



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

Tuesday, 16 January 2024 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 23 January 2024 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

January 2023

Committee Officer: committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Note: Date of next meeting: 7 February 2024

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. Approval required for Tender for "Multiply" program (Pages 1 - 6)

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

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/358

Contact: Angela Turton, Strategy & Partnership Manager,

Angela.turton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director for Children's Services (**CMDCEYPS4**)

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

- a) **Approve the open tendering of Multiply Maths to secure an adult numeracy development service provider(s) for a twelve-month period commencing 1st April 2024 and concluding 31st March 2025.**
 - b) **To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to agree the contract with an adult numeracy development service provider(s) upon satisfactory completion of the open tendering exercise.**
- 5. Approved Provider List for Care and Support Agencies** (Pages 7 - 16)

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

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/330

Contact: Rebecca Lanchbury, Commissioning Manager, Start Well
Rebecca.lanchbury@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director for Children's Services. (CMDCEYPS5)

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Approve the commissioning and procuring of an Approved Provider List for CQC registered Care and Support Agencies to join, (in the first round and subsequent rounds of the tender) selected in accordance with and following the Council's competitive tender process.**
- b) **Approve awarding bespoke packages of care and support to the successful bidder (of each call off process) selected in accordance with and following the Council's competitive procurement.**
- c) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services to authorise award of call-off contracts to Providers, after the brokerage process has been completed in accordance with the processes set out in the Approved Provider List contract, for individual care packages. Following the same process as for other bespoke care and support packages.**
- d) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to initiate the competitive process set out in the Approved Provider List, for call-off contracts of bespoke care and support packages over the value of £500,000 per contract. Award of Contracts subject to separate Key decision reports.**

6. Formal Approval of Schools Funding Formula 2024/25 (To Follow)

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/231

Contact: Danny Doherty, Interim Finance Business Partner,
danny.doherty@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director for Children's Services (CMDCEYPS6).

To seek approval for the funding formula for schools.

EXEMPT ITEMS

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the annexes to Agenda Items 7 or 8, the Committee will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the annex by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the annex since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda".

NOTE: The reports do not contain exempt information and are available to the public

THE ANNEXES TO THE ITEMS NAMED HAVE NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

7. Children's Services Residential Capital Programme OCC DfE Bid 1 - SOLO 2 Home (Pages 17 - 38)

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

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/348

Contact: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager REoC Childrens Service
andrea.benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director: People (**CMDCEYPS7**)

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The annex containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to release funds to:

- a) **Purchase a property in Sutton, Witney for the amount listed in Annex A**
- b) **Cover fees of amount listed in Annex A (Stamp Duty Land Tax, valuation, legal etc)**
- c) **Cover the adaptation and refurbishment for the amount listed in Annex A**

8. Children's Services Residential Capital Programme OCC DfE Bid 2 - ASD Home (Pages 39 - 60)

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

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/349

Contact: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager REoC Childrens Service

andrea.benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director: People. (**CMDCEYPS8**)

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The annex containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to release funds to:

- a) **Purchase a property at East Hagbourne, Didcot for the amount listed in Annex A**
- b) **Cover fees of amount listed in Annex A (Stamp Duty Land Tax, valuation, legal etc)**
- c) **Cover the adaptation and refurbishment for the amount listed in Annex A**

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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Divisions Affected – N/A

**CABINET MEMBER FOR
CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES
16 January 2024**

Multiply Maths: Adult Numeracy Development Service Provider

Report by Executive Director: People

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

- a) Approve the open tendering of Multiply Maths to secure an adult numeracy development service provider(s) for a twelve-month period commencing 1st April 2024 and concluding 31st March 2025.
- b) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, to agree the contract with an adult numeracy development service provider(s) upon satisfactory completion of the open tendering exercise.

2. Executive Summary

In September 2022 the Department for Education (DfE) approved Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) £2.578m grant funding over three years for Multiply Maths.

The grant funding is part of a national levelling up programme targeted at reducing the barriers that poor math skills present in our communities. This funding is to support people who are aged 19 or over and do not currently have a GCSE or equivalent qualification in math and live, work or volunteer in Oxfordshire.

OCC is seeking agreement to tender for an adult education specialist to provide over 700 Oxfordshire residents the opportunity to participate in maths learning and courses. These courses will be delivered between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

An open tender is proposed, with a contract value of up to £600,000. This will be resourced through the multiply maths DfE grant.

3. Background

In September 2022 the Department for Education (DfE) approved Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) £2.578m grant funding over three years for Multiply Maths.

Multiply maths is designed to provide Oxfordshire residents, who may lack function maths skills, the opportunity to engage in numeracy learning in new, attractive, and innovative ways. Breaking down the personal psychological barriers and negative social narratives is critical to rewiring and renewing how we think about maths. The purpose of this funding is to create numeracy opportunities for people over the age of 19 without a good maths GCSE or equivalent qualification.

In the final year of delivery (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025), a single provider or consortia of specialist adult education providers is required to create a range of opportunities for eligible people to build their numeracy skills for work and for life. Expertise, energy, capacity and a passion for adult learning will be paramount. This will include a highly visible community presence, a wide range of learning and engagement approaches that inspire participation for some of the hardest to reach in our Oxfordshire community.

Numeracy learning opportunities will be required to target the following outcomes benefitting at least 700 Oxfordshire residents in a twelve-month period.

- Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
- Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.
- Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace
- Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy order to access a certain job/career
- New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification
- Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression
- Numeracy courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence
- Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system
- Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners
- Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses

An open tender is proposed, with a contract value of up to £600,000. This will be resourced through the multiply math DfE grant. The open tender process will encourage a wide range of applicants and ensure best value is achieved for Oxfordshire County Council.

4. Alignment with our corporate priorities

The vision for Oxfordshire is 'working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county'. Multiply maths has a pivotal role in helping to tackle inequalities. It will create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential, providing support for their parents and carers. In addition, by working with local businesses and partners generate economic and social benefit.

Multiply is aligned to Oxfordshire's skills priorities. The delivery approach will also need to be considerate of these priorities.

- Supporting the reform of vocational and technical skills provision, which includes promoting Apprenticeships and T Level offers.
- Help to provide clear, diverse, and inclusive career pathways for young people and adults to ensure they are aware of the Oxfordshire Labour Market and sectors.
- Managing Oxfordshire's consistently tight labour market
- Business skills provision and support
- Ensure training and re-skilling provision in identified priority sectors.

5. Financial Implications

The total value of this open tender will be up to £600,000. The value is based on the delivery of numeracy learning interventions including formal courses across Oxfordshire. The contract opportunity will be resourced fully through the DfE grant fund.

Comments checked by:

Ohaz Ikedionu, Accountant (Education-Finance),
ohaz.ikedionu@oxfordshire.gov.uk
8th December 2023

6. Legal Implications

The Council has a statutory power to engage in the provision of adult numeracy courses pursuant to its general power of competence under s 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The procurement of the new services will follow a competitive tendering process in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules which themselves ensure that the Council is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended). Legal Services will

assist with the preparation of the terms and conditions of the proposed contract.

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (Contracts), jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk
7th December 2023

7. **Staff Implications**

There are no directed or indirect staffing implications for Oxfordshire County Council.

The DfE grant includes an annual allocation for the management and administration of the Multiply Maths by the Council. This administrative allocation has been and will continue to be used by the council for resourcing procurement (tender) exercises, contract management and monitoring as per the DfE funding requirements.

The open tender will require the successful applicant(s) to be responsible and retain responsibility for all resourcing (staffing or otherwise). The tender is for an explicit period of 12 months with no anticipated opportunity to extend, owing to the tender being linked to the DfE multiply programme which concludes on 31st March 2025.

8. **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

The tender process will require applicants to show how in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating their work, equality and diversity issues are appropriately considered from the outset.

9. **Sustainability Implications**

The tender process will require applicants to consider sustainability implications, particularly relating to Climate Action demonstrating a commitment to carbon neutrality.

10. **Risk Management**

The tender process will require applicants show how risks and opportunities to have been considered

Stephen Chandler, Executive Director: People

Annex: None

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Angela Turton, Strategy & Partnership Manager,
Angela.turton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January 2024

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Divisions Affected -

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

16 January 2024

CREATION OF AN APPROVED PROVIDER LIST FOR CARE AND SUPPORT AGENCIES (CHILDREN'S)

Report by Corporate Director of Children's Serv

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the commissioning and procuring of an Approved Provider List for CQC registered Care and Support Agencies to join, (in the first round and subsequent rounds of the tender) selected in accordance with and following the Council's competitive tender process.
- b) Approve awarding bespoke packages of care and support to the successful bidder (of each call off process) selected in accordance with and following the Council's competitive procurement.
- c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services to authorise award of call-off contracts to Providers, after the brokerage process has been completed in accordance with the processes set out in the Approved Provider List contract, for individual care packages. Following the same process as for other bespoke care and support packages.
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to initiate the competitive process set out in the Approved Provider List, for call-off contracts of bespoke care and support packages over the value of £500,000 per contract. Award of Contracts subject to separate Key decision reports.

Executive Summary

2. To commission and procure an Approved Provider List of CQC registered Care and Support Agencies offering bespoke care and support packages to meet the individual needs of children and young people up to the age of twenty-four which will complement our externally commissioned children's services.
3. These bespoke packages of care and support will enable children and young people to remain in their own homes, be accommodated in kinship care or to live within an alternative home setting, on a temporary basis, until such time that a permanent place to live can be found.

4. The Approved Provider List will offer best value and more choice when we require bespoke packages of care and support in the county.

Background

5. For Oxfordshire County Council to commission and procure an Approved Provider List of Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered Care and Support Agencies offering bespoke care and support packages to meet the individual needs of children and young people up to the age of 24 to complement our externally commissioned children's services. These bespoke packages of care and support will enable children and young people to remain in their own homes, be accommodated in kinship care or to live within an alternative home setting, on a temporary basis, until such time that a permanent place to live can be found.
6. The creation of the Approved Provider List for Care and Support Agencies will ensure that Oxfordshire County Council can be confident that they are working with CQC registered agencies that have been assessed as compliant prior to joining the Approved Provider List and in advance of the Council committing any spend to a bespoke care and support package, which will meet the needs of the child or young person.
7. The Approved Provider List will allow Oxfordshire County Council to make efficiencies to the cost of care and support packages by agreeing consolidated rates (at the time of joining the Approved Provider List) and fixing these for 12 months. Standard uplift clauses will be built into the contract to prevent providers from increasing rates multiple times throughout the 12-month period.
8. This contract needs to be as flexible as possible to enable brokerage and commissioning to work closely with providers to ensure that we are meeting the individual needs of a child or young person which can often fluctuate due to the trauma they have experienced in their lives and how this affects them on a daily basis.
9. The proposal is for a four-year contract, with two optional extension periods of two years each. It is intended that the Approved Provider List for Care and Support Agencies will start on 01/04/2024.

