

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

***Tuesday, 29 April 2025 at 9.00 am
Virtual***

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, 7 April 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



Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

April 2025

Committee Officer: **Committee Services**
E-Mail: committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Note: *Date of next meeting: 17 June 2025*

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

Items for Decision

1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

2. Questions from County Councillors

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

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

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

3. Petitions and Public Address

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

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

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

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting of 25 February 2025 as an accurate record of proceedings.

5. Connect to Work: Selection of Key Delivery Partner (Pages 1 - 10)

*Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/071
Contact: Will Gardner, Team Manager
Will.gardner@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Director of Adult Social Services

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) review the options considered against the criteria identified taking into account the requirements of the Connect to Work Guidance of Department of Work and Pensions, Oxfordshire's labour market and social value;**
- b) approve the recommendation of Option 2 – Enterprise Oxfordshire as the provider of the Independent Placement Support pathway for Oxfordshire's Connect to Work programme; and**
- c) delegate the pathway design and award of contracts decision to the Director of Adult Social Care, the latter in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Governance.**

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 registrable 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.

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 25 February 2025 commencing at 9.08 and finishing at 9.12am.

Present: Councillor Tim Bearder – in the Chair

Officers: Jack Nicholson (Democratic Services Officer)
Derek Gravett-Smith (Commissioning Manager, Live Well)
Jordan Marsh (Commissioning Officer, Adult Social Care)
Sharon Paterson (Commissioning Manager, Support Protect)

The Cabinet Member considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

37/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 1)

There were no declarations of interest.

38/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no questions from County Councillors.

39/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

There were no petitions and public address.

40/25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2025 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

41/25 KINGWOOD - CONTRACT EXTENSION

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair remarked that analysis demonstrated that the real impact to providers of adult social care of the government's budget last year potentially exceeded £2 billion, given an increase in employers' National Insurance contributions and a rise in the National Living Wage. He said that local government had not been given the necessary funds to cope with these changes, which put local government in an invidious position.

The Chair approved the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED to agree to a continued extension of the contract with Brandon Trust to deliver the Adult Learning Disability Respite contract with the Council for an additional 7 months, from 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026.

42/25 LEARNING DISABILITY RESPITE SERVICE CONTRACT EXTENSION

(Agenda No. 6)

The Chair approved the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED to authorise the extension of the following contracts for a further two years:

- i. Contract for the Provision of Specialist Learning Disability Supported Living Services at Culver Lodge, Oxford between Oxfordshire County Council and Autism at Kingwood dated 03 June 2019. The 2-year extension would be from 29 September 2025 to 29 September 2027.**
- ii. Contract for the Provision of Specialist Learning Disability Supported Living Services at Abingdon, Didcot, Oxford, between Oxfordshire County Council and Autism at Kingwood dated 01 April 2019. The 2-year extension would be from 29 September 2025 to 29 September 2027.**
- iii. Contract for the provision of Specialist Learning Disability Supported Living Services at Wallingford, Carterton and North Leigh. The 2-year extension would be from 06 September 2025 to 06 September 2027.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2025

Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care 29th April 2025

Connect to Work: Selection of Key Delivery Partner

Report by the Director of Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) review the options considered against the criteria identified taking into account the requirements of the Connect to Work Guidance of Department of Work and Pensions, Oxfordshire's labour market and social value;
- b) approve the recommendation of Option 2 – Enterprise Oxfordshire as the provider of the Independent Placement Support pathway for Oxfordshire's Connect to Work programme; and
- c) delegate the pathway design and award of contracts decision to the Director of Adult Social Care, the latter in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Governance.

Executive Summary

1. Connect to Work (CtW) is a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through grant funding. Oxfordshire County Council is designated as the Accountable Body Oxfordshire responsible for designing Oxfordshire's offer and delivering the programme for the initial five-year duration (2025 – 2030).
2. Connect to Work will be delivered through the provision of the two high-fidelity models of employment support, the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model and the Individual Placement Support Model (IPS). Indicative figures for Oxfordshire suggest that 2,000 participants will access the programme over four years. It is expected that 20-30% of participants will be supported through the 5 Stage Model and 70-80% through IPS provision.
3. The DWP funding for Oxfordshire is advised as £4200.00 per participant giving an indicative programme cost of circa £8.4 million based on the DWP's current demand modelling of 2000 people accessing the programme. The

programme is funded in arrears by the DWP subject to a delivery plan and grant funding agreement. Payments will reimburse costs defrayed by the council in delivering the programme. To support implementation, the Connect to Work Grant payment will be made monthly in arrears for planning and implementation activities during the implementation period, and quarterly in arrears for the Delivery Period.

