



Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services

Wednesday, 19 March 2025 at 2.00 pm

Room 3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 26 March 2025 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reeves".

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

March 2025

Committee Officer:

Note: Date of next meeting: 23 April 2025

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

2. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to speak must be submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk .

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2025 as an accurate record of proceedings.

5. School term dates 2026/27 and 2027/28 (Pages 1 - 6)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education and Young People's Services

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/005

Contact: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager
(Barbara.Chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CMDCEYPS**).

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

Approve the proposed school term dates for Oxfordshire schools in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

6. Woodeaton Manor School Residential Provision (Pages 7 - 18)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education and Young People's Services

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/019

Contact: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager

(Barbara.Chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CMDCEYPS**).

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

Approve the proposal from the governing body of Woodeaton Manor School to permanently close the residential provision at the school.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 12 February 2025 commencing at 3.00 pm and finishing at 3.23pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor John Howson – in the Chair

Officers:

	Jack Nicholson – Democratic Services
Agenda Item 5 and 7	Caroline Kelly, Lead Commissioner – Start Well
Agenda Item 6	Les Oosthuizen – Finance
Agenda Item 7	Lisa Lyons, Director – Children & Young People's Services

The Cabinet Member considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

34/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda No. 1)

There were no declarations of interest.

35/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda No. 2)

There were no questions from County Councillors.

36/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda No. 3)

There were no petitions and public address.

37/25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the meetings held on 6 November 2024 and 21 January 2025 were both approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

38/25 HOMES 2 INSPIRE - CONTRACT EXTENSION AND AMENDMENTS
(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair asked why the contract was only being extended for two years rather than five and, secondly, why the contract was not being cancelled all together. The officer

explained that the Council would not have time to find another provider should the contract be cancelled in March. She added that there would be another opportunity to renew the contract in 2 years' time and that 2 years provided an opportunity for review.

The Chair remarked that 2 years is not a very long period and that the evaluation would have to be undertaken soon. The officer agreed and said that the evaluation would be done within 1 year.

The Chair asked that future documentation consistently refer to either 'Homes2Inspire' or to 'Homes to Inspire'.

The Chair approved the recommendations.

RESOLVED to:

- a) agree the extension of the Residential Children's Homes Contract with Homes to Inspire for a term of 2 years from 1 April 2025 to the value of £7.024m; and**
- b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to finalise the required Contract documentation for that extension.**

39/25 FORMAL APPROVAL OF EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA 2025/26
(Agenda No. 6)

The Chair asked if some children would now receive dual funding from both the SEN Fund and the Disability Access Fund referred to in paragraph 11 of the report. The officer confirmed that this was the case.

The Chair remarked that it would be a challenge for the Council to identify all SEN children, particularly those younger than 2 years' old.

The Chair said that given the Schools' Forum was content, he was happy to approve the recommendations.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Pass the funding increase received by Oxfordshire onto providers (after allowing for centrally retained funding per Department of education (DfE) criteria) and approve the 2025-26 Early Years funding formula for 3- and 4-year-old provision with an underlying hourly rate of £5.53 (excluding the supplements, SEN Inclusion Fund and Contingency).**
- b) Pass the funding increase received by Oxfordshire onto providers and approve the 2025-26 Early Years funding formula for 2-year-old working parent provision at an hourly rate of £8.05.**

- c) Pass the funding increase received by Oxfordshire onto providers and approve the 2025-26 Early Years funding formula for 2-year-olds of families receiving additional support at an hourly rate of £8.05.
- d) Pass the funding increase received by Oxfordshire onto providers and approve the 2025-26 Early Years funding formula for 9 Months to 2-year-old provision at an hourly rate of £11.05.
- e) Pass on the additional 15 hours for entitled “2yrs olds” & “9-months to 2 years old” (new entitlement from 1 September 2025).

40/25 JOINING THE SOUTH EAST REGIONAL CARE COOPERATIVE (RCC)
(Agenda No. 7)

The Chair remarked that under local government reorganisation, Greater Manchester would come under the Metropolitan Districts not the Combined Authority and as such a question may arise around what constitutes the South East Region.