Key Issues

10. We do not currently have a compliant route for procuring CQC care and support agencies when we require a bespoke package of care and support to meet the assessed needs of the child or young person.
11. We are SPOT purchasing packages of care and support which reduces our ability to manage costs and forecast spend in this area.

12. We have limited quality assurance and monitoring options with a SPOT purchase.

Procurement Process

Sourcing Options

13. Extensive supplier engagement has been carried out to determine if there were any readily available alternative compliant route to procure the services. This engagement confirmed that main providers of the service were not signed up to any other frameworks, however they did confirm that they would be willing to join a framework or Approved Provider List if they felt that the balance of risk and responsibilities was not too one sided. This the reason that we concluded that we need to create our own process in order to meet our needs.

Tender Approach

14. Procurement will undertake a procurement exercise to put in place an Approved Provider List under the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 Light Touch Regulations (LTR) because it deals with Social Work-related work. The LTR can be used to allow any Contracting Authority the ability to create a bespoke process that can reduce the tendering timescales down if the requirement(s) are linked to social care, education, among others.

15. This requirement falls within scope and as such the business needs to allow at least 16 weeks from approvals being in place in which to commence this exercise and for it to Go Live. The Approved Provider List route under the LTR was chosen as the only viable route given the nature of the services required.

16. The Approved Provider List will require continued involvement from both Procurement and HESC, as well as the Service Area to review ongoing applications over the life of the Approved Provider List as well as maintaining the list.

17. Once bids are received and the mandatory criteria met, qualified (those with the technical capability for the services being procured) evaluators will review the information and if satisfied, the suppliers will be placed onto the Approved Provider List and staff will be able to access them for these services once the Contract has gone live.

Section D – Economic and Financial Standing

18. All providers will need to complete a Dun and Bradstreet credit report checks and an evaluation of Economic and Financial Standing before being awarded a contract.

19. The market in question for providers offering care and support is made up of lots of small companies and start up organisations. The risks can and will be mitigated against, as the nature of the Approved Provider List means that payments will

only be made for active care and support packages and there will be no payments in advance.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

20. The proposed Approved Provider List incorporates two of the key priorities set out by the Start Well Commissioning Team and aligns with three of the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, as below:

Priorities of the Start Well Commissioning Team

- increase number of children placed in county.
- Improve access to services to reduce inequality

Priorities of the Corporate Plan.

- Priority 3 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Priority 7 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Priority 9 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefits.

21. To achieve the priorities set out above and to address the gaps identified in the Sufficiency Strategy, the Start Well HESC team are working with operational colleagues in Health, Social Care and Education on the following:

- OCC will work positively and collaboratively with existing and potential providers to develop a range of appropriate provision to meet the needs of Oxfordshire's children within County (ensuring access to services, continuity of schooling, maintenance of support networks).
- OCC will share what we are learning about our children's needs and features through the Valuing Care needs assessment tool, to identify what is needed from the local market to support those needs and that the needs assessment tool needs updating more regularly following the original placement request.

Vision and Strategic Objectives

22. The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan (2018-2023)¹ outlines a vision to make Oxfordshire a great place for children and young people to grow up in and to have the opportunity to become everything they want to be'. To achieve this, our strategic objectives are:

¹ [Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan](#)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Be Successful To ensure children have the best start in life; ensure they have access to high quality education, employment and motivational training; go to school feeling inspired to stay and learn; and have good self-esteem and faith in themselves.</p> | <p>Be Happy and Healthy Services are available to promote good health and prevent ill health; learn the importance of healthy, secure relationships and having a support network; have access to services to improve overall wellbeing, and easy ways to get active.</p> |
|--|---|

Financial Implications

23. In the last financial year (2022/23) the Children Social Care service recorded up to 20 children in unregistered placement settings at a cost of £8.8m over budget (represents over 46% of the total overspend of £19.1m in the year).
24. The service is currently supporting 6 children in unregistered placement settings with a net projected spend of £5.4m after allowing for an estimated joint funding of £2m. This is currently indicating a forecast overspend of £3.4m.
25. The preferred option to implement an Approved Provider List is critical in ensuring more contract compliant arrangements but also providing a more efficient and robust financial management process, system and control. The platform will enable:
- Commissioning, Contract and Brokerage to obtain best possible value through a more effective commissioning and contract oversight.
 - Ensure that the care planning and review process will allow for the transfer to a regulated setting at the earliest opportunity and switch from higher cost 'spot' to lower fixed cost base with clearer, and timelier step-down plans to enable greater independence and better value care.
 - The Invoicing, vouching and payment arrangements for unregistered placements can be moved onto the same basis as all other placements and processed on a more automated basis with less manual intervention, removing the potential for error and greater certainty in financial management and forecasting.

Comments checked by: Danny Doherty, Finance Business Partner, CEF
(danny.doherty@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Legal Implications

26. The Council's powers and duties to engage in these activities are set out at Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948, the Care Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2017 and the Children Act 1989.
27. The Council will conduct a fair and transparent competitive procurement process in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) to score all providers and ensure that only those who meet all of the criteria can join the Approved Provider List. The CPRs themselves ensure that the Council complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the proposed awards under the Approved Provider List are therefore lawful.
28. It should be noted that the subsequent awards of call-off contracts must be made in accordance with the award procedures set out in the framework agreements.
29. The framework agreement will reduce the Council's reliance on direct award spot contracting. Such spot contracting is by its nature neither competitive nor fair and, when aggregated, runs the risk of breaching procurement rules.

