

**Divisions Affected – N/A**

**DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS  
19 JUNE 2026**

**RECOMMISSIONING OF ADULT SHORT BREAKS (LEARNING  
DISABILITY RESPITE) SERVICE**

**Report by Director of Adult Social Care**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Agree to delegate the decision to award contract for the Adult Short Breaks Service (formerly known as Learning Disability Respite Service) to the Director of Adult Social Care.**

**Executive Summary**

1. The Council has issued a tender for a replacement Adult Short Breaks service inviting providers to bid to provide the service in properties owned or leased by the Council.
2. The sum made available in the tender was up to £1,198,880.00 per annum. An additional sum has been allocated to the Council Properties and Estates Directorate to cover accommodation and annual property maintenance costs. This equates to a total budget of £1,298,880.00. The contract will be for five years with the option to extend for a further three years, commencing 01 October 2026. Any future contract extension will be subject to the decision of the responsible authority at that time.
3. The service model and budget scope have previously been agreed by Cabinet Member on 16 July 2024.
4. The Adults Short Breaks service has been designed to deliver planned, time-limited, or emergency care provided to support people with a learning disability and their carers/families with having a break from each other and/or a break from their caring role. Adult Short Breaks additionally provide an opportunity for individuals to socialise with their peers in their personal time.
5. The Council provides this service for people who meet thresholds and criteria set out in the Care Act.

6. The Adult Short Breaks service has been co-designed/co-produced following engagement workshops with experts by experience, families/carers, and other stakeholders to enhance the delivery of the service so that it is person-centred and meets the diverse needs of the people accessing Adult Short Breaks and their carers/families.
7. The redesigned model will be delivered from three properties (15 beds) leased or owned by Oxfordshire County Council.
8. The current model includes provision for emergency Adult Short Breaks. This provision is included within the delivery of the new service and will be deployed to support with hospital admission avoidance by Adult Social Care (ASC) Operational Teams.
9. The service will offer support to people with learning disabilities who may have co-existing conditions such as:
  - Mental health conditions
  - Physical disabilities including degenerative conditions, sensory impairment, and brain injury / neurological condition
  - Autism
10. The Council owns one of the sites and is in the process of acquiring the other 2 sites that will be used to deliver the service. The Council will manage the properties used to deliver the service. This will include lease costs and annual maintenance. The utility and other costs related to the property will be covered by the Adult Short Breaks service provider as part of the contract.
11. The recommissioned sites will be rebranded and refurbished by the Properties and Estates Directorate. People who use the current Respite services were involved in co-designing this.

## 12. Decision table

<b>Board</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	03 June 2024	Agreed
Commercial Board	18 June 2024	Agreed
Key Decision – Cabinet Member	16 July 2024	Agreed
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	15 September 2025	Agreed

## Background

13. Under the Care Act 2014, carers of adults who have care and support needs are entitled to have a carer's assessment, which determines the amount of support they receive. The council is legally obliged to meet eligible needs. Dependent upon outcomes from a financial assessment, people receiving the care may be charged for the Adult Short Breaks service.

14. Currently the Council commissions a *Respite Service* to meet these needs from three sites around Oxfordshire. The current five plus five-year contract commenced on 16 October 2018 and was due to expire on 15 October 2023. The contract was extended in line with its provisions to 30 September 2026. The Council has used this extension to co-design the new *Adult Short Breaks Service* with experts by experience, families/carers, and other stakeholders.
15. The below table details where the current Respite Service is delivered. The Council is in the process of securing these sites and will use them for the future *Adult Short Breaks Service*:

<b>Housing Provider</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Maximum No of People per Night</b>
Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust (Oxfordshire County Council in process of acquiring property)	43 Saxon Way, Oxford	5 Respite Beds (+ 1 Emergency Bed)
Oxfordshire County Council	Woodview, 97 Wantage Road, Didcot	5 Respite Beds
Bromford Housing Group Limited (Oxfordshire County Council in process of acquiring property)	69 Neithrop Avenue, Banbury	5 Respite Beds

16. The newly designed service replicates current service provision at the above sites with enhancements made to improve the user experience.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

17. The council's Strategic Plan sets out the vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county. The vision has nine priorities and two of the priorities are: 'Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents' and 'Support carers and the social care system.'
18. The Adult Short Breaks service will provide support to adults with a learning disability and/or physical disability and their carers who have identified care and support needs, to have a break from their caring role and help with maintaining their health and wellbeing.
19. The council's consultation and engagement strategy outlines the approach, putting residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong, active, and inclusive communities. Commissioners have ensured that the people who use the service, their parents, and carers, have had their voices heard through supporting the design of the new service.

