



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

***Wednesday, 9 October 2024 at 2.00 pm
Room 1 - 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 Wednesday 16 October 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

September 2024

Committee Officer: committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Note: Date of next meeting: 6 November 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. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024 to be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the **annex** to Agenda Item **5**, 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 report does not contain exempt information and is available to the public

THE **ANNEX** TO THE ITEM NAMED HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

5. Children's Services Residential Capital Programme for Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton (Pages 5 - 26)

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

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/313

Contact: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager – Residential Edge of Care
(Andrea.Benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CMDCEYPS5**).

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:

- a) Approve entering the contract with E. W. Beards for them to carry out construction services on the refurbishment of Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton.**
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Property in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Deputy Monitoring Officer to complete all necessary legal documentation to give effect to this contract award.**

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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Agenda Item 4

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

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 11 September 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.15 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor John Howson – in the Chair

Officers: Jack Ahier (Democratic Services Officer), Caroline Kelly (Lead Commissioner – Start Well), Rebecca Lanchbury (Commissioning Manager), Alison Walker (Commissioning Officer), Rosie Winyard (Commissioning Manager, Health),

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.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 1)

None.

13 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda No. 2)

None.

14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

None.

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 were approved by the Chair as a correct record.

16 FUNDING CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS JOINT COMMISSIONED CAMHS CONTRACT WITH BOB ICB (2024-25)

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair remarked that he was anxious about how the timing of this decision is going to be managed in line with the new budget (April 2025).

Officers replied that the delay in this decision is because of a change in contract regulations and NHS requirements, and they hope to speed things up to avoid a search for retrospective funding in the new fiscal year.

The Chair further remarked that the problem now is that this decision will either adversely affect budgetary negotiations or require over-spend and this was not ideal.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services APPROVED the following as advertised:

- a) **To delegate authority to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to award a funding contribution value £754,400 to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) under the existing partnering agreement with BOB ICB towards payment for the contract for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Oxfordshire. This service contract value is £20million in 2024-2025 is managed by the BOB ICB and delivered by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT).**
- b) **To agree commencement of an immediate review process for this contract and future funding arrangements post April 2025, to ensure return on investment and improving outcomes for children and young people in Oxfordshire experiencing mental health problems and associated neuro diversity.**

17 SOUTH CENTRAL RESIDENTIAL FRAMEWORK (Agenda No. 6)

The Chair asked why he was being asked to approve £500K only, given that the Council spent £1.3M under a previous contract.

Officers clarified that the cost is £500K per placement, and they are likely to want to make several placements in the year.

Officers further remarked that they would like the director of Start Well to have delegated approval to award contracts which cost more than £500K in the future, and they are seeking legal advice around whether this would be possible.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services APPROVED the following as advertised:

- a) **To approve the purchase of individual and/or block placements, under the £500K threshold, for the children of Oxfordshire from the South-Central Residential Care Framework as a Consortium member.**

18 SHAP HOMELESSNESS PROJECT WITHDRAWAL

(Agenda No. 7)

The Chair remarked that this whole situation is unfortunate and frustrating because it would have been nice to provide the service to the young people.

The Chair asked officers to stay in contract with potential providers of such a service and thanked the team for their efforts.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services APPROVED the following as advertised:

- a) To acknowledge the Council's position on the application to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme (SHAP) for Young People aged 18-25 at Risk of Homelessness, and reasons for withdrawing the service following the key decision paper on 10th July 2024.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Divisions Affected –

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

9 October 2024

Children's Services Residential Capital Programme for Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton

Report by Director of Childrens Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - a) **Approve entering the contact with E. W. Beards for them to carry out construction services on the refurbishment of Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton.**
 - b) **Delegate authority to the Director of Property in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Deputy Monitoring Officer to complete all necessary legal documentation to give effect to this contract award.**

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 ASD and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH), comprising 6-bedroom properties to accommodate four children each.
3. A further Key Decision was approved to release these approved funds for the acquisition and refurbishment of Oathill Lodge on 17 October 2023
4. The property at Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton (Oathill Lodge) was purchased on 16 November 2023 and will be a large long-term children's home specifically for children with complex emotional needs.