Comments checked by: Marina Lancashire, Locum Lawyer, Contracts.
Marina.lancashire@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

30. The use of the Approved Provider List has no additional staffing implications all actions necessary to operate the Approved provider List are included within established staffing structures.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

31. The Approved Provider List specifications have been diligently prepared for the specific needs of disabled people and those people with mental health needs. The expectation of care providers is to deliver person centred support which ensures;
- Provision of in-county accommodation so people with Care Act needs are not placed a long way from their current support networks.
 - Bespoke packages of care and support are provided to meet the complex needs of the child or young person.
 - Children and young people can remain in their local communities.
 - Their individual needs are met.
 - Their cultural and religious beliefs are understood and supported.
 - Children and young people can become economically sufficient by supporting them to access training, learning, voluntary and employment opportunities (where applicable).

32. The Approved Provider List evaluation process includes the requirement for providers to have an Equalities Policy. In accordance with the requirements of the ITT documentation, all successful providers must self-certify that their organisation has an active Equality & Diversity Policy in keeping with the Equality Act 2010. All providers must also self-certify that their organisation has no court, industrial or employment tribunal cases brought against them regarding unlawful discrimination within the last 3 years. In addition, the Quality & Improvement Team will carry out regular monitoring of services and include equality items in their reviews.

Sustainability Implications

33. The Approved Provider List evaluation process includes mandatory disclosure from providers to answer questions regarding their environmental management as well as that of their sub-contractors. At present a Climate / Environmental Policy is not required by providers. All successful providers self-certified that their organisation had no prior convictions of breaching environmental legislation, or had any notice served upon it within the last 3 years by any environmental regulator or authority.

34. Recruitment for care and support mostly attracts a local workforce, therefore limiting the amount of extensive travel time.

35. The initial focus of purchasing bespoke care and support packages from providers of the Approved Provider List is for new packages of care and support, These are static workplaces unlike domiciliary care calls to multiple locations.

36. In line with the Council's policy, people living in supported living do not attend the day centres and therefore do not access the vehicles which transport people to and from the day services. Instead within the course of supporting someone staff will be required to travel alongside the individual often on public transport both for accessing the community and for travel training where this is part of a support plan.

37. Many of the care companies offer training online so their staff are not having to travel.

Risk Management

38. The Council has found itself in a situation where operational social care officers are dealing with challenging situations that do not fall within the (currently) commissioned services. This has meant that the checks and balances that are routinely undertaken for other types of services are not necessarily carried out and the approach to dealing with the wide variety of suppliers has been inconsistent and has put the Council at risk both commercially and reputationally should these arrangements go wrong.

39. The creation of the Approved Provider List will close the hole in the scope of commissioned services and bring the commissioning of assignments within the established support resources (Brokerage, procurement, legal service, Commissioning & Quality Improvement), reducing pressures on social care staff and increase management oversight of quality and budget. It will also reset the commercial relationship between the Council and its suppliers enabling us to start to leverage our significant spending to increase quality and value for money.

40. Benefits

- Reduces the risks associated with care and support purchased in an emergency.
- Ability to negotiate costs prior to accepting the care and support services.
- Ability to be flexible when purchasing care and support to meet the various needs of children and young people, from block provision to bespoke complex needs accommodation and care packages.

41. Critical Success Criteria

1. Care and Support Agencies are accredited and fully compliant prior to working with them
2. An increase in providers offering care and support in Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties
3. A reduction in costs for care and support services (based on ad-hoc rates currently being paid).

42. The benefits discussed above are very important to the Council and will make a noticeable difference (e.g., especially around accreditation and being fully compliant agencies).

43. Table of risks and mitigations

| Risk | Impact | Probability | Mitigation | Risk Owner |
|------------------------------|--------|-------------|--|----------------|
| Staff ratio being inadequate | 4 | 3 | Social Workers will frequently liaise with providers to ensure that we have the right staff ratio to keep the child or young person and staff members safe and well. | Social Workers |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Breakdown of care and support services due to complexity of need and challenging behaviour of child or young person. | 4 | 2 | Packages of care and support will be reviewed frequently to ensure increases in staffing to meet the complexity of need to prevent breakdown of care package. | Social Workers |
| Concerns about temporary accommodation meeting the child or young person's needs | 4 | 2 | Temporary accommodation will be scrutinised, and permanent accommodation searches will be a priority for the child or young person placed in temporary accommodation. | Social Workers |
| Lack of interest in the tender opportunity from the market | 4 | 2 | A competitive tender process should encourage competitive bids from the marketplace. Commissioning is in regular communication with known providers and can gauge interest and promote the opportunity. | Commissioning and Procurement |
| Poor performance from the social care agency | 4 | 2 | A full and competitive tender process will ensure the value for money (balance between cost and quality) is achieved for this contract – thus encouraging high standards and performance. | Quality Improvement and Procurement |

| | | Probability | | | | |
|--------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| | | Remote 1 | Unlikely 2 | Possible 3 | Probable 4 | Highly Probable 5 |
| Impact | 5 Catastrophic | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| | 4 Major | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| | 3 Moderate | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| | 2 Minor | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| | 1 Insignificant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Lisa Lyons, Corporate Director of Children’s Services

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

Contact Officer: [Rebecca Lanchbury, commissioning Manger – Start Well](mailto:rebecca.lanchbury@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
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January 2024

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Divisions Affected – N/A

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

16 January 2024

Children's Services Residential Capital Programme for Sutton, Witney (Solo2 Home)

Report by Executive Director: People

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED** to release funds to:
 - (a) Purchase a property in Sutton, Witney for **the amount listed in Annex A**
 - (b) Cover fees of **amount listed in Annex A** (Stamp Duty Land Tax, valuation, legal etc)
 - (c) Cover the adaptation and refurbishment for the **amount listed in Annex A**

Executive Summary

2. Approval of the Children's Services Residential Capital Programme was received on 5 December 2022. This was for the acquisition and associated works of four residential properties to be converted to Children's Homes. The property meets the requirements for the Small Solo Children's Home set out in the Business Case to house up to two children.
3. The subject property at Sutton, Witney has been identified by the service as meeting their needs as a Small Solo children's home. Terms have been agreed to acquire the property for the amount listed in Annex A subject to approval by Cabinet. The offer is below the asking price listed in Annex A as a market valuation supported by the desk-top valuation.

