

**Oversight and Governance**

Chief Executive's Department

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Delegated Decisions

Delegated Executive/Officer Decisions

Notice of call-in for non-urgent decisions must be given to the Democratic Support Team by 4.30 pm on 18 December 2025. Please note – urgent decisions and non-key Council Officer decisions cannot be called in. Copies of the decisions together with background reports are available for viewing as follows:

- on the Council's Intranet Site at <https://modgov/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx>
- on the Council's website at <https://tinyurl.com/3hwmppzp>

The decision detailed below may be implemented immediately.

Delegated Decisions

I. Council Officer Decision - David Haley, Director of Children's Services:

- I.a. COD11 25/26 - Purchase of a property for use as a Children's Home **(Pages 1 - 8)**

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Council Officer




REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL OFFICER

Executive Decision Reference Number – COD11 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Purchase of a property for use as a Children's Home
2	Decision maker: David Haley (Director of Children Services)
3	Report author and contact details: Vivien Lines (Project Consultant) E. Vivien.lines@plymouth.gov.uk T +441752308971
4a	Decision to be taken: 1. To purchase a property at for use as a Children's Home, at a value of £575,000
4b	Reference number of original executive decision or date of original committee meeting where delegation was made: Executive Decision: L32 24/25 - Capital Programme Allocation: Development of Children's Homes. (29/11/2024)
5	Reasons for decision: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plymouth City Council becoming a provider of residential care for children is part of a programme of work responding to pressures securing sufficient value for money homes locally for children in care in line with need. 2. Like many Local Authorities nationally, PCC has become reliant on the independent sector for a significant volume of fostering and residential provision for children in the care of the Local Authority. At the same time, the independent sector has demonstrated that it is not able to provide sufficient high-quality and value for money placements to meet the needs of our young people. 3. Opening our own children's homes presents an opportunity to improve the cost and quality of care and outcomes for children in care who need residential placements. 4. Added value of the local provision being developed includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to prevent a child moving into an unregulated arrangement. • Savings from social workers not having to visit children at a distance from Plymouth. • Ability to support children with local health and education services. • Greater potential to support children into foster care or home to their families.
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purchased alternative property: Alternative properties have been considered but not deemed suitable.

	2. Not to buy a property for use as a children's home: Rejected as this will result in the Council continuing to spend high costs on external care providers.			
7	Financial implications and risks: £2,000,000 of Service Borrowing was approved into the Capital Programme in November 2024 for the purchase of two homes, to be used as Children's Homes (Executive Decision: L32 24/25 - Capital Programme Allocation: Development of Children's Homes). This is the first property being purchased, using this approved funding. The property price is £575,000. The purchase will be completed in advance of the revenue savings being achieved.			
8	Legal Implications and risks: Due diligence on the property has been undertaken by external solicitors and the Council is satisfied that there are no legal impediments on the title to the property which would prevent use as children's home. Planning permission for a change of use will be sought – there is a risk that this might not be granted.			
9a	Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			x	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
			x	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million , annually
			x	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
9b	If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions	N/A		
10	Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	A commitment to keeping children safe is included in the Council Plan. The Council's MTFP includes the costs and savings delivered from the opening of homes.		
11	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	A climate impact assessment has been completed as part of Executive Decision: L32 24/25		
Urgent decisions				
12a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support for advice)
		No	X	(If no, go to section 13a)
12b	Reason for urgency:			

I2c	Scrutiny Chair signature:		Date
	Scrutiny Committee name:		
	Print Name:		
Consultation			
I3a	Which Cabinet Member's portfolio does this decision relate to?	Cllr Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications).	
I3b	Date Cabinet Member consulted	11/12/2025	
I3c	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes	
		No	x (If no go to section I4)
I3d	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	N/A	
I3e	Date other Cabinet member(s) consulted	N/A	
I4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes	If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No	x
I5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	David Haley
		Job title	Director Children's Services
		Date consulted	02/12/2025
Sign-off			
I6	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	JS48 25/26
		Finance (mandatory)	ITG.25.26.098
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/00001312/2AC/4/12/25
		Human Resources (if applicable)	CS.25.26.020
		Corporate property (if applicable)	JW 0128 08/12/25
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A

Appendices									
17	Ref.	Title of appendix							
	A	Briefing report part 1							
	B	EIA – Childrens Homes (14/11/24)							
Confidential/exempt information									
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?		Yes	X	If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below.				
		No							
			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title: Briefing Report Part 2				X				
Background Papers									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.								
Title of background paper(s)			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Council Officer Signature									
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.								
Signature				Date of decision		11/12/2025			
Print Name		David Haley (Director Children's Services)							

Delegated Decision Briefing Paper – Purchase of Properties for Children’s Homes

Part I



Author: Victoria Whitman, Head of Service

Victoria.whitman@plymouth.gov.uk

Purpose of Purchase

Plymouth City Council is purchasing two four-bedroom properties to develop as children’s homes as part of its programme to improve outcomes for children in care and reduce reliance on costly external placements. These homes will collectively provide provision for up to six children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and will be operated directly by the Council. This initiative will help address the shortage of local provision, reduce the number of children in unlawful placements, and provide emergency and long-term care closer to Plymouth.

This decision supports the Council Plan commitment to keeping children safe and aligns with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which includes anticipated savings from reducing external placement costs.

Background

The proposal to purchase and run children’s homes was initiated in July 2024. The original model sought properties with annexes (2+1 model) to allow flexible care arrangements. Following market challenges and restrictive covenants, the search criteria were broadened in April 2025 to include homes suitable for two children, aligning with other providers in the city.

Since the programme was agreed;

- 118 title deeds reviewed.
- 76 properties rejected due to restrictive covenants.
- 33 properties viewed.
- 3 offers made.

