



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department

Plymouth City Council

Ballard House

Plymouth PL1 3BJ

T 01752 305155

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

Published 16/02/26

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 23 February 2026. 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/3hwmpzpzp>

The Cabinet Member decision detailed below may be implemented on 24 February 2026 if it is not called-in.

The Officer decision detailed below may be implemented on 24 February 2026 if it is not called-in.

Delegated Decisions

1. Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council):

- 1.a. L16 25/26 - Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest – **(Pages 1 - 24)**
Business Case Change Request

2. Council Officer Decision: David Haley (Director of Children's Services):

- 2.a. COD19 25/26 - Purchase of a property for use as a Children's **(Pages 25 - 42)**
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EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – L16 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest – Business Case Change Request
2	Decision maker: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council)
3	Report author and contact details: Peter Hawking-Sach, 01752 304109, peter.hawking-sach@plymouth.gov.uk
4	<p>Decision to be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the Business Case change request; 2. Allocates an additional £7,294,240 into the capital programme, funded by Defra’s Trees for Climate Fund; 3. Delegates the award of contracts, and programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning where they would not already have authority to do so.
5	<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>1. The council and its partners have successfully delivered Defra’s Trees for Climate fund 2022-25, enabling over 380,000 trees to be planted across Plymouth, Dartmoor, and South Devon. The delivery programme for 25/26 has been approved by Defra and England’s Community Forest network, with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest allocated £7,294,240 for capital delivery of an additional 265 hectares of tree planting and woodland creation across the region through March 2026.</p> <p>The programme is accessing unrivalled funding for PCC and partners to achieve the goals set out in the Joint Local Plan, Corporate Plan, and Plymouth’s Plan for Trees.</p> <p>Delegation of the programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning (Director of the Community Forest) will enable the project team to ensure timely delivery of contracts and grant awards to landowners and businesses across the programme area throughout the Winter.</p>
6	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <p>1. Do nothing – Reject the continuation of the funding, denying the programme full external funding for capital delivery and staff resources to progress with delivering England’s tree planting targets. Rejected, as we have been provided a grant agreement for 25/26 in anticipation of continued Trees for Climate delivery across the region.</p>
7	<p>Financial implications and risks:</p> <p>Financial risks to PCC are fully mitigated by 100% external funding from Defra’s Trees for Climate programme. All costs are funded through this programme, continuing under exact terms as per the previous business case.</p>

	Total project for 2025/26 - £7,294,240 Trees for Climate Capital Funding - £7,294,240			
8	<p>Legal Implications: (For completion by Legal Officers)</p> <p>The delegation to award contracts is being made to the Head of Environmental Planning who is also currently acting as a non-executive Director of the Community Forest programme.</p> <p>The partnership includes Devon County Council, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority, and South Hams and West Devon. There are internal governance processes to ensure any conflict of interest is declared for any grant being delivered to one of the partners, with quorate requirements against any votes to approve grants.</p> <p>The Head of Environmental Planning will not be involved in any decisions about grants being given to the Council.</p>			
9	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> <p>Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	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 £1million 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.	
	<p>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions</p>			
10	<p>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:</p> <p>Corporate Plan Making Plymouth a fairer, greener city where everyone does their bit.</p> <p>Joint Local Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEV026 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation, • DEV028 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows • Plymouth Plan • SO1 – Delivering a healthy city • HEA7 - Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment 			
11	<p>Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)</p> <p>This programme of works aligns with and supports the delivery of the Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan by delivering a programme of works that will enhance and add resilience to the city's green estate.</p> <p>The Community Forest planting will increase carbon capture/CO2 by 83% from current levels, once fully</p>			

		established, helping us in our fight to become carbon neutral by 2030.		
Urgent decisions				
I2a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticservices@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	x	(If no, go to section I3a)
I2b	Reason for urgency:			
I2c	Scrutiny Chair Signature :		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			
Consultation				
I3a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes	X	
		No		(If no go to section I4)
I3b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Tom Briars-Delve, Portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change		
I3c	Date Cabinet member consulted	23 September 2025		
I4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		
		No	X	
I5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Glenn Caplin-Grey	
		Job title	Strategic Director for Growth	
		Date consulted	16 September 2025	
Sign-off				
I6		Democratic Support (mandatory)		JS50 25/26

Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Finance (mandatory)	OW.25.26.100
	Legal (mandatory)	LS/00001312/1/AC/2 5/9/25
	Procurement (if applicable)	N/A
	Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)	N/A
	Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A

Appendices

17	Ref	Title of appendix
	.	
	A	Briefing report for publication – 250730 <i>Briefing Report – Community Forest change request</i>
	B	Equalities Impact Assessment – 250730 <i>EqIA community forest change request</i>
	C	Climate Impact Assessment
	D	Capital Change Request

Confidential/exempt information

18 a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)
		No	x	

Exemption Paragraph Number

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18 b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:						

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 I 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

Cabinet Member 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 (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.		
Signature		Date of decision	16/02/2026
Print Name	Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council		

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PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH DEVON COMMUNITY FOREST - ADDITIONAL CAPITAL ALLOCATION



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Plymouth City Council (PCC) is lead partner for Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF), a partnership programme consisting of PCC, South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils, National Trust, and Woodland Trust, Dartmoor National Park Authority, and Devon County Council. Since 2022, PSDCF has been delivering DEFRA's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Trees for Climate fund, with £8.6m funding from DEFRA, enabling the planting of 380,000 trees across Plymouth, South Devon and Dartmoor.

DEFRA's Trees for Climate programme has been extended for another year, beyond 2025, through to April 2026. This briefing accompanies a change request to extend the Trees for Climate capital programme to be extended, and to allow an additional £7.3m of DEFRA's Trees for Climate funding to be added to the programme to enable tree planting to continue this winter across the region.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

- 2.1. Addition of £7.3m to the capital programme for Community Forest. DEFRA and England's Community Forests have allocated this amount to Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest for the delivery of tree planting and woodland creation through 2025/26.
- 2.2. Delegated authority for grant awards of DEFRA's Trees for Climate to third parties to be given to the Head of Environmental Planning. Head of Environmental Planning is acting Director of the Community Forest programme, working closely with the Project Manager and Project team to deliver Trees for Climate grants to eligible applicants across South Devon. Enabling grant awards to be authorised by the Head of Environmental Planning will enable informed decision making to be made swiftly, and to maximise the delivery of the programme throughout the year.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do nothing – Turn down the grant offer, deliver tree planting at a smaller scale through unsecured funding routes and exert internal revenue pressure on PCC through the refusal of external funding which resources the current team and operational costs. **Rejected** – as we have an agreed commitment from funders to enable the continued delivery of the programme this year, and the continued resourcing of the current Community Forest team embedded at PCC.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

Total Project cost up to £7.3M

Trees for Climate Fund - £7.3M

5. TIMESCALES

Receipt of DEFRA's Trees for Climate Fund 2025/26 – August 2025.

Delivery of tree planting in Plymouth and awarding of grants to landowners across South Devon and Dartmoor – November 2025 to March 2026.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMUNITY FOREST CHANGE REQUEST 2025

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Peter Hawking-Sach	Department and service:	Growth, Street Services	Date of assessment:	30 July 2025
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Kat Deeney, Head of Environmental Planning	Signature:		Approval date:	30 July 2025
Overview:	Change request for the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest capital business case, enabling continued delivery of Defra's Trees for Climate programme through April 2026, with an allocation of an additional £7.3m to the capital programme, and delegated authority for grant awards and the programme to Head of Environmental Planning				
Decision required:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the Business Case change request; 2. Allocates an additional £7.3m into the capital programme, funded by Defra's Trees for Climate Fund; 3. Delegates the award of contracts, and programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning. 				