Alignment to relevant strategy:

4. Children We Care for [Sufficiency Strategy](#) 2020-2025
5. To support the departments Sufficiency Strategy for placements for Children We Care For, Children's Services plan to deliver four additional Children's

Homes which will be operated and staffed by the Council’s experienced Residential and Edge of Care (REoC) service. To support children with the greatest needs CEF plan to purchase four properties from the open market and convert to a specific specification working with the Council’s Property department.

6. To increase the number of residential beds within county, to prevent having to place Children We Care For out of county.

| Ref no. | Benefit | Measurement |
|----------------|--|---|
| B.01 | To provide Children We Care For with complex needs a homely and nurturing environment with specialist trained staff including access to the Council’s Clinical Psychologists to enable them to thrive close to their family and friends. | <i>Reduction in CWCF placed outside of Oxfordshire</i> |
| B.02 | These schemes will support the department to meet their duties under the Sufficiency Strategy to increase the provision of in-county residential placements. | <i>Increase in internal residential provision</i> |
| B.03 | The internal residential expansion programme is an invest to save initiative whereby CEF aim to save between £0.5m and £5.6m per annum which is a cost comparison on current un-registered arrangements and out of county placement spend for children who would be accommodated in these homes based on a 75% occupancy rate. | <i>Reduction in number of children placed in unregistered provision</i> |
| B.04 | Increase in the quality of care afforded to our children | <i>Clear Corporate Parenting oversight of the provisions our children are living within</i> |

Exempt Information

7. The information in the Annex is exempt because it contains information that could reveal the identity of an individual (the vendor of the private property) and relates to the business affairs of the vendor (the commercial sensitivity of the purchase of a private property).

Case for Change

8. Before this property was selected as one of 4 properties for conversion across Oxfordshire, a detailed search exercise was undertaken which looked at all vacant properties owned by Oxfordshire County Council. Unfortunately, none of these were suitable as a prospective children’s home. Therefore, an extensive search has been carried out across the county to identify properties

on the open market for purchase and conversion. The Service consider each property in light of the particular needs of the children the home will be catering, and Sutton was found to be suitable for a small Solo children's home.

9. The house was chosen as it gives children the opportunity to live and thrive within a settled and safe community within easy reach of universal amenities that are afforded to any other child living within Oxfordshire. Ordinarily there will be no more than 2 children living at the property with 2 - 3 adults caring for them.
10. Oxfordshire currently has 3 children's homes each of which provide a home for up to 6 children at any one time. These homes are well established within their communities and are all registered with Ofsted and rated GOOD at their most recent inspections.
11. The property will be offering a short-term home to a maximum of 2 children at any one time as we move away from institutionalised living and offer these children the valued experience of living within a nurturing family setting that supports the recovery from trauma suffered from being unable to live with their birth families.

Constraints and dependencies

Constraints

12. The pool of properties available on the open market within 10 miles of Eynsham suitable for minimal conversion are limited. The property offers the accommodation required with minimal conversion work and is within the budget set. If works to this property are not approved, there will be considerable time delay to find another suitable property.
13. Locating a home within 10 miles of Eynsham is a geographical and regulation challenge sufficient parking, mains drainage, suitable amenities and not located near a railway, waterway or main road is a geographical challenge. For reference, Ofsted view railways, main roads and waterways as significant risks to our children and therefore not suitable

Dependencies

14. In the local housing plan for the property it looks favourably on properties seeking change of use from C3 to C2, however we recognise this is for the purposes of elderly care due to the increasing elderly population.
15. Planning permission for change of use from C3 to C2 will be instigated once the property has been purchased. The Service have instructed robust pre-app due diligence to ensure the dependency of planning permission is mitigated as much as possible preplanning.
16. Ability to recruit to the volume of residential staff required in the timeframes will be a challenge due to the current national shortage of candidates entering the care sector. This will require a focused recruitment campaign with support from Human Resources, Marketing and Communications Teams.

Economic case

17. The proposal is to purchase the property at Sutton, Witney.
18. The house is a two storey 5-bedroom detached dwelling with garden to the rear and parking and garage to the front. The layout is such that minor internal reconfiguration is required and the building would require a re-fit to suit robustness for use and meet OCC's ligature risk policy.
 - Internal refurbishment to create the required robust, safe environment including fire detection, security etc
 - Replacement doors and windows, upgrade the external fabric/services to ensure improvement in energy efficiency in line with OCC's decarbonisation requirements including ASHP and solar PVs
 - Landscaping at front boundary may need to be scaled back to accommodate required visual splays
19. This is an initial proposition to inform project costs and facilitate acquisition of the property and will be properly designed at feasibility stage.
20. The preferred option is to purchase the property, obtain planning consent for change of use and carry out the refurbishment as required.
21. This is the agreed template as approved by SCB (April 23) and the programme on the property will follow the same approach as the first children's home.
22. The high-level programme is based on carrying out pre-planning application discussions with the planners, local community and residents during the purchase process. The necessary surveys will also be carried out during this period to inform the design work. Once the property is purchased, the planning application will be progressed and submitted to obtain planning consent for change of use before construction works start.
23. A review of potential risks has been carried out by the project team, including the possibility of starting works prior to planning approval. The risk consequence includes potential reputational risk and impact on the relationship with neighbouring residents longer term. Also, if obtained as hoped, planning consent may have conditions precedent that need to be complied with prior to starting works on site. The council would automatically be in breach of the planning consent if work had started prior to consent.
24. Therefore, it was agreed that once consent is received a contractor will start on site.