The Chair noted that Oxfordshire County Council just falls into Tier 1, which would cost the Council an additional £50,000 over three years. He said that he felt the boundaries between the tiers came across as arbitrary decisions. The Director said that there was a profiling matrix used in establishing these boundaries, based on a look back and a forward projection around number of children cared for within a given area. The Chair said that Kent would get a very good deal compared to Oxfordshire.

The Chair asked if looked after children included unaccompanied asylum seekers or not. The Director said that that was her understanding.

The Chair asked if everybody in the South East had agreed to join the RCC. The Director said that 18 of 19 authorities had agreed to join in principle.

The Chair asked if £625,000 was to go up in line with inflation. The Contact Officer said that it would not go up.

The Chair approved the recommendations.

RESOLVED to:

- a) agree to Oxfordshire County Council joining the Department for Education (DfE) approved pathfinder for the South East Regional Care Cooperative (RCC) for a period of three years from 1 April 2025–31 March 2028; and
- b) contribute financially to the RCC at a total cost of £625,000 for the three-year commitment.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2025

DELEGATED DECISION BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

19 March 2025

School Term Dates 2026/27 and 2027/28

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

Approve the proposed school term dates for Oxfordshire schools in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Executive Summary

2. Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002, it is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The county council has consulted on proposed school term dates for 2026/27 and 2027/28. These dates now require determination.

Background

3. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. Although Voluntary Aided, Foundation and academies are not legally required to use the same term dates, in practice most academies closely align their dates with those set for maintained schools.
4. The county council has consulted on proposed school term dates for 2026/27 and 2027/28. These term dates following the pattern previously applied in Oxfordshire, of autumn, spring and summer terms divided into two halves, with half-term holidays of one week, Easter and Christmas holidays of approximately two weeks, and a summer holiday of approximately six weeks. Term lengths are kept as similar as possible, within the constraints of the timing of bank holidays.
5. These proposed term dates were informed by liaison with neighbouring authorities, to keep term dates broadly aligned across county boundaries, for the convenience of families with children in different authorities' schools.

6. There is a long-standing agreement with schools that one of their non-teaching days for training (INSET) is taken on the first day of the autumn term; the remaining four are determined and allocated by the schools as they wish.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. The recommendation in this report links to the OCC Strategic Plan 2023-25 Priority 7, to create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential. Children benefit from good attendance in school: it supports educational achievement and lays the foundation for a positive contribution to society and economic well-being. Properly structured periods of learning and rest help children to remain healthy, enjoy their school time and achieve more. The standardisation of dates as much as possible across schools helps them to plan effectively and supports good attendance. The publication of dates well in advance enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised.
8. This report also links to Priority 8, to play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy, by engaging schools and local residents in the setting of school term dates.

Financial Implications

9. The school year decides the term and holiday dates calendar. It has no budget implications.

Comments checked by: T James

Thomas James
Head of Financial Services
thomas.james@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

10. Under section 32 of the Education Act 2002, the local authority shall determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled or community special schools. There are no legal implications.

Comments checked by: L Schrouder

Leanne Schrouder
Locum SEN and Education Solicitor
leanne.schrouder@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

11. This report has no staff implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

12. The proposed calendars for term dates apply to all community, voluntary controlled schools, including community special schools. Academies, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools are free to set their own term dates, but are recommended to align with the authority's calendars. The proposed calendar is applied across all schools using it in the same way and therefore does not have any impact on any of the protected characteristics.

Sustainability Implications

13. This report has no sustainability implications.

Risk Management

14. It is a requirement for the local authority to set school term and holiday dates for all its maintained schools, other than Voluntary aided, Foundation and Academy schools, to whom the dates are recommended. If the council fails to agree term dates, it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002. There is a risk that schools not under local authority control self-determine term dates creating inconsistency with school holiday patterns. This is out of the local authority control.