5. Planning Permission was submitted 19 February 2024 and granted 5 August 2024 for change of use from C3 (residential dwelling house) to C2 (residential institution) and for the proposed refurbishment.

Alignment to relevant strategy:

6. Children We Care for [Sufficiency Strategy](#) 2020-2025
7. 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.
8. 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

9. 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 (the commercial sensitivity of the purchase and contract details of a private property).

Case for Change

10. 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 look at each property considering the particular needs of the children the home will be catering, and Oathill Lodge is suitable as a large children's home.
11. The home 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.
12. 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.
13. Oathill Lodge 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

14. 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

15. Planning permission for full change of use from C3 (residential dwelling house) to C2 (residential institution) and for the proposed refurbishment works was granted on 5 August 2024.
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.

17. To note: Ofsted Registration, an external driver and requirement for securing children in the home, is taking 17 – 25 weeks for completion. The registration cannot start until the keys are handed to the service at completion of refurbishment works. This will impact the realisation of revenue savings until nearly 6 months after completion of refurbishments.

Economic case

18. The proposal is to refurbish the property at Oathill Lodge, Enstone, Chipping Norton.
19. The house is a two storey 10-bedroom children's home with a small garden to the side and rear of the property. It is set within a rural location with fields and woodlands 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.

Refurbishment works include

- The interior of the property will require a complete refit and a link will need to be created between the main body of the house and the annex
- Internal robust re-fit including new heating system and new external windows and doors; small increase in floor area due to new connection between the house and the annex at first floor level
- Demolition of office building in garden
- Installation of new fencing and gates at the front of the house and some additional protective barrier fencing at the rear
- Photovoltaics to roof and increase insulation throughout

Financial Implications

Comments checked by Lorna Baxter, Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer. Email: lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Financial Case

Identification of funding source

20. 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.
21. 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
22. 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
23. 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

24. 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.
25. 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.

26. 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.
27. 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

Legal Implications

Comments checked by Sarah Hayes, Solicitor, Legal Services. Email: sarah.hayes@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

28. The legal due diligence has been undertaken in-house by Legal Services.
29. The decision will enable legal services to draft and finalise the relevant contractual documentation on behalf of the Council so that the project can proceed.

Staff Implications

Technical Advice and Refurbishment Works

30. Project management of the works will be carried out by the minor works team, via a specialist project manager to complete the works to the agreed scope and specification. The cost for this Project Manager is included in the project capital budget.

Risk Management

| <i>Ref no.</i> | <i>Risk</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Likelihood</i> | <i>Impact</i> | <i>Mitigating Action</i> |
|----------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|---------------|--|
| R.04 | Staff Recruitment | Unable to successfully recruit the volume of staff | Medium | High | High impact recruitment campaign including marketing & comms and the |

| | | | | | |
|------|---------------------|--|------|-----|--|
| | | needed for the home to be operational in the desired timeframe | | | use of social media |
| R.05 | Match Funding | Unable to successfully spend the required amount of funding from DfE within the required timescale | High | Med | Escalation of risk to timescales given in July 24 and shared with DfE to ensure change control for programme can be managed appropriately. |
| R.06 | Ofsted Registration | Unable to secure Ofsted registration for the home resulting in lack of revenue savings | Low | Med | Ofsted registration, at the time of writing, is taking 17 – 25 weeks per home to complete and will impact the timing of the anticipated revenue savings. |

Lisa Lyons
Director of Children's Services

Annex: Annex A – Exempt Information

Contact Officer: Andrea Benneyworth, Programme Manager, Residential Edge of Care, Children, Education & Families
Mobile: 07720144860
Email: andrea.benneyworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

September 2024

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

Document is Restricted

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