Financial Implications

Financial case

Identification of funding source

25. Strategic Capital Board (SCB) approved the Business Case strategy to develop the Children's service Care Home capacity through the purchase and adaptation of 4 children's homes costing a total of £10.450m with 50% match funding by the DfE. The authority capital commitment totals £5.225m. Cabinet subsequently approved the proposal at its meeting December 2022.
26. Purchasing and adapting 3 / 4 of the units in this financial year will enable the service to optimise its claim against the DfE conditions, spend profile and share of funding across 2023/24 and 2024/25. The approach will ensure that the spend is at or above the minimum spend thresholds preventing any risk of clawback of underspend on any individual or combination of units against the DfE 50% share. The approach is reinforced by the DfE policy of paying its share of the costs in full up front leaving the authority to cover the balance and have maximum discretion and flexibility in utilising any underspends
27. The CEF Service confirmed approval for staffing and non-staffing supplementary revenue budget through the January 2023 (P10) Budget Monitoring Report approved at Cabinet in May 2023. Funding for the costs is based on an Invest to Save strategy, further details are listed in Annex A. The rationale and basis for the savings strategy is set out in the original Business Case approved by SCB and Cabinet in December 2022
28. The financial strategy and approach to the purchase and adaptation of the units has been planned and structured to ensure best quality of care for children obtaining best value, maximising the use of the DfE's share and optimum use and return on the investment funds.

Future costs, income, and planned expenditure:

Revenue costs

29. The original business case for the four new homes, including two large homes (of which this is one), set out estimated savings totalling between £0.5m and £1.8m per annum. Recently revised, the potential revenue saving per annum on all four children's homes once operational will be in the order of £1m - £5m per annum. This is based on 10-12 children and a cost saving listed in Annex A. The return on investment is 10%-50% per annum and the capital investment would be fully recovered between 2 and 10 years.
30. Net revenue savings for each home were estimated at between £0.2m to £0.5m per annum. The running costs of a single home have been reduced overall following a reduction in proposed staffing levels, offset by small increases in other costs and an increase of £4,000 for utility costs from £20,000 to £24,000 per annum due to inflation, giving a total of £44,000 for property-related costs.

- 31. Costs will be incurred prior to the home becoming operational, particularly in relation to the early appointment of staff. These costs are estimated at no more than £80,000 and these can be offset by the savings from more expensive external placement costs. There are also other revenue costs that have been, or will be, incurred that relate to the property acquisition process that cannot be charged to capital. This includes professional costs incurred in preparing a bid for a property that was subsequently rejected. There may be other costs, such as design fees, but these are minimal and can be met from revenue budgets.
- 32. The estimated full year running costs for the home are £850,000, including £24,000 for property-related costs. These costs will be met from savings in other placement costs as set out in the original business case and incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan

Comments checked by: Danny Doherty, FBP, CEF
danny.doherty@oxfordhsire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

- 33. The legal due diligence will be undertaken in-house by Legal Services.
- 34. Any additional building and technical surveys required prior to the exchange of contracts will be instructed via existing framework agreements or through a purchase order.

Comments checked by Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Richard.Hodby@oxfordshire.gov.uk
 (Law and Governance)

Staff Implications

Technical Advice and Refurbishment Works

- 35. The minor works team will provide detailed surveys and specifications in line with the requirements of the service.
- 36. Project management of the subsequent works will be carried out by the minor works team, and the already appointed specialist project manager will complete both the design and completion of the works to the agreed scope and specification.

Risk Management

| <i>Ref no.</i> | <i>Risk</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Likelihood</i> | <i>Impact</i> | <i>Mitigating Action</i> |
|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|

| | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|---|--------|------|---|
| R.01 | Planning | Approval for change of use not achieved resulting in the need to sell the property | Medium | High | Pre-application engagement will seek to determine response from OCC planners on acceptability of change of use before exchange; in addition, a consultation exercise will be undertaken with neighbours, parish council and local Councillors |
| R.02 | Property Acquisition (1) | Acquisition falls through due to vendor change of circumstances | Low | High | Engagement with vendor through vendor's agent at pre-bid stage to understand circumstances and drivers for sale |
| R.03 | Property Acquisition (2) | Acquisition doesn't proceed due to failure at due-diligence stage | Low | High | Already undertaken pre-bid property, planning and high level technical due diligence |
| R.04 | Staff Recruitment | Unable to successfully recruit the volume of staff needed for the home to be operational in the desired timeframe | Medium | High | High impact recruitment campaign including marketing & comms and the use of social media |

NAME

Stephen Chandler, Executive Director: People

Annex: Annex A (Exempt)

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager, Residential Edge of Care, Children, Education & Families, 07720144 860 andrea.benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dec 2023