Consultations

15. Schools and stake holders were invited to comment on the proposed pattern of term dates via the Let's Talk consultation platform (<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation-2026-2028>) and Schools News communications.
16. The consultation period ran from 12 November 2024 to 20 December 2024. The consultation webpage was visited by 97 participants, of whom 81 downloaded the term date documents.
17. One response was received, from a secondary school. This suggested moving the start of the autumn term 2026 from Wednesday 2 September to Tuesday 1 September. The reason for this was that the first day would be INSET, and many secondary schools typically then only have Year 7 and Year 12 in school on the following day, so that many secondary students would have their first school day on a Friday which may not be beneficial for attendance.
18. Based on the consultation response, the term dates have been adjusted as suggested, as this provided a better match with neighbouring authorities.

Lisa Lyons, Director of Children Services

Annex: Proposed school term dates for 2026/27 and 2027/28

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager
07554103418, barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2025

Oxfordshire School Term and Holiday Dates - 2026/27

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Aug-26						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Dec-26						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Apr-27						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Aug-27						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Sep-26						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Jan-27						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

May-27						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sep-27						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Oct-26						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Feb-27						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Jun-27						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Half Term	Days
1	38
2	35
3	30
4	24
5	34
6	34
TOTAL	195

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Nov-26						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Mar-27						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Jul-27						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

	Total days
Autumn Term	74
Spring Term	54
Summer Term	67
TOTAL	195

	School Holiday
	Public Holiday
	Proposed Inset Day. Four more can be set by the school.

Pupil days shown include four to be selected by schools as additional INSET days
Teacher working days include five INSET days

Oxfordshire School Term and Holiday Dates - 2027/28

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Aug-27						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Sep-27						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Oct-27						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Nov-27						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Dec-27						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Jan-28						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Feb-28						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Mar-28						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Apr-28						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
May-28						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Jun-28						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Jul-28						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Aug-28						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Sep-28						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Half Term	Days
1	36
2	37
3	28
4	35
5	24
6	35
TOTAL	195

	Total days
Autumn Term	73
Spring Term	63
Summer Term	59
TOTAL	195

	School Holiday
	Public Holiday
	Proposed Inset Day. Four more can be set by the school.

Pupil days shown include four to be selected by schools as additional INSET days
Teacher working days include five INSET days

DELEGATED DECISION BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES 19 March 2025

WOODEATON MANOR SCHOOL RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Report by Director for Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

Approve the proposal from the governing body of Woodeaton Manor School to permanently close the residential provision at the school.

Executive Summary

2. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) of Woodeaton Manor School, the body responsible for governance of the school, has proposed that the temporary closure of residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School is made permanent.
3. As a prescribed alteration under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, this requires a statutory consultation and decision-making process. While the governing body of a Foundation School is the only body able to propose this change, the decision-maker is the local authority.
4. The Cabinet Member is now required to make a decision on the proposal in accordance with the statutory prescribed alteration procedures.

Background

5. Woodeaton Manor School was inspected by Ofsted 7 to 8 November 2023, and was assessed as "inadequate", which resulted in the governing body being replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB), and the school being required to convert to an academy. That conversion is currently scheduled to take place on 1 June 2025.
6. The residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School was inspected by Ofsted 30 October to 1 November 2023. At that time, the school was recorded as having 10 residential places, available for four days a week during term time, but it was noted that the residential provision had not been used since July 2023. There has continued to be no use of the residential provision since then.

7. The Ofsted inspection assessed the residential provision as “inadequate”, noting “serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.”
8. While the IEB has made progress in addressing management and safeguarding arrangements, concerns raised in the inspection included the unsuitability of the residential accommodation available, which does not meet the relevant national minimum standards.

Proposed alteration

9. It is proposed to formally close the residential provision, making permanent the “pause” in residential provision since 2023.
10. There are no current pupils at Woodeaton Manor School with Education, Health and Care Plans requiring residential provision; as such it is identified that restarting residential provision is not required to meet the needs of pupils, and the county council SEND team does not intend to start commissioning residential places in the foreseeable future.
11. The school is due to convert to an academy, and the incoming academy trust (Propellor) also does not intend to restart residential provision for pupils post-conversion. Given the provision was suspended prior to the academisation order being issued, the Trust has requested that, based on safeguarding concerns, this provision be formally closed pre-transfer.