4. This programme links with the Council's emerging local Get Britain Working Strategy which aim to develop a whole system approach to tackling the supply and demand side challenges within local labour markets, covering market issues such as participation, progression, earnings and job quality in the labour market. This report sets out the options that have been considered for the IPS pathway against a set of appraisal criteria. All options for delivery have been assessed against the requirements and the preferred option, working with Enterprise Oxfordshire to deliver the IPS Pathway emerged as the preferred option.

Background

5. Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) launched the Connect to Work programme in late 2024 as the first programme under the Government's new Get Britain Working Strategy. It is a work programme to help disabled people, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment, to find sustainable work. It is a voluntary, high-fidelity Supported Employment programme, connecting work, health and skills support.
6. Oxfordshire County Council has been designated as one of 43 Accountable Bodies across England. The Council will design the local offer, shaping it around local services and priorities, to help people find and fulfil their potential to work. Connect to Work will support those, primarily, currently outside the workforce and facing greater labour market disadvantages, to get into work and to stay in work.
7. The programme will drive two Supported Employment models: Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF). The proposal has DLT and SLT approvals. Work is ongoing to ensure that the local model remains in line with fidelity assurance models and the programme is effectively co-produced.
8. The Programme will primarily be focused on supporting people with a disability and specified disadvantaged groups such as disabled people, offender/ex-offenders, carers/ex-carers, homeless people, former members of HM Armed Forces or a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel, people with a alcohol or drug dependency, care experienced young person/ care leavers (full eligibility can be found in the published guidance [Connect to Work: Grant Guidance for England](#) for details on eligibility).
9. Over the five years of the programme (2025 - 2030), there is an indicative target of 2,000 participants in Oxfordshire. This is split between the two models 70-75% for IPS and 25-30% for and SEQF pathways.

Planning the Delivery of the IPS Pathway in Oxfordshire

10. An extensive mapping exercise has been conducted to identify potential providers of the IPS pathway and a number of organisations that could be interested in delivering local Connect to Work programmes identified.
11. Market engagement conversations have taken place to explore opportunities with potential organisations, including with Enterprise Oxfordshire, (a Teckal company, previously known as OxLEP – brought under Council ownership through Cabinet Decision November 2024). An options appraisal has been conducted to inform the choice of provider for the IPS pathway and ensure that Oxfordshire residents gain the most value from the Connect to Work programme using the criteria identified.
12. The criteria have taken into account the following:
 - The ability to meet the ambitious DWP timescales for the delivery of the programme and the programme outcomes;
 - The capability to deliver a quality, fidelity model for IPS in Oxfordshire;
 - Opportunities to tap into the existing experience and knowledge of Oxfordshire’s labour market;
 - Ability to focus on supporting local people into employment effectively in conjunction with Council’s ambitions and existing programmes to support inclusive employment in Oxfordshire;
 - Achieving ambitions which reflect the strategic vision of the Oxfordshire Way and other local strategy across health, employment and communities;
 - Deliver social value including keeping investment and jobs local as well as building capacity of local organisations and the VCSE.
13. The Council has considered the criteria against which to appraise the options to identify the benefits and risks of each option for successful Connect to Work delivery.

Options appraisal

14. Three options have been considered and appraised against the criteria set out above.

Option 1

Do not deliver the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) pathway.

Option 2

Contract with Enterprise Oxfordshire (as a Teckal company) to deliver the Individual Placement and Support pathway.

Option 3

Take the Individual Placement and Support pathway to the open market and procure a provider.

