

Norfolk County Council

Record of Individual Cabinet Member Decision

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor (Cabinet Member for) Cllr Greg Peck - Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management.	
Background and Purpose: The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is asked to approve the purchase of a property in Beetley area. Capital funding from SEND fund has been allocated for Childrens Services to secure property across the county, for use as solo/ dual placements for looked after children. Norfolk's residential and semi-independent living service currently does not provide any specialised solo provision for complex, high needs young people. As part of the project, a property in the Beetley area has been identified as a suitable purchase to meet the requirements of Childrens Services.	
Decision: The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is asked to approve the purchase.	
Is it a key decision?	No
Is it subject to call in? If Yes – Deadline for Call in	Yes Date: 4pm, Thursday 8 July 2021
Impact of the Decision: The purchase of this residential property will support the "Safer Children & Resilient Families" work stream, focusing on placement choice and a commitment to secure better solo/ dual placement for high needs looked after children.	
Evidence and reason for the decision: The proposed acquisition is in respect of a residential property in the Beetley area. It is a four-bed detached property in a rural location. The full address is	

included in an exempt report as is to remain confidential, under the Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12A Part 1, in that it contains commercially sensitive information relating to the authority, namely the purchase price. The public interest test has been applied, and it is recommended to the Cabinet member that the public interest in keeping the information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

The property was identified after a search of potentially suitable accommodation with four or more bedrooms and spacious living space in a rural location. This will allow for use by up to 2 young people. The search was based on criteria such as the location and layout of the properties in terms of their suitability for the service requirements, with a focus on their risk profile.

Given the condition of the property the scope of additional internal works needed for service use was relatively limited. The four bedrooms offer adequate space for the children and staff and provides space for use as an office. Works required would largely be to meet statutory or service standards, such as fire doors and improved alarm systems. Some work is required on the driveway as a condition of planning permission and some outbuildings may be improved in order to make them more functional for uses ancillary to the home.

Before making our offers, NCC checked the local market to compare similar properties in the area to find out what they sold for. An assessment of comparables suggests that overall the proposed acquisition price is an appropriate and justifiable figure in respect of this property.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Several alternative properties were viewed and considered prior to this decision however they were all discounted due to location, size or the condition of the property.

Financial, Resource or other implications considered:

The purchase price is included within the exempt report.

The County Council will be responsible for its own professional fees which are estimated to be approximately £7,500.

In addition, there will be the cost of furnishing and equipping to operate the property, this is estimated to £25,000.

Record of any conflict of interest: N/A

Background Documents:

Date of Decision:	01/07/2021
Publication date of decision:	01/07/2021
Signed by Cabinet member: I confirm that I have made the decision set out above, for the reasons also set out Signed: Cllr Greg Peck Print name: Cllr Greg Peck Date: 01/07/2021	
Accompanying Documents: •	

Once you have completed your internal department clearance process and obtained agreement of the Cabinet Member, send your completed decision notice together with the report and green form to committees@norfolk.gov.uk

Report to Cabinet Member

Item No.

Report title:	Acquisition of House in Beetley area for Solo/Dual placements
Date of meeting:	Not applicable
Responsible Cabinet Member:	Cllr G Peck Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management
Responsible Director:	Simon George Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services
Is this a key decision?	No
<p>Executive Summary/Introduction from Cabinet Member</p> <p>Capital funding from SEND fund has been allocated for Childrens Services to secure property across the county, for use as solo/ dual placements for looked after children.</p> <p>As part of the project, a property in the Beetley area has been identified as a suitable purchase to meet the requirements of Childrens Services.</p> <p>Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is asked to approve the purchase.</p>	

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1. SEND capital budget has been allocated by Childrens Services for the purchase and renovation of property across the county for use as solo/dual placements for looked after children aged 12-16 years. These residential homes support the wider NCC Children's Service Sufficiency Strategy and will bring NCC in line with best practice in other local authorities.
- 1.2 Norfolk's residential and semi-independent living service currently does not provide any specialised solo provision for complex, high needs young people.
- 1.3 A project team has been established, led by Children's Services and working closely with the Corporate Property Team. The team are focused on bringing up to 6 additional solo/dual accommodation units to operational delivery.
- 1.4 The requirement for an improved placement mix is also one of the key objectives of the Safer Children and Resilient Families programme, specifically, "***Changing the placement mix for those children who are looked after so that***

placements are more appropriate for children's needs, are more local and more cost effective"