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

<p>If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.</p>	<p>There is no negative impact to service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics, nor any PCC employees.</p> <p>It is considered that as the project is open to all, delivery of the objectives of the Trees for Climate fund through PSDCF activity will contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of residents, communities and many groups with protected characteristics across Plymouth.</p>
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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
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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>			
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<p>Care experienced individuals (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>			
<p>Disability</p>	<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>			

<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<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>			
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<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>			
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<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>			

<p>Race</p>	<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>			
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<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>			
<p>Sex</p>	<p>51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).</p>			
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>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).</p>			

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department

SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
<p>Work together in partnership to:</p> <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 			
<p>Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.</p>			
<p>Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.</p>			
<p>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.</p>			

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PSDCF Capital Change request 2025/26

Project details

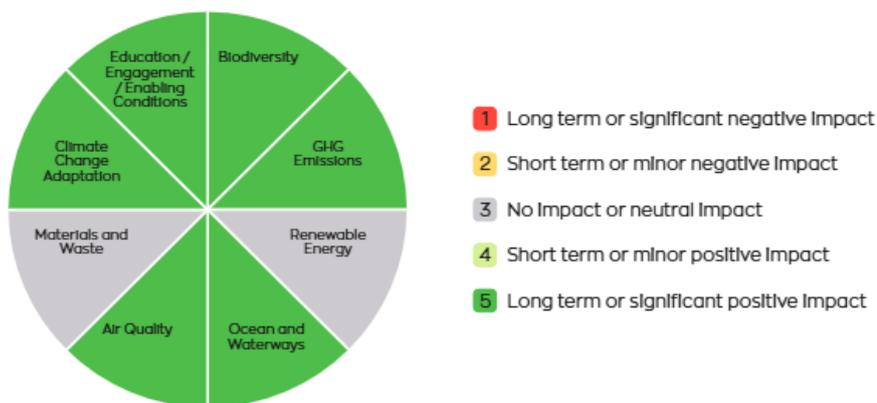
Assessment author

Peter

Project summary

-

Summary of assessment



Capital programme additions for the tree planting programme will have significant net benefit to Climate adaptation and impact measures across Plymouth and South Devon

Assessment scores

Biodiversity

Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

enhanced capital to continue significant tree planting in Plymouth and South Devon



GHG Emissions

Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

Considerable tree planting in the region will have a huge benefit to carbon sequestration

Renewable Energy

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

This will have neutral impact regarding provision of renewable energy

Ocean and Waterways

Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

Considerable water quality and flood alleviation impacts from strategic tree planting enabled by the capital programme

Air Quality

Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

Air quality improvements across the region due to significant increases in canopy cover. Previous programme planting included 380,000 trees through four years, this will contribute further to those figures

Materials and Waste

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

Neutral impact on waste volumes

Climate Change Adaptation



Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

Significant contribution from this programme to climate adaptation, providing flood benefits, air quality, water quality, canopy cover enabling reduced urban heat island effects and carbon sequestration

Education / Engagement / Enabling Conditions

Score

(5) Long lasting or extensive positive impact

Score justification

This programme contributes significantly to the suite of engagement and outreach delivery through PCC and its Natural Environment Service, with considerable focus on young people through the 'Forest Rising' programme

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CAPITAL BUSINESS CASE CHANGE REQUEST



Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest

Business Case Change CATEGORY (Tick one or more box as appropriate and insert the funding source)

Project Variations	Add Funding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Funding Source	DEFRA Trees for Climate Fund
	Remove Funding <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Virements <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other please specify:			

Project Detail

Insert previous business case number and link to the business case	L45 21/22 DOCUMENT TITLE		
Total value of capital project currently within the approved capital programme.	£8,589,257.68 (£8,651,000 + £79,150.90 S106 Approval - £140,893.22 vired to Plan for Trees project)		
Value to be added/ - removed from Capital programme (if any)	£7,294,240	additional	
Does this project need to go to CMT?	Yes/No	Date business case approved by CMT (if required)	
		Directorate	Growth
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Tom Briars-Delve, Environment and Climate Change	Service Director	Glenn Caplin-Grey
Senior Responsible Officer (client)	Kat Deeney	Project Manager	Peter Hawking-Sach