20. Additionally, through the council engaging with the local community, the council ensures that customers are being treated as a priority, by those who support them.
19. The new service creates the potential to provide more diverse support opportunities. This approach ensures the council continues to reduce the inequalities in accessing support and services, in Oxfordshire.

## **Financial Implications**

20. The budget for the new Adult Short Breaks Service is £1,298,880.00 per annum and features as part of the Live Well pooled budget. This would cover the rent for the properties, emergencies, and the cost-of-service delivery.
21. The contract is a block arrangement, the provider will be responsible for covering costs such as staffing and utilities etc, as defined within their tender bid.
22. The leasing and annual maintenance costs for the properties for Adult Short Breaks Service, will be managed by Oxfordshire County Council's Properties and Estates Team at a value of £100,000.00 per annum, included within the figure quoted in paragraph 5.1 above.

### ***Finance Comments Checked by:***

Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business Partner

## **Legal Implications**

23. The statutory duty for the council to provide adult respite care is set out in the Care Act 2014 ("the Care Act"):
24. Section 2 of the Care Act recognises the carer's right to have their own needs assessed and supported. This includes access to respite care to maintain their own physical and mental well-being.
25. Section 18 of the Care Act states that local authorities must consider respite care when conducting a needs assessment for either the cared-for person or their carer. This means it is not automatically guaranteed, but they must actively evaluate its potential benefits and suitability.
26. Section 10 of the Care Act, requires local authorities to conduct an assessment, known as a "carer's assessment", where it identifies that a carer may have needs or requires support at that time or in the future.
27. Section 20 of the Care Act places a duty and power on local authorities to meet a carers' needs for support where they qualify through an assessment for specific support.

28. In addition to the fulfilment of the specific duties set above the provision of respite care supports the fundamental principle of prevention under the Care Act by supporting carers to have a break from their caring role, to ensure that they are able to care for the people they support, for longer.
29. The contract for the service has been procured competitively in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules which themselves ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

***Legal Comments Checked by:***

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor

## **Staff Implications**

30. There is no new or additional impact on the council's workforce as a result of the recommendation.
31. The successful bidder for the new Adult Short Breaks service will be required to progress their responsibility for the TUPE management arrangements of staff who work in the current Respite Services, through the mobilisation stage of the implementation period.
32. The TUPE arrangements have been jointly progressed between Procurement, Commissioners, and the Service Provider, prior to publishing the tender documentation.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

33. No evidence has been identified to suggest, that by the council approving this recommendation, will lead to a negative impact on the community, environment, or its strategic partners within Oxfordshire.

## **Sustainability Implications**

34. Drawing upon the valuable feedback received through the stakeholder engagement and in addition from future insights from benchmarking exercise, this has resulted in a detailed specification being developed which will provide a better tailored service with a significantly wider reach and greater sustainability for the future of this provision.

## **Risk Management**

35. The Agreement to award the contract for Adult Short Breaks was specifically procured for the purpose of providing support for family carers and to provide meaningful stays to those who require support. The contract will be completed through a competitive tender process.

By approving the recommendation within this paper, it promotes the following benefits and mitigates the following risks.

- a) A competitive tender process has been progressed to ensure a high-quality service is delivered within a specified financial envelope.
- b) This service model has been designed with people who use this service which will enhance the outcomes for individuals. This service will provide vital rest for family carers enabling people with a Learning Disability to stay in their homes with their family.
- c) The model reduces financial risks to the Council (and NHS) of high cost out of area and/or alternative accommodation and care provision.

## **Consultations**

- 36. Through engagement workshops, feedback on the current Respite service was gathered and the model for the new Adult Short Breaks service was co-designed/co-produced.
- 37. Participants included experts by experience who access Oxfordshire Family Support Network (OxFSN) and My Life My Choice (MLMC), current staff of the Respite service, families/carers and people who currently use the Respite Service.
- 38. Engagement events informed existing users about future commissioning plans and offered them the opportunity to share their experiences: what worked well, what could be improved, and their suggestions for a redesigned service.
- 39. The resulting feedback covered both positive aspects of the current service, areas requiring improvement, and innovative elements which have been included in the redesign of the Adult Short Breaks Service.

**Karen Fuller**  
**Director for Adult Social Care**

Contact Officer:                      Bhavna Taank  
Lead Commissioner – Live Well  
[LiveWellCommissioning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LiveWellCommissioning@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**June 2026**