Process

12. Closure of residential provision at a school is defined as a significant change under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, requiring a prescribed alterations statutory consultation and decision-making process. Details of this process are set out in *Statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers* (last updated October 2024) referred to in this report as the *Guidance*.
13. Woodeaton Manor School is currently a Foundation School. Governing bodies of Foundation Schools have the statutory power to propose the removal of boarding provision; the decision-maker is the Local Authority – in this case, Oxfordshire County Council.
14. The council has followed the statutory process for a significant change. A statutory notice was published by the county council on 30 January 2025, followed by the required 4-week representation period, ending 27 February 2025.
15. Seven representations were received and are summarised below in the Consultation section of this report.

16. Under the prescribed process, the local authority must decide whether to approve the proposed alteration within 2 months of the representation period ending, i.e. by 27 April 2025, or the proposal must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.
17. If approved, the closure would formally take effect on 1 April 2025.

Considerations for the decision maker

18. The DfE Guidance states that decision makers should consider whether the proposal will meet or affect the needs of parents, raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.
19. The proposed alteration would address some of the concerns raised in the 2023 Ofsted inspection, which highlighted the unsuitability of the previous arrangements. Formal closure of the residential provision would ensure the governing body, and incoming academy trust, are able to fully focus on raising educational standards at the school. Formal closure would have no impact in practice on families and children, as the accommodation previously used for residential provision is not fit-for-purpose, and the provision has not been in use since 2023.
20. In making a decision on a proposal to remove boarding provision from a school, the decision maker should consider whether there is a state funded boarding school within reasonable distance from the school and whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future.
21. Of the children now at Woodeaton Manor School, none has a requirement for residential provision included in their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Oxfordshire County Council's SEND team does not expect to require residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School in the future. There is, therefore, no requirement for alternative boarding arrangements, if the residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School is closed.

Financial Implications

22. Woodeaton Manor School received additional revenue funding for the operation of residential provision. The permanent closure of the residential provision will therefore mean a permanent end to this funding stream, alongside the permanent end to the revenue costs of running residential provision. The school will continue to receive revenue funding based on the nature of provision it delivers and its pupil numbers. There is one staff member affected by the closure of the residential provision. If no suitable alternative position is found, then this employee is at risk of redundancy and redundancy costs are estimated to be £3,400. That cost would be borne by the county council. It is appropriate that we agree to cease the residential provision formally, along with the funding.

Comments checked by:

Jane Billington, Strategic Finance Business Partner – Children's Services
Jane.billington@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Issues

23. The proposals set out in this report involve a legal process which the Council has followed, including statutory consultation. The recommendation for a change of category results in a change of legal status for the school.
24. Closure of residential provision at a school is covered by The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 ('the Prescribed Alterations Regulations') which should be read in conjunction with Parts 2 and 3 and Schedule 3 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 (as amended by the Education Act (EA) 2011) and the Prescribed Alterations Regulations.
25. The proposed change is subject to the "Guidance", as set out in "Making Significant Changes ('Prescribed Alterations') to maintained schools" last updated October 2024. This Guidance is for proposers and decision-makers. The Guidance states that the statutory proposal must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change. The proposal should be accessible to all interested parties and should therefore use 'plain English'. The full proposal must be published on a website (e.g. the school or LA's website) along with a statement setting out:
 - (a) how copies of the proposal may be obtained;
 - (b) that anybody can object to, or comment on, the proposal;
 - (c) the date that the representation period ends;
 - (d) and the address to which objections or comments should be submitted.
26. A brief notice (including details on how the full proposal can be accessed e.g. the website address) must be published in a local newspaper. Within one week of the date of publication on the website, the proposer must send a copy of the proposal and the information set out in the paragraph above to the Governing Board and any other body or person that the proposer thinks are appropriate.
27. The representation period must last for four weeks from the date of the publication. During this period, any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the LA to be taken into account by the decision-maker. It is also good practice for representations to be forwarded to the proposer to ensure that they are aware of local opinion.