	Option 1: Do nothing	Option 2: Contract with Enterprise Oxfordshire to deliver the IPS Pathway.	Option 3: Tender the IPS to procure a provider.
Delivering the Programme	The Council is required to deliver Connect to Work in Oxfordshire.	This would be a low-risk approach reputationally. It would deliver a programme to support local people into employment.	This would be a low-risk approach reputationally. It would deliver a programme to support local people into employment.
Criteria Met?	No	Yes	Yes
Deliver a quality, fidelity model for IPS.	This would not be achieved with this option. There would not be a programme of IPS offered.	DWP does not require a fidelity provider from the beginning of the programme. Enterprise Oxfordshire has committed to completing the fidelity self-assessment process in the implementation stage of the programme. The organisation has knowledge and expertise that can support the design and delivery of the IPS pathway.	There are a range of providers and prime contractors who operate a fidelity model and a number who do not. As this is not an immediate DWP criteria, this is not considered essential.
Criteria Met?	No	Yes	Yes
Contribute to achieving ambitions of our strategic vision of the Oxfordshire Way and other local strategic approaches	This would not be achieved with this option. There would be no opportunity to build strategic vision or join up activity across health, employment and communities.	Enterprise Oxfordshire, as a company owned and controlled by the Council, shares the ambitions of the Council, including those within the Oxfordshire Way. Working with Enterprise Oxfordshire to	It would be possible to identify a provider at a national level who could reflect the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Way but it would not necessarily be their primary purpose. National organisations operating in this

		deliver the IPS pathway would further join up local strategies.	space are likely to have their own ambitions and a mission created by their own corporate priorities. Ambitions around co-production would not be fully met in this option.
Criteria Met?	No	Yes	Partly
Deliver social value locally and build capacity of local organisations and the VCSE.	This option would not deliver against the Council's social value agenda. It would not bring forward local jobs or build capacity of the VCSE.	Enterprise Oxfordshire has excellent local links with local organisations. Through their 13+ years of delivering business support (through the DBT Growth Hub) and employment support programmes (No Limits, Apprenticeship delivery, Skills for Life Bootcamp, Careers Hub), Enterprise Oxfordshire has access to significant local assets and has worked with local organisations to build capacity in the county.	National primes are unlikely to have strong local networks and contacts with the business community unless they have delivered programmes locally over a long period of time. The risk of establishing these contacts at the beginning of the programme is high and would be detrimental to the delivery of the programme outcomes.
Criteria Met?	No	Yes	No
Ability to meet the DWP ambitious programme timelines.	This would not be achieved with this option as there would be no programme.	Enterprise Oxfordshire has indicated that they are able to work closely with the project team timetable for implementation and delivery. They have committed to early conversations on the overall delivery model and working	To competitively procure an organisation to deliver the IPS pathway for Oxfordshire would require a full commissioning process. This would significantly slow down the programme design and delay the start of the Connect to Work programme.

		with the Council to co-designing the offer.	
Criteria met?	No	Yes	No
Outcome	Not recommended	Recommended	Not recommended

Summary

Option 1

This is not the preferred option.

- The Council is required to deliver Connect to Work in Oxfordshire

Option 2

This is the preferred option.

- Enterprise Oxfordshire has already demonstrated a commitment to carrying out self-assessment of the fidelity 25-item scale.
- Their existing contacts with local businesses, VCSE and employment support providers is also an important factor in this appraisal.
- Enterprise Oxfordshire has indicated that they are committed to working with the Council to design the IPS pathway and support the development of the delivery plan for Council and DWP sign-off.
- As Enterprise Oxfordshire is a Local Authority trading company (also known as a Teckal company), it benefits from an exemption under which the parent local authority (i.e. Oxfordshire County Council) is allowed to enter into a contract without the need for a competitive tender process.

Option 3

This is not the preferred option.

- National organisations operating in this space are likely to have their own ambitions and a mission created by their own corporate priorities.
- Ambitions around co-production would not be fully met in this option.
- This would not have the desired outcome of building the capacity of local organisations and ensuring the model can achieve a local / hyper local outcome.
- The timetable for design and implementation would likely not be met given the time to commission an external provider.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended to agree progress of the Connect to Work Programme (design and procurement) in line with Option 2. In order to mitigate risk, the Council also recommends continuing design reviews with Enterprise Oxfordshire and building in contract milestones including:

- Completing a self-assessment of the fidelity 25-item scale in 2025-26 to identify areas for improvement.
- Completing the formal assessment of the fidelity 25-item scale in 2026-27.
- Achieving a 'good' rating within the first 3-years of the programme.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. Delivering a successful IPS Pathway in Oxfordshire aligns with following strategic priorities of Oxfordshire County Council:

- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire – there will be a measurable impact on numbers of individuals achieving supported employment through this work.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents – employment is considered a central part of health and wellbeing.
- Support carers and the social care system – Connect to Work's eligible groups includes carers and care leavers.
- Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential – Connect to Work's eligible groups includes young people from the age of 16-years of age.
- Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy – the programme design will include co-production aspects to ensure the barriers to participation and job outcomes are removed.
- Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit – there will be significant work carried out with the local business base to identify and provide job opportunities. The pathway will encourage social value.