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

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Divisions Affected – N/A

**CABINET MEMBER FOR
CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES
16 January 2024**

**Children's Services Residential Capital Programme for
East Hagbourne, Didcot (ASD Home)**

Report by Executive Director: People

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to** release funds to:
 - (a) Purchase a property at East Hagbourne, Didcot for **the amount listed in Annex A**
 - (b) Cover fees of **amount listed in Annex A** (Stamp Duty Land Tax, valuation, legal etc)
 - (c) Cover the adaptation and refurbishment for the **amount listed in Annex A**

Executive Summary

2. Approval of the Children's Services Residential Capital Programme was received on 5 December 2022, Appendix A. This was for the acquisition and associated works of four residential properties to be converted to Children's Homes. Two of these properties are to be utilised as Larger long-term homes for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH), comprising 6-bedroom properties to accommodate four children each.
3. The subject property at East Hagbourne, Didcot has been identified by the service as meeting their needs as a Large Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Terms have been agreed to acquire and refurbish the property for the amount listed in Annex A subject to approval by Cabinet. The offer is in line with the asking price listed in Annex A and is supported by a desk top market valuation at the same level.

Alignment to relevant strategy:

4. Children We Care for [Sufficiency Strategy](#) 2020-2025
5. To support the departments Sufficiency Strategy for placements for Children We Care For, Children’s Services plan to deliver four additional Children’s Homes which will be operated and staffed by the Council’s experienced Residential and Edge of Care (REoC) service. To support children with the greatest needs CEF plan to purchase four properties from the open market and convert to a specific specification working with the Council’s Property department.
6. To increase the number of residential beds within county, to prevent having to place Children We Care For out of county.

| Ref no. | Benefit | Measurement |
|----------------|--|---|
| B.01 | To provide Children We Care For with complex needs a homely and nurturing environment with specialist trained staff including access to the Council’s Clinical Psychologists to enable them to thrive close to their family and friends. | <i>Reduction in CWCF placed outside of Oxfordshire</i> |
| B.02 | These schemes will support the department to meet their duties under the Sufficiency Strategy to increase the provision of in-county residential placements. | <i>Increase in internal residential provision</i> |
| B.03 | The internal residential expansion programme is an invest to save initiative whereby CEF aim to save between £0.5m and £5.6m per annum which is a cost comparison on current un-registered arrangements and out of county placement spend for children who would be accommodated in these homes based on a 75% occupancy rate. | <i>Reduction in number of children placed in unregistered provision</i> |
| B.04 | Increase in the quality of care afforded to our children | <i>Clear Corporate Parenting oversight of the provisions our children are living within</i> |

Exempt Information

7. The information in the Annex is exempt because it contains information that could reveal the identity of an individual (the vendor of the private property) and relates to the business affairs of the vendor (the commercial sensitivity of the purchase of a private property).

Case for Change

8. Before this property was selected as one of 4 properties for conversion across Oxfordshire, a detailed search exercise was undertaken which looked at all vacant properties owned by Oxfordshire County Council. Unfortunately, none of these were suitable as a prospective large or small children's home. Therefore, an extensive search has been carried out across the county to identify properties on the open market for purchase and conversion. The Service consider each property in light of particular needs of the children the home will be catering, and the property was found to be suitable as a large children's home. .
9. The house was chosen as it gives children the opportunity to live and thrive within a settled and safe community within easy reach of universal amenities that are afforded to any other child living within Oxfordshire. Ordinarily there will be no more than 4 children living at the property with 3-4 adults caring for them.
10. Oxfordshire currently has 3 children's homes each of which provide a home for up to 6 children at any one time. These homes are well established within their communities and are all registered with Ofsted and rated GOOD at their most recent inspections.
11. The property will be offering a long-term home to a maximum of 4 children at any one time as we move away from institutionalised living and offer these children the valued experience of living within a nurturing family setting that supports the recovery from trauma suffered from being unable to live with their birth families.

Constraints and dependencies

Constraints

12. The pool of larger 6-bedroom properties available on the open market within Oxfordshire for our £1.5m budget and suitable for minimal conversion is very limited. In addition, locating such a property with sufficient parking, mains drainage, suitable amenities and not located near a railway, waterway or main road is a geographical challenge. For reference, Ofsted view railways, main roads and waterways as significant risks to our children and therefore not suitable.

Dependencies

13. Planning permission will be required to either transfer the personal use from Hillcrest to OCC, or for full change of use from C3 (residential dwelling house) to C2 (residential institution); planning will also be required for the proposed refurbishment works
14. Ability to recruit to the volume of residential staff required in the timeframes will be a challenge due to the current national shortage of candidates entering the care sector. This will require a focused recruitment campaign with support from Human Resources, Marketing and Communications Teams.

Economic case

15. The proposal is to purchase the property at East Hagbourne, Didcot.
16. The house is a two storey 6-bedroom family home with a off-street parking to the front and side of the property and a large garden to the rear of the property. It is set within a rural location with fields and to all sides. Proposed accommodation will comprise Ground floor: kitchen/dining room, lounge, games room, staff office and meeting room, and First floor: x4 Children’s bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and x2 Staff bedrooms.

