

Officer Decision Report

Title:	Children's homes property purchase decision
Date decision taken:	16/5/2019
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Local Members Affected	Darren Hayday

Decision

To **APPROVE** submission of a planning application to change the designation of the property identified within the High Wycombe area to managed residential accommodation.

To **APPROVE** submission of an offer of purchase subject to planning for the identified property in line with the property valuation report. Purchase to be funded from within the capital previously released of £850k within the £2m capital programme agreed by Cabinet in April 2017 for the purchase and renovation (as required) of a property to be used as a children's home within south Buckinghamshire.

Reasons for the decision

This decision looks to implement the intention set out within the joint cabinet member decision taken in June 2018 (see background papers) to increase Buckinghamshire County Council provision of homes for looked after children. Further to the June decision to release the capital for purchase; a property has now been identified for which we are seeking approval to put in both a planning application and purchase offer.

Authority to take this decision

This decision is authorised by the delegation of authority set out within the June 2018 children's homes provision cabinet decision:

To DELEGATE AUTHORITY to the Executive Director for Children's services and the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and also the relevant local members to agree the purchase of two additional properties up to the total value of £1676k and within the criteria set out (see background papers).

Other options available, and their pros and cons

There is an option to not go ahead with this property and to seek alternatives. However, ongoing searches to identify a second property suggest that there are currently no alternative properties available which meet the criteria set out for this type of provision. As a result, a decision not to go ahead with this property would delay the implementation of the project to increase the number of homes within Buckinghamshire. This project is a central aspect of our Looked After Children placement sufficiency strategy and will allow us to reduce the number of young people who are placed outside of the County. The resulting delay would impact our ability to provide appropriate placements which will enable us to support some of our most vulnerable young people to achieve their full potential.

Conflicts of interest

None

Feedback from Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken to date with:

- Cabinet Member for Children's Services Cllr Warren Whyte
- Cabinet Member for Resources Cllr John Chilver
- Local Member Cllr Darren Hayday
- Local Member of the adjoining ward Cllr Majid Hussain
- Neighbours of the proposed property

To date no concerns have been raised regarding this proposal although we will continue to engage with all stakeholders moving forward and as part of the planning process local residents will be formally consulted and given an opportunity to raise any concerns.

Background papers

[Cabinet Member decision report Children's homes local provision \(June 2018\)](#)
[Scope for properties](#)