Financial Implications

17. The programme is fully funded against a five-year operational period by DWP subject to a delivery plan and grant funding agreement. The Council does not expect any exceptional expenditure.

18. Based on DWP modelling, 2,000 people are expected to access the programme. DWP estimated the lifetime cost to be £4,200 per participant indicating a programme budget of circa £8 million. The Council has been awarded £100,000.00 from the total project budget to fund development activities.

19. It is recommended that the proposed contract length is 5-years with review periods after 1 year, 3 years and 5 years, which will give the opportunity to

review the service provided. It is also recommended that there be an option to extend for 2-years, should further government funding be provided as has been the case in other programmes. This will give the Council flexibility should short-term funding be allocated before any further support programmes come in.

Comments checked by:

Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business Partner,
stephen.rowles@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

20. The delivery of the Connect to Work Programme will require entering into and complying with the Department of Work & Pensions' grant agreement conditions and guidance which will need legal input and support.
21. Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited (OxLEP) now trading as Enterprise Oxfordshire is a limited company, wholly owned by the Council. It was formed as a "Teckal" compliant company, in order that contracts for works, services and goods, awarded by the Council to it, are exempt from the requirement to carry out a competitive procurement exercise in accordance with regulation 12 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). The PCR has recently been replaced by the Procurement Act 2023, however, the 'Teckal' exemption (now vertical exemption) still exists under the new Act (contained within Schedule 2, paragraph 2 of the Act).
22. The contract for the IPS can be directly awarded by the Council to OxLEP, without competition (relying on the 'Teckal' exemption within the Procurement Act) provided that the Teckal conditions continue to be satisfied i.e. more than 80% of OxLEP's activities are carried out for or on behalf of the Council, only public authorities must hold shares in OxLEP, and the Council controls OxLEP (with no person other than the Council exerting a decisive influence on the activities of OxLEP).
23. It is important that the Council operates OxLEP in accordance with the appropriate controls (i.e. the Council does not allow it to operate with wider freedoms than those in its Articles and any Member Agreement, but instead it is managed and controlled accordingly) and continues to monitor compliance with the above conditions to ensure OxLEP continues to satisfy the 'Teckal' exemption.
24. Appropriate contractual documentation should be formalised with OxLEP in relation to the service provision.

Comments checked by: Gareth Hale, Senior Solicitor, Contracts and Conveyancing
gareth.hale@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

25. The successful delivery of the Programme would require staffing support from OCC teams including Oxfordshire Employment, HESC (Commissioning Team), Legal, Finance and Procurement Teams. Supporting this programme is within the Council's ambitions and staff would be expected to support the implementation.
26. Additional specialist support may be needed to ensure a dedicated capacity to oversee implementation and escalate risks. The Council anticipates that this would include a Programme Manager, Project Manager and Consultant. These additional staffing requirements will be included in the detailed programme design and specification once the preferred option has been agreed. It is expected that these can be financed through the CtW programme budget and would be no cost to the Council.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

27. The Programme Delivery plan will align to the Council's corporate values of Equality and Integrity in all that we do. An Equality and Impact Assessment will be completed once the route is agreed. Oxfordshire County Council's contracting terms will require any contracting party to adhere to the relevant legislation and standards as a minimum with clear expectations as to culture, training and onward investment in EDI.

Sustainability Implications

28. The proposed IPS delivery does not directly create any sustainability benefits or issues. As part of the detailed development of the programme, the Council will consider if there are any climate benefits can be achieved (for instance, using public transport, reducing journeys etc). At the contract stage, the Council's standard terms and expectations for sustainability and environmental impact will be included.

Risk Management

29. The development plan will include a fully developed risk assessment and management plan. Key risks currently identified are:
- Programme timescales
 - Resource and capacity, including recruitment of suitably skilled practitioners for delivery
 - Identifying the ambitious numbers of participants required
 - The sustainability of Oxfordshire Employment should option 2 not be chosen as a delivery partner.
 - Duplication of provision.
 - Continuation of grant funding (review based)

Consultations

30. There is no requirement on the Council to consult in this instance. The development of the Connect to Work Programme locally in line with DWP Guidance is expected to benefit supporting people access employment locally.

Karen Fuller
Director of Adult Social Care

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April 2025