbers of external placements do not increase as a result. This can only be avoided by a change in culture of practice, a revised approach to managing risk in a child centred way and the development of new services to support children and their families to respond to the challenges that have resulted in them being on the edge of care.

65. The financial information relating to the proposals are set out in the report and in the Appendix. Overall the proposals identify a net saving subject to consultation. It is not possible to quantify exactly the level of saving until the consultation is complete. However, a range is set out in the table below to provide assurance that a saving is feasible and whilst not the key driver it is important to note that the approach suggested could also provide qualitative and contract benefits, as well as avoidance of costs.

Table 2 – Analysis of financial impact of the range of options for edge of care

	£m	£m
Potential Direct Cost from additional edge of care support service investment	1.9	1.5
Potential Direct Saving from re-provision of residential care homes	(3.1)	(2.0)
Net saving	(1.2)	(0.5)

## Consultation

66. Changes to the current services would require a change management approach with a comprehensive approach to consultation. The homes recommended for closure will have an impact currently on 19 children and it will be important to consult with them and their families individually, using advocates and independent reviewing officers to ensure that their wishes are understood and had regard to. Their needs will be reassessed to ensure that any proposed changes will meet these needs. This will take one month to complete.

67. It is also proposed to engage with children, young people and other stakeholders to shape the revised service offer to ensure this is fit for the future.

68. There would be detailed staff consultation for those staff in the homes affected, after any decision to close. These staff are valued members of the children's service and every effort would be made to minimise compulsory redundancies through redeployment opportunities into other residential units and the new Edge of Care Support Service.

69. Staff consultation will be undertaken following Council procedures.

## Conclusion

70. This report reviews the current position with high numbers of children in care and recommends a significant service development approach to delivering better outcomes for children and young people. This requires a different approach to managing risk in the community, underpinned by a skilled and intensive approach to supporting families when in crisis.

71. The changes proposed would need to be carefully managed with the development of the new service offer and appropriate consultation with staff, children, families and partners to ensure that there is an agreed vision and shared understanding of risk approach.

72. Decisions on final proposals for closure would be taken by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families as part of the programme of change in the light of consultation and ensuring that the needs of children can be appropriately met.

## Legal, Financial and HR Implications

73. Key legislation which outlines the duties and statutory responsibilities of Local Authority Children's Services to Children in Need is the Children Act 1989.

74. Section 17 of the Act sets out the general duty of every Local Authority to:

- (a) Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, and
- (b) So far as to be consistent with that duty, promote the upbringing of such children by their families.

A Child In Need is defined as ' a child who is':

- a) Unlikely to achieve or maintain or have the opportunity to maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a Local Authority
- b) Their health or development is to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision of such services
- c) They are a disabled child.

75. The Act sets out the duty on Children's Services to undertake a Social Work Assessment where any child is presented as a potential Child In Need within the above definition.

76. The Social Work Assessment will identify need into three primary categories Children in Need of; Support, Protection or Care.

- **Child in Need of Support:** Where Children or Young People who have been identified as in need of support (commonly referred to in practice as a 'Section 17') it is the duty of the Local Authority to promote the upbringing of children by their families. Work with families whose children are deemed to be "Children in Need" requires the voluntary consent of the parent and young person of sufficient age and understanding if over 16yrs.
- **Child is in Need of Protection:** Children or Young People who have been assessed as in need of protection are those where assessment has identified them suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm (commonly referred to in practice as Child Protection 'Section 47'). Where a child is identified as suffering significant harm or there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is likely to suffer significant harm detailed statutory duties and responsibilities of Local Authorities and their partner agencies are set out in the Children Act and within 'Working Together 2018'.
- **A Child In Need of Local Authority Care:** Children Act 89 outlines the duty of every Local Authority to provide accommodation for any child in need in their area which appears to them to require accommodation as a result of:
  - No person who has Parental Responsibility (PR) for them
  - Has been lost or having been abandoned
  - The person who has been caring for them being prevented whether or not permanently or whatever reason from providing them suitable accommodation or care

- any child in need in their area who has reached the age of 16 and who's welfare the authority consider to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide them with accommodation.

77. Statutory guidance for how the local authority should undertake its duties and responsibilities to Children Looked After are set out in a variety of Care Regulations. Where a social work assessment identifies a Child in need of Local Authority Care there are two primary care arrangements (commonly referred to in practice as S20 or S31). Section 20 refers to a child in care on a voluntary basis at the request of the parent or young person themselves and Section 31 refers to children in care subject to a legal order, predominantly put in place by the Court. For all children and young people in "care" it is the duty of the authority to assuming a corporate parenting role.

### **Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments**

78. An Information Risk & Privacy Impact Screening has been carried out in respect of this proposal. It identified that further assessment will be required to ensure the information involved in this proposal is adequately protected. Furthermore, a more detailed Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) will be required to identify how the proposal affects individuals and their personal data, and what needs to be considered and implemented to ensure the proposal is acceptable and compliant with the Data Protection and Human Rights Acts.

79. A Public Health Impact Screening has been carried out in respect of this proposal to identify and predict the health implications on those impacted by the proposals set out in this report. The screening indicated that further Public Health Impact Analysis will be required, specifically in respect of mental health and wellbeing and social/economic factors. Health implications will be considered through the development of the Edge of Care Service. Individual plans to meet the identified needs of children will be developed in conjunction with the appropriate health and wellbeing and/or mental health services.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

80. An Equality Relevance Screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. It identified that further equality impact analysis will be required in respect of due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### **Supporting Information**

- Appendix - Worcestershire County Council Children Home Details (salmon pages) – Exempt report for Cabinet members only. (This Appendix is NOT FOR PUBLICATION as supporting information as it discloses information in relation to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the local authority holding that information) and the public interest is better met by its non-

disclosure as it contains commercially confidential information relating to the financial aspects of this proposal.

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

### Specific Contact Points for this report

Catherine Driscoll, Director of Children, Families and Communities

Tel: 01905 846303

Email: [cdriscoll2@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:cdriscoll2@worcestershire.gov.uk)

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children, Families and Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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