Comments checked by:

L. Schrouder, Locum SEN and Education Solicitor, Law & Governance
leanne.shrouder@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

28. While school staff have previously been employed to operate the residential provision, as the residential provision has not been in use since 2023, staff have been redeployed to other functions in the school. There are two posts still shown in the school staffing structure relating to the residential provision, which will no longer exist. One post is vacant, and the school is considering potential suitable alternative roles with the affected post holder. If no suitable alternative position is found, then this employee is at risk of redundancy and redundancy costs are estimated to be £3,400.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

29. Decision makers should be satisfied that proposed changes will not adversely impact any particular group, including those with protected characteristics or who are disadvantaged (for example, those who are eligible for free school meals or pupil premium).
30. When it was operating, the residential provision was clearly valued by pupils and their families, but as the residential provision has not been in use since 2023, and none of the current pupils has a requirement for residential provision included in their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP), the proposal to now formally close the provision is not considered to have a direct equality and inclusion implication. It is not usual for maintained special school in Oxfordshire to offer residential provision, so closure brings the provision at Woodeaton into line with other schools.

Sustainability Implications

31. There are no sustainability issues, or implications for travel and accessibility.

Risk Management

32. The Ofsted inspection assessed the residential provision as “inadequate”, noting “serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.”
33. While the IEB has made progress in addressing management and safeguarding arrangements, concerns raised in the inspection included the unsuitability of the residential accommodation available, which does not meet the relevant national minimum standards.

34. Permanent closure of the residential provision will improve safeguarding and reduce risk at the school

Consultations

35. The statutory representations period ran from 30 January 2025 to 27 February 2025. Seven representations were received. One of these was neutral, from another special school offering residential provision should it be required. Two respondents strongly supported the closure, but gave no details of their reasons. One respondent somewhat objected and three strongly objected. Three of those respondents objecting detailed their reasons.
36. The reasons given for objecting were:
- (a) When the provision was operating, it gave pupils with SEND the opportunity to do things without their parents, and develop independence.
 - (b) The provision had received a Good Ofsted report as recently as February 2023, before being rated Inadequate in November 2023.
37. It is recognised that the pupils who were able to benefit from the residential provision when it was operating benefitted from a variety of opportunities for social and emotional development, tailored to their special needs. And this was valued by families. However, the school, county council and incoming academy trust agree that in the short-medium term, improving educational standards at the school must be the highest priority, and that addressing the significant concerns about the suitability of the residential provision could be a barrier to making swifter progress with improvement of the school as a whole.
38. The Inadequate Ofsted rating of November 2023 was based on concerns about management and resourcing of the provision, and also the physical accommodation, which would require significant capital investment to bring up to the required national minimum standards. While some of the issues raised have been addressed in the meantime, others cannot be quickly addressed. Given that the provision has already been out of use for nearly two years, it is considered more transparent to formal close the provision rather than leave it paused with no realistic timescale for being able to reopen it.

Lisa Lyons
Director for Children, Education & Families

Annex 1:	Statutory Notice
Annex 2:	Statutory Proposal
Background papers:	Nil
Contact Officer:	Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager 07554 103418, barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2025



PUBLIC NOTICE

Proposed removal of residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School

Notice is given in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 of a proposed prescribed alteration to Woodeaton Manor School, effective from 1 April 2025.

The Interim Executive Board, as governing body of the school, with the support of Oxfordshire County Council, is proposing that the residential provision at the school be permanently closed.

This Notice is an extract from the full proposal, which can be viewed on the Oxfordshire County Council public website at letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodeaton-school-residential-provision .

Copies can also be requested by emailing: school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this Notice, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to the Local Authority using the online feedback form located on the Oxfordshire County Council website as detailed above, or by email to the above address.