Purpose of Business Case Change Request: (Provide a brief outline of what has happened to date. Explain the details of the proposal and how the proposal will address the issue)

The purpose of this business case change request is to update Capital Programme Officer Group (CPOG) on the extension of Defra's Trees for Climate programme. 2025/26 is a transition year for Defra's capital programme's including the Trees for Climate programme. Plymouth City Council, as lead partner for Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (PSDC), has delivered Defra's Trees for Climate programme since 2022. The programme has been extended through March 2026, enabling to deliver an additional £7,294,240 of tree planting and woodland creation across the region. The extension of the programme will precede a renewed woodland creation programme which is anticipated to run from 2026-2030. This current extension through 2026 enables delivery partners (including PSDCF) to continue delivering the UK Government's tree planting targets.

The change request includes a request for delegated authority for grant awards within the programme to be held by Head of Environmental Planning. Head of Environmental Planning is acting Director of PSDCF, and works closely with the Project Manager and team on the delivery of the

programme. Delegating authority for the programme to Head of Environmental Planning will enable swift and informed delivery and decision making of grant awards to private landowners and businesses across the region.

Revised Key Risks: *(Explain any changes to the risk register / risk log in the approved business case)*

None. This is a continuation of the operations and processes of the Trees for Climate programme, for an additional year.

Revised Outcome and Benefits: *(Explain any changes to the financial and non-financial outcomes and benefits as identified in the approved business case)*

Revised benefits of this request include the planting of thousands of more trees across South Devon, Dartmoor and Plymouth, contributing to the delivery of the Plymouth Climate Emergency Action Plan, and the sequestration of tonnes of Carbon from the atmosphere, continuing to increase carbon capture by over 80% from current levels/

Revised Milestones and Date:

Has the start /completion date changed? <i>(If so, please update with new dates)</i>		Yes
Contract Award Date	Start On Site Date	Completion Date
March 2022	N/A	April 2041

Is further Consultation required: *(if so, please ensure you consult with legal and procurement prior to submission)*

Will this change request require new procurement activity or the variation of an existing contract? If yes, have procurement been consulted? Provide name of Procurement Officer consulted:	No
Does the change in your project require Legal advice? if yes please explain why.	No

Does the change alter the Climate Impact Assessment. <i>(If yes, this would need to be updated)</i>	No	Does the change alter the Equalities Impact Assessment. <i>(If yes, this would need to be updated)</i>	No
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Revised Financial Implications: *(Capital and Revenue – capital profile and ongoing PCC revenue implications)*

Capital Cost and Financing:

Breakdown of project	Prev. Years	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	Future Years	Total
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costs including fees surveys and contingency	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Original business case capital cost	7,279,889.51	1,309,368.17						8,589,257.68
Revised capital costs	7,279,889.51	8,603,608.17						15,883,497.68
Difference		0 7,294,240.00						7,294,240.00
Detail on financing change (+£ or -£) to match the difference above								
	Prev. Years	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £	29/30 £	Future Years £	Total £
Grant Funding (Ringfenced/ Un-Ringfenced)		7,294,240.00						7,294,240.00
SI06 /CIL								
Corporate / Service Borrowing								
Internal Contribution (RCCO)								
External Contribution								

Are there any bidding constraints /restrictions/ conditions attached to the funding	Yes. As per original funding terms
Does the change have any Tax and VAT implications. (If yes, please contact Sarah Scott)	No