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The proposed acquisition is in respect of a residential property in the Beetley area. It is a four-bed detached property in a rural location. The full address is included in an exempt report as is to remain confidential, under the Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12A Part 1, in that it contains commercially sensitive information relating to the authority, namely the purchase price. The public interest test has been applied, and it is recommended to the Cabinet member that the public interest in keeping the information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.
- 2.2 The property was identified after a search of potentially suitable accommodation with four or more bedrooms and spacious living space in a rural location. This will allow for use by up to 2 young people. The search was based on criteria such as the location and layout of the properties in terms of their suitability for the service requirements, with a focus on their risk profile.
- 2.3 Given the condition of the property the scope of additional internal works needed for service use was relatively limited. The four bedrooms offer adequate space for the children and staff and provides space for use as an office. Works required would largely be to meet statutory or service standards, such as fire doors and improved alarm systems. Some work is required on the driveway as a condition of planning permission and some outbuildings may be improved in order to make them more functional for uses ancillary to the home.
- 2.4 The Local Member has been consulted on this matter and has confirmed that they support the project.
- 2.5 A condition survey has been undertaken by NPS, no significant concerns were raised about the building.
- 2.6 Planning advice has been sought from NPS and an application has been made for change of use however the planning decision will not be made until after the purchase is complete.

3. Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The purchase of this residential property will support the "Safer Children & Resilient Families" work stream, focusing on placement choice and a commitment to secure better solo/ dual placement for high needs looked after children.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 Given the condition of the property, the scope of additional works needed for service use was relatively limited. The four bedrooms offer adequate space for the children and staff and provides space for use as an office. Internal works required would largely be to meet statutory or service standards, such as fire doors and improved alarm systems.

- 4.2 The purchase of this residential property will support the “Safer Children & Resilient Families” work stream, focusing on placement choice and a commitment to secure better solo/ dual placement for high needs looked after children.

- 4.3 Before making our offers, NCC have checked the local market to compare similar properties in the area to find out what they sold for. An assessment of comparables suggests that overall the proposed acquisition price is an appropriate and justifiable figure in respect of this property.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1. Several alternative properties were viewed and considered prior to this decision, however they were all discounted due to location, size or the condition of the property.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The purchase price was negotiated and agreed, this is detailed within the exempt report.
- 6.2 The estimated cost for alterations and work required to meet statutory standards is £70,000.
- 6.3 The estimated cost for alterations to the driveway and improvements to outbuildings is £55,000
- 6.4 In addition, there will be the cost of furnishing and equipping to operate the property, this is estimated to £25,000.
- 6.5 All these costs as outlined will be funded from the capital programme.
- 6.6 The revenue cost of running the property will be met by Children’s Services budgets.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** None
- 7.2. **Property:** Acquisition of freehold
- 7.3. **IT:** None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. **Legal Implications:**
None.
- 8.2. **Human Rights implications:**
None.
- 8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**
- 8.4. Childrens Services are responsible for undertaking any EqIA required for the project

8.5. **Health and Safety implications**

None

8.6. **Sustainability implications**

None

8.7. **Any other implications**

None

9. Risk Implications/Assessment

9.1 Given the nature of the care provided by the Children's Services staff working at the property, planning permission for Change of Use has been applied for however a decision will not be made until after the purchase is complete.

9.2 In the event that NCC's application for planning permission on the property was unsuccessful, there would be costs as the council would seek to mitigate the situation by reselling the property. Set out below are the likely total costs in this scenario:

Item	Cost
Purchase costs previously incurred:	
• Stamp duty	£13,200 - £22,700 (depending on completion date due to stamp duty holiday)
• Professional fees (NPS) / surveys	£5,000
• Legal fees	£2,500
Holding costs:	
• Design/Planning fees	£12,000
• Holding costs of security/maintenance	£5,000
Re-sale costs	
• Agents fees	£4,500
• Legal fees	£3,000
Total potential loss to NCC of buying/holding/ reselling	£45,200- £54,700

(Assuming the same sale price was achieved as was originally purchased.)

10. Recommendation

10.1. The Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management is asked to approve the purchase.

11. Background Papers

11.1. nil

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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**Estates and Commercial
Surveyor Apprentice**

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