Signed: Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

Publication Date: 30 January 2025

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FULL STATUTORY PROPOSAL

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)
(England) Regulations 2013

Proposed removal of residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School

1. School and LA details

School: Woodeaton Manor School

Address: Woodeaton, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 9TS

Local Authority: Oxfordshire County Council

2. Description of alteration

Removal of boarding provision at a special school (Foundation status).

Woodeaton Manor School is currently a Foundation School. Governing bodies of Foundation Schools have the statutory power to propose the removal of boarding provision; the decision-maker is the Local Authority – in this case, Oxfordshire County Council.

Woodeaton Manor School was inspected by Ofsted 7 to 8 November 2023, and was assessed as “inadequate”, which resulted in the governing body being replaced by an Interim Executive Board (IEB), and the school being required to convert to an academy.

The IEB, as the governing body, is formally proposing that the residential provision be permanently closed, prior to academy conversion. The local authority, Oxfordshire County Council, does not intend to commission residential provision at the school in the future.

3. Evidence of demand

The residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School was inspected by Ofsted 30 October to 1 November 2023. At that time, the school was recorded as having 10 residential places, available for four days a week during term time, but it was noted that the residential provision had not been used since July 2023.

The Ofsted inspection assessed the residential provision as “inadequate”, noting “serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.”

While the IEB now responsible for the school has made progress in addressing management and safeguarding arrangements, concerns raised in the inspection included the unsuitability of the residential accommodation available, which does not meet the relevant national minimum standards.

In making a decision on a proposal to remove boarding provision from a school, the decision maker should consider whether there is a state funded boarding school within reasonable distance from the school and whether there are satisfactory alternative boarding arrangements for those currently in the school and those who may need boarding places in the foreseeable future.

- Of the pupils now at Woodeaton Manor School, none has a requirement for residential provision included in their Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).
- Oxfordshire County Council’s SEND team does not expect to require residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School in the future.

There is, therefore, no requirement for alternative boarding arrangements, if the residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School is closed.

4. Objectives

The proposed alteration would formalise and make permanent the “pause” in residential provision since 2023. It would address some of the concerns raised in the 2023 Ofsted inspection, which highlighted the unsuitability of the previous arrangements.

Formal closure of the residential provision would ensure the IEB, and incoming academy trust, are able to fully focus on raising educational standards at the school.

Formal closure would also simplify some aspects of the academy conversion process.

Formal closure would have no impact in practice on families and children, as the accommodation previously used for residential provision is not fit-for-purpose, and the provision has not been in use since 2023.

5. The effect on other educational institutions within the area

There would be no impact on other educational institutions.

6. Project costs and funding

There are no project costs associated with this project, as the provision has not been in use since 2023. Woodeaton Manor School received additional revenue funding for the operation of residential provision. The permanent closure of the residential provision will therefore mean a permanent end to this funding stream, alongside the

permanent end to the revenue costs of running residential provision. The school will continue to receive revenue funding based on the nature of provision it delivers and its pupil numbers. Formalising the closure of the provision would provide more clarity over financial planning.

7. Implementation plan

If this proposal is approved, the formal closure of the residential provision would take effect as of 1 April 2025. As the provision is already “paused” there will be no impact from this.

8. How to submit your views

The statutory process for the change described in this proposal is that the Woodeaton Manor School IEB, as the governing body of a Foundation School, can propose the removal of boarding provision, but the decision-maker is the Local Authority – in this case, Oxfordshire County Council.

To inform the decision, this statutory proposal has been published for a 4-week representation period, as required under The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

Comments or objections must be received by the end of **27 February 2025**.

You can respond by:

- using the online questionnaire at letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodeaton-school-residential-provision
- or emailing school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk (*please quote Woodeaton Residential in the header*)

All responses will be taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

9. Decision-making

The decision-maker for this proposed expansion is Oxfordshire County Council. The decision will be made by the Cabinet Member responsible for Education at a meeting which is open to the public, and publicised on the county council’s website. The decision must be made within a period of two months of the end of this representation period, and is currently expected on 19 March 2025.

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