

Agenda Item 9
Council – 18 July 2023
Recommendation from Cabinet
11 July 2023

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 11 July 2023

Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)
Councillor R Brown
Councillor K Caan
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor P Seaman
Councillor P Hetherton

Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members: Councillor S Agboola
Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor G Lloyd

Non-Voting Opposition
Members: Councillor S Gray
Councillor P Male
Councillor R Simpson

Other Non-Voting
Members: Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor C E Thomas

Employees (by Service):

Chief Executive J Nugent

Business, Investment and
Culture S Weir

Children's Services N Macdonald (Interim Director), A Whitrick

Finance B Hastie (Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer),
P Jennings, T Pinks

Law and Governance J Newman (Chief Legal Officer), S Bennett

Streetscene and
Regulatory Services

R Back, C Styles

Transportation and
Highways

C Knight (Director of Transportation and Highways),

Apologies:

Councillor L Bigham
Councillor AS Khan
Councillor D Welsh

Councillors L Harvard, C Miks, S Nazir, Ridley

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

RECOMMENDATION

14. Children's Residential Children's Home Strategy

The Cabinet considered a report of the Interim Director of Children's Services which sought approval for the Residential Children's Homes Review and Strategy 2023-2026.

The report indicated that the Council wished to establish additional Children's homes to meet the needs of more children in need of residential care within the city. This would help improve outcomes for looked after children whilst also reducing the Council's reliance on the expensive external residential market, creating overall financial savings for the Council.

A sufficiency needs analysis was a requirement of section 22G of the Children Act 1989 and statutory guidance was issued in 2010. A recent analysis in Coventry had identified the need for additional provision of residential care for children within Coventry.

Coventry City Council currently operates four Children's homes for up to 16 looked after children and commissions an additional 12 placements with private providers within the city. A further two homes have already been approved by Cabinet and were in the process of being purchased/ built. The 'short stay same day' children's home was due to open in November 2023 and our first purpose-built home for looked after children with a disability is due to open in June 2024.

Working across Children's Services, finding the right placement at the right time, despite being part of a regional framework can be a significant challenge due to current market pressures. Therefore, the City Council were often reliant on spot contract providers who may inflate costs of the placement due to the urgency to

meet a child's immediate needs or due to the complexity of the child's trauma responsive presenting behaviours.

The proposal and 3-year Residential Strategy was to:

Purchase and refurbish two further privately owned residential properties to create two homes for up to 4 looked after children in each, with trauma related emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Build a further home for looked after children with a disability, as referenced within the approved Cabinet report from January 2022

Consider a new build, modernised and purpose built residential short breaks home, to replace Broad Park House, with the current property being sold on Logan Road following completion.

Embed the workforce Strategy for Children's Residential Services, with capacity to develop the existing and future work force to expand the children's home portfolio, run by the Council, improve outcomes for children and financial savings, based on the current residential market.

The success of the Strategy would result in a decrease in future placement expenditure of c£1m per annum.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 17 below refers).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the Residential Children's Homes Review and Strategy 2023-2026 appended at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 officer) and the Chief Legal Officer to undertake the necessary due diligence (including the power to enter into any necessary legal agreement) required to facilitate the following:**
 - a. Purchase land and build an additional children's home for the purpose of accommodating four looked after children with a disability**
 - b. Purchase land and re-build an existing short breaks children's home (Broad Park House) for the purpose of accommodating children with disabilities and additional needs**
 - c. Purchase and renovate two properties to open two additional children's homes for the purpose of accommodating looked after children whose needs are best met within this type of provision**
- 3. Delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services, following consultation with Chief Operating Officer and Chief Legal Officer, to**

(where required) commence all necessary procurement for works or services necessary to bring into effect the recommendations set out in 1 and 2 above.

- 4. Recommends that Council approve capital expenditure of up to the sum stated in the private element of this report to be met from prudential borrowing which shall be utilised solely for the delivery of the recommendations set out in 1-3 above as well as the objectives set out in the Residential Children's Homes Review and Strategy 2023-2026 which is appended to the report.**