Indicative refurbishment works to include:

- An extension to the property to contain a new additional staircase to enable all bedrooms to be located on the first floor.
 - Internal robust re-fit including new heating system
 - Installation of new fencing and gates at the front of the house and boundary fencing
17. This is an initial proposition to inform project costs and facilitate acquisition of the property and will be properly designed at feasibility stage.
 18. The preferred option is to purchase the property, obtain planning consent for change of use and carry out the refurbishment as required.
 19. This is the agreed template as approved by SCB (April 23) and the programme on the property will follow the same approach as the first children’s home.
 20. The high-level programme is based on carrying out pre-planning application discussions with the planners, local community and residents during the purchase process. The necessary surveys will also be carried out during this period to inform the design work. Once the property is purchased, the planning application will be progressed and submitted to obtain planning consent for change of use before construction works start.
 21. A review of potential risks has been carried out by the project team, including the possibility of starting works prior to planning approval. The risk consequence includes potential reputational risk and impact on the relationship with neighbouring residents longer term. Also, if obtained as hoped, planning consent may have conditions precedent that need to be complied with prior to starting works on site. The council would automatically be in breach of the planning consent if work had started prior to consent.
 22. Therefore, it was agreed that once consent is received a contractor will start on site.

Financial Implications

Financial case

Identification of funding source

23. Strategic Capital Board (SCB) approved the Business Case strategy to develop the Children's service Care Home capacity through the purchase and adaptation of 4 children's homes costing a total of £10.450m with 50% match funding by the DfE. The authority capital commitment totals £5.225m. Cabinet subsequently approved the proposal at its meeting December 2022. The table below provides a summary of the budget for each of the units together with a breakdown of the purchase and adaptation (construction) costs.
24. Purchasing and adapting 3 / 4 of the units in this financial year will enable the service to optimise its claim against the DfE conditions, spend profile and share of funding across 2023/24 and 2024/25. The approach will ensure that the spend is at or above the minimum spend thresholds preventing any risk of clawback of underspend on any individual or combination of units against the DfE 50% share. The approach is reinforced by the DfE policy of paying its share of the costs in full up front leaving the authority to cover the balance and have maximum discretion and flexibility in utilising any underspends
25. The CEF Service confirmed approval for staffing and non-staffing supplementary revenue budget through the January 2023 (P10) Budget Monitoring Report approved at Cabinet in May 2023. Funding for the costs is based on an Invest to Save strategy, further details are listed in Annex A. The rationale and basis for the savings strategy is set out in the original Business Case approved by SCB and Cabinet in December 2022
26. The financial strategy and approach to the purchase and adaptation of the units has been planned and structured to ensure best quality of care for children obtaining best value, maximising the use of the DfE's share and optimum use and return on the investment funds.

Future costs, income, and planned expenditure:

Revenue costs

27. The original business case for the four new homes, including two large homes (of which this is one), set out estimated savings totalling between £0.5m and £1.8m per annum. Recently revised, the potential revenue saving per annum on all four children's homes once operational will be in the order of £1m - £5m per annum. This is based on 10-12 children and a cost saving listed in Annex A. The return on investment is 10%-50% per annum and the capital investment would be fully recovered between 2 and 10 years.

28. Net revenue savings for each home were estimated at between £0.2m to £0.5m per annum. The running costs of a single home have been reduced overall following a reduction in proposed staffing levels, offset by small increases in other costs and an increase of £4,000 for utility costs from £20,000 to £24,000 per annum due to inflation, giving a total of £44,000 for property-related costs.
29. Costs will be incurred prior to the home becoming operational, particularly in relation to the early appointment of staff. These costs are estimated at no more than £80,000 and these can be offset by the savings from more expensive external placement costs. There are also other revenue costs that have been, or will be, incurred that relate to the property acquisition process that cannot be charged to capital. This includes professional costs incurred in preparing a bid for a property that was subsequently rejected. There may be other costs, such as design fees, but these are minimal and can be met from revenue budgets.
30. The estimated full year running costs for the home are £850,000, including £24,000 for property-related costs. These costs will be met from savings in other placement costs as set out in the original business case and incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan

Comments checked by: Danny Doherty, FBP, CEF
danny.doherty@oxfordhsire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

31. The legal due diligence will be undertaken in-house by Legal Services.
32. Any additional building and technical surveys required prior to the exchange of contracts will be instructed via existing framework agreements or through a purchase order.

Comments checked by Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Richard.Hodby@oxfordshire.gov.uk
(Law and Governance)

Staff Implications

Technical Advice and Refurbishment Works

33. The minor works team will provide detailed surveys and specifications in line with the requirements of the service.
34. Project management of the subsequent works will be carried out by the minor works team, and the already appointed specialist project manager will complete both the design and completion of the works to the agreed scope and specification.

Risk Management

| <i>Ref no.</i> | <i>Risk</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Likelihood</i> | <i>Impact</i> | <i>Mitigating Action</i> |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|---|
| R.01 | Planning | Approval for change of use not achieved resulting in the need to sell the property | Medium | High | Pre-application engagement will seek to determine response from OCC planners on acceptability of change of use before exchange; in addition, a consultation exercise will be undertaken with neighbours, parish council and local Councillors |
| R.02 | Property Acquisition (1) | Acquisition falls through due to vendor change of circumstances | Low | High | Engagement with vendor through vendor's agent at pre-bid stage to understand circumstances and drivers for sale |
| R.03 | Property Acquisition (2) | Acquisition doesn't proceed due to failure at due-diligence stage | Low | High | Already undertaken pre-bid property, planning and high level technical due diligence |
| R.04 | Staff Recruitment | Unable to successfully recruit the volume of staff needed for the home to be operational in the desired timeframe | Medium | High | High impact recruitment campaign including marketing & comms and the use of social media |

Stephen Chandler, Executive Director: People

Annex: Annex A (Exempt)

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager, Residential Edge of Care, Children, Education & Families, 07720144 860 andrea.benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dec 2023

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