Properties

Following the purchase of the property and the planned schedule of works, both homes will comply with Ofsted standards and will enable the Council to deliver local, high-quality registered care provisions.

Current Status

Both purchases are progressing to completion. Exchange and completion for one property is expected during the week commencing the 8th of December 2025. Exchange and completion for the other property is anticipated in February 2026.


The following relates to exempt or confidential matters (Para(s) 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Govt Act 1972). Any breach of confidentiality could prejudice the Council/person/body concerned & might amount to a breach of the councillors /employees codes of conduct.

Document is Restricted

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – CHILDREN’S HOMES

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Victoria Whitman	Department and service:	Children’s Services – Children, Young People and Families	Date of assessment:	14/11/24
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Temi Salimon	Signature: (signed on behalf of Temi Salimon)	David Haley, DCS 	Approval date:	29/11/24
Overview:	<p>The business case is to support consideration of PCC becoming a provider of residential care for children, part of a programme of work responding to pressures securing sufficient value for money homes for children in care in line with need.</p> <p>We believe that children and young people in care should grow up in a family home with foster carers so that they can experience secure attachments and to support healthy development. Exceptionally, residential children’s homes can be appropriate to enable a young person to make progress with their emotional and behavioural needs in order to achieve a planned move back into a family home. We are committed to placing children in care in settings that are as close as possible to their home to enable them to maintain family and friendship relationships (where positive), access their social worker and local health and therapeutic services and maintain their school placements to support good outcomes including a supported and local transition to independence.</p> <p>Both cost and volume pressures are being experienced. A growth in demand has been seen of children with experiences of childhood neglect, trauma, disrupted attachments and additional learning needs. The number of children in care has risen as a result.</p> <p>It is proposed to utilise up to £2m capital through service borrowing to purchase two four bedroom homes with an annexe to establish two children’s homes in Plymouth. There is the potential for the capital requirement to reduce if we are successful in securing match funding from DfE from a current programme to support the development of residential care for children. Bids open in November (subject to confirmation in the Autumn budget) and decisions will be made by June.</p> <p>The proposal is that these homes would be registered with Ofsted to collectively offer provision for up to 6 children at any one time and run by PCC who would directly employ the staff team required.</p> <p>The proposal is that two four+ bedroom family homes would be purchased on the open market. The specification would be that that they would both have an annexe or alternative living space to be able to offer a diverse range of care to children with complex needs. These homes would be in or close to the city and will be in neighbourhoods which can understand and accept the need for these homes. The properties would ideally have a garden area and some flexibility of space to allow children to have wrap around support</p>				

	<p>within the home where this is appropriate. The homes would seek to provide a family environment and a nurturing space, while also having an emphasis on safety and security to maintain children and young people’s wellbeing while living in the home.</p> <p>The project promotes and enables significant local market development of provision for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs whilst increasing the council’s assets. This works to disrupt the private market on a national level by increasing Plymouth’s own local provision and it also will enhance partnership working with local providers who Plymouth currently purchase beds from. Increasing sufficiency in the local area will be beneficial to the council in terms of outcomes for children but also in terms of costly private placements. Many other local authorities around the Country are pursuing a similar approach at this time.</p>
Decision required:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approves the Business Case for the purchase of two houses to establish two children’s homes in Plymouth.2. Allocate £2,000,000 for the project into the Capital Programme funded by service borrowing.3. Delegate the approval to the Strategic Director of Children’s Services for all purchases within the approved financial envelope.

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes		No	X
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	X
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	Yes		No	X
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.	The proposal aims to be inclusive of all children who meet the criteria for being in need of a placement in a children’s home and this is not affected by any protected characteristics. The provision aims to be inclusive of all children in their diverse needs and presentations, however, I have detailed this further below.			

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
Age	<p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. • 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p>	No adverse impact	The proposal intentionally creates an offer that is flexible and allows children of all ages to access the homes that they need at the time that they need them. The offer enables children of all ages to have a fair and equal provision.	<p>Transformation Team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>

<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p>	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	No adverse impact	Children who are care experienced will have the same opportunity to have a space in the new provisions as all other children. They may even be more likely to secure a place if their current home is not in Plymouth.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>
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Disability	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	No adverse impact	Homes will consider the needs of all children and aim to offer a service which is fully inclusive of their needs in line with the registration of the home.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact	The homes will have a diverse workforce who are highly skilled and a therapeutic approach to care. All children will be considered in line with the registration of the home and an 'impact risk assessment' with regards to the cohort of children living there.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>

Marriage and civil partnership	<p>40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married.</p> <p>0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact	Homes will support all children, where applicable, into their transition to adulthood. They will be mindful and supportive to young peoples' personal choices and preferences.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.</p>	No adverse impact	Homes will support all young people in their development and work with partners, agencies and other providers who specialise in parent and child care.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>

Race	<p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact.	Homes will support children of all races and will aim to provide a workforce which reflects this diversity.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p>	No adverse impact	Homes will support children in their personal choices and family preferences to engage in and practice their religious and cultural beliefs. Where applicable they will be supported to access religious communities or sites as a part of their care plan.	<p>Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department.</p> <p>Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.</p>

Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	Homes will be registered for all children regardless of their sex.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.
Sexual orientation	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).	No adverse impact	Homes will support children in their sexual development and provide a tolerant and inclusive environment in which they can grow and learn safely.	Transformation team and CYPFS (Children, Young People and Families) are responsible department. Timescale is within 18 months dependent on successful purchase of properties, development of properties to meet with Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and full Ofsted registration.

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
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SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Work together in partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ promote equality, diversity and inclusion▪ facilitate community cohesion▪ support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together			
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.			
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.			
Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.			

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