

Decision Pathway



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 22 January 2019

TITLE	Re-profiling Children's Homes		
Ward(s)	Eastville		
Author: Samantha Flowers	Job title: Programme Manager		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Helen Godwin	Executive Director lead: Jacqui Jensen		
Proposal origin: <i>BCC Staff</i>			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: <i>Cabinet</i>			
Purpose of Report: The purpose of the report is to seek approval as to the suitability of a property which has been identified as being appropriate to accommodate looked after children with complex needs and seeks Cabinet approval to proceed with the purchase.			
Evidence Base: Re-profiling of Children's Homes is a project within the Strengthening Families Programme (delivering transformational change across children's social care). The project intends to enable the council to meet the needs of our looked after children whose complex needs and presentation mean that a more intensive package of care is required and where a foster family is not a viable option. The proposal to remodel our existing provision (comprising large and institutional homes) towards a higher number of smaller homes that more closely replicate an ordinary family home will enable us to care for these children's needs (in some cases bringing children back to Bristol from other authorities). The case for having a remodelled estate of smaller children's homes and caring for Bristol's children in Bristol has already been made within the Strengthening Families Programme; and in the subsequent Outline and Full Business Cases drafted specifically for this purpose (see Appendix A2). £800k in capital funding was allocated to start this process pending the formation of a more detailed costed proposal for delivering all the new homes required. We are able now to recommend, with a good level of confidence in the costs, the purchasing of a single property upon which we can begin the process. The specific address and marketing details of the identified property have not been included in this report for reasons of child safeguarding and confidentiality. In terms of evidence and providing members with confidence to approve the purchase, documents have been prepared by the appropriately qualified professionals and are appended to this report.			
Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations: That Cabinet 1. Authorise the purchase of the property detailed in Appendix A1 of the report for the purpose of providing an additional children's home in Bristol.			
Corporate Strategy alignment: The strategic intent and approach embodied within the Strengthening Families Programme, of which the Re-profiling of Children's Homes is a project, is contained within and referred to in Theme 1: Empowering and Caring in the Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2018–2023 (specifically under point No. 3. Provide 'help to help yourself' and 'help when you need it' through a sustainable, safe and diverse system of social care and safeguarding provision, with a focus on early help and intervention).			
City Benefits: The premise of the project is to deliver efficiencies through improving outcomes for children, young people and families. The benefit is a model of children's social care delivery which is sustainable for the future.			

Consultation Details: The consultation log at Appendix B captures our engagement to date with officers, children's homes staff and councillors primarily to scope out our requirements in delivering a new model of children's homes for the city. Since identifying a potential property, we have been able to meet with one of the ward councillors who advised that the proposed property is situated in an ideal location for this type of use; somewhere that benefits from "fantastic community spirit". The project is being provided with contact details for key community representatives (if they consent to details being shared) and will follow up directly with those who will be living close to our children so that a dialogue can get underway prior to a child being placed. The current guidance from Ofsted for children's homes that closely replicate 'a normal family dwelling' means that there should be minimal aesthetic impact of this proposal.

Revenue Cost	£0.440m		Current budgets for existing in-house Children's Homes and/or placement budget for out-of-authority places.
Capital Cost	£0.545m	Source of Capital Funding	£0.8m in current capital programme
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice:

The purchase of this property is part of a strategy for moving away from larger 4 and 5-bed children's homes to more, smaller 2 and 3-bed homes. Funding of £0.8m was earmarked in the capital programme in February 2018 for the purpose of buying two homes. The more detailed work to develop the full business case has identified that an average cost of £0.400m per home is too low, when account is taken of the market prices of properties in Bristol, the associated legal fees, taxes, refurbishment works and project support. A detailed assessment of the costs for bringing this property into use as a children's home is assessed as £0.545m which is within the capital funding available. Any further purchases would need to identify further resources, beyond the balance in the originally agreed £0.8m (i.e. if £0.545m is committed, this leaves £0.255m).

The revenue costs associated with operating a 2-bed children's home (£0.440m) would be transferred either from the budget of any children's home that closes, as a consequence of this one opening, or from the out of authority placement budget which would otherwise be needed if this new provision was not available. The final business case for the wider strategy is in development.

Finance Business Partner: David Tully, Interim Finance Business Partner, ACE (12th December 2018)

2. Legal Advice: The recommendation is lawful. The Council's power to acquire property by agreement and at market value falls within the Local Government Act 1972 for the purpose of any of its functions or for the benefit, improvement or development of the area.

Legal Team Leader: Andrew Jones - Team Leader (Property, Planning and Transport)

3. Implications on IT: As a purchase only proposal, there are no direct IT implications in this initiative. However, there will need to be due consideration of IT services to be provided when the site is fitted out as a children's home and these will need to be addressed at the appropriate time in the overall project.

IT Team Leader: Ian Gale, Head of IT

4. HR Advice: As the proposal is currently only in relation to the purchase of a house to turn into a residential home for Children, there are no imminent HR implications. However, we will need to consider appropriate staffing for the new home, along with appropriate training and in consultation with the current staff group and their representatives.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, 13 December 2018

EDM Sign-off	Jacqui Jensen, Executive Director – ACE	
Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Helen Godwin	17 December 2018
CLB Sign-off	Mike Jackson	18 December 2018
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	24 December 2018

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal Appendix A1 - property valuation and negotiation Appendix A2 - summary of known costs Appendix A3 - excerpt from the business case Appendix A4 - decision pathway to date	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external Consultation Log and statement for future consultation	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment A full RAID log is available and maintained as part of the overarching project	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal EqIA has been taken from the Full Business Case document	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal ECO IA has been taken from the Full Business Case document	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Combined Background papers	
Appendix J – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix K – HR advice	NO
Appendix L – ICT	NO