Revised Revenue Implications:							
Revised Revenue Implications for Service Area:							
	25/26 £	26/27 £	27/28 £	28/29 £	29/30 £	Future Yrs.	
Original business case revenue cost (A)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Change to costs (B) increase / - reductions	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Change in income (C) reduction / - increase	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revised revenue costs D = (A+/- B & C)	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Difference (A – D)		0	0	0	0	0	0
Revised Service Area benefit & savings:							
Has the revised cost changes from this request been budgeted for or would it make a revenue pressure.							
Loan value	£	Interest Rate	%	Term Years		Annual Repayment	£

SECTION 5: RECOMMENDATION AND ENDORSEMENT

Recommended Decision

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council

- Approves the Business Case Change Request
- Allocates an additional £7,294,240 for the project into the Capital Programme funded by Defra Trees for Climate
- Delegates the award of contracts and programme processes to the Head of Environmental Planning where they would not already have authority to do so

Cllr Tom Briars-Delve, Environment and Climate Change

Glenn Caplin-Grey, Strategic Director. Growth

Either email dated: *date*

Either email dated: *date*

Or signed: 

Signed: 

Date: 01 October 2025

Date: 7 October 2025

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Council Officer



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

Executive Decision Reference Number – Executive Decision Reference Number – COD19 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Purchase of a property for use as a Children's Home
2	Decision maker: David Haley (Director for Children's 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 for use as a Children's Home, at a value of £330,000.
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) https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4524
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 reduce the cost and improve the 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. Purchase alternative property: Alternative properties have been considered but not deemed suitable.

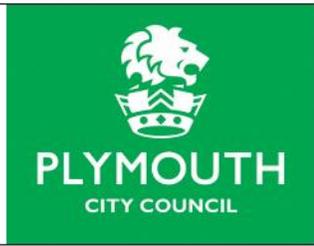
	2. Not to buy a property for use as a children's home: Rejected as this will result in the Council continuing to spend high costs on external care providers and prevent the Council providing a local home for children and young people who need our care.			
7	Financial implications and risks: £2,000,000 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. This is the second property being purchased, using this approved funding. The property price is £330,000. The purchase will be completed in advance of the revenue savings being achieved.			
8	Legal Implications and risks: Due diligence on the property will be undertaken by external solicitors and the Council will not exchange unless it is satisfied that there are no legal impediments on the title to the property which would prevent use as a 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 £1million , 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.		
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	05/02/2026		
I3c	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes		
		No	x	(If no go to section 14)
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	Strategic Director: Children's Services	
		Date consulted	11/02/26	
Sign-off				
I6	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	JS75 25/26	
		Finance (mandatory)	OW.25.26.131	
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/00001312/1/AC/4/12/25	
		Human Resources (if applicable)	CS.25.26.020	
		Corporate property (if applicable)	JW 0130 11/02/26	
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A	

Appendices								
Ref.	Title of appendix							
A	Briefing report part 1							
B	EIA							
C	CIA							
Confidential/exempt information								
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					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			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
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		16/02/2026	
Print Name		David Haley, DCS						

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

Part I



Purpose of Purchase

Plymouth City Council is purchasing a four-bedroom property 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. The home will provide provision for up to three 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.

Property

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

Current Status

The purchase is progressing to completion. Exchange and completion for the property is anticipated on the 20th of February 2026.

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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 (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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<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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<p>Disability</p>	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited ‘a lot’ because of a physical or mental health problem. 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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<p>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.</p>

<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<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>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<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>Race</p>	<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>	<p>No adverse impact.</p>	<p>Homes will support children of all races and will aim to provide a workforce which reflects this diversity.</p>	<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>Religion or belief</p>	<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>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>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>	<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>Sex</p>	<p>51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).</p>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>Homes will be registered for all children regardless of their sex.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>No adverse impact</p>	<p>Homes will support children in their sexual development and provide a tolerant and inclusive environment in which they can grow and learn safely.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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
<p>Work together in partnership to:</p> <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 			
<p>Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.</p>			
<p>Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.</p>			
<p>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.</p>			

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