



**Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny
Committee**

12 February 2024

**Report from the Corporate Director
of Governance**

Call-in: Cabinet decision (15 January 2024) re Acquisition of a property in Wembley for the Brent Residential Childrens Care Home Project

Wards Affected:	Barnhill
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Part Exempt – Appendix 2a is exempt as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"
List of Appendices:	Three: Appendix 1: Call-In Form Appendix 2: Report to Cabinet (15 January 24) – Acquisition of a property for Brent Childrens Care Home Project Appendix 2a: Appendix 1 Cabinet report (15 January 24) – Purchase Cost (exempt) Appendix 3: Call-In Protocol
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Amira Nassr, Head of Chief Executive & Member Services Tel: 020 8937 Email: amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 A decision taken by Cabinet on 15 January 2024 to approve the acquisition of a property in Wembley for the Brent Childrens Care Home Project has been called-in for consideration by the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with Standing Order 14.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That having considered the call-in the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee agree one of the following outcomes:
- 2.1.1 The Committee does not wish to refer the matter back to the decision maker or to Council, at which point the decision is deemed to be confirmed and takes effect immediately following the meeting; or
 - 2.1.2 The Committee agrees to refer the original decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration, in light of any observations made during consideration of the call-in; or
 - 2.1.3 Having had regard to the advice of the Corporate Director of Governance or Corporate Director of Finance & Resources, the Committee considers the decision is contrary to the Council's Budget or Policy Framework, at which point it refers the matter to the next practicable meeting of the Council, subject to the provisions of Standing Orders.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1 The development of a Children's Residential home in Brent aligns with two Borough Plan outcomes, firstly Prosperity and Stability in Brent, and secondly The Best Start in Life. Enabling more children and young people to stay in the borough means they will have greater opportunities to participate in and contribute to the Brent community. They will receive local services to enable them to be fully equipped to succeed in adulthood.

Background

- 3.4 Cabinet (15 January 2024) received a report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and Corporate Director of Children and Young People which, in line with the Brent Children's Residential Home Business Case that had been approved by Cabinet in May 2023, sought approval for the acquisition of a property for renovation to deliver a four bedded children's care home for young people by March 2025 which would provide four placements, three permanent and one emergency for the Council to deliver and operate a children's residential home.

Having considered the report, Cabinet agreed to approve the acquisition with the minute recording the decision as follows:

Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) introduced the report, which set out the Council's plans to acquire a property as part of the Children's Residential Home Project.

In considering the report Cabinet noted the way in which the proposed acquisition aligned with the objectives within the Brent Children's Residential Home Business Case approved by Cabinet in May 2023. This included not only

supporting the Council in seeking to address the increasing cost of child residential placements for looked after children, with the scheme projected to save the Council approx. £290,000 on an annual basis once operational, but also in delivering the benefits associated with the additional capacity to reduce the need for out of borough placements and enabling more children and young people to receive care closer to home with access to local services and support.

*Members welcomed the way in which the insourcing of this scheme would enhance service delivery and in recognising the benefits that the proposal would bring to both young people and the Council, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:*

- (1) To approve the acquisition of the property (address detailed in the exempt appendix of the report) in Wembley HA9 with vacant possession to meet the needs of young people as outlined in the Brent Residential Home Business Case approved by Cabinet in May 2023.*
- (2) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People, to agree the terms of the purchase and acquire the property subject to financial and legal due diligence, vacant possession and contract.*
- (3) To note that the completion of the property needs to take place by the end of January 2024 in order to allow sufficient time to renovate the property within the timescales permitted in the grant agreement with the Department for Education (DfE).*

(Please note: The above minute is subject to formal approval by Cabinet on 5 February 24)

- 3.5 The Cabinet decision to approve the acquisition of the property has subsequently been called-in by five members of the Council, with details of the call-in attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.6 The Cabinet report on which the called-in decision was based has been attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.7 The procedure for dealing with the call-in and the conduct of the Scrutiny Committee meeting is attached at Appendix 3 of this report.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 None specifically applicable to this report.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 There are no direct financial considerations arising from this covering report. The financial considerations relating to the called-in decision have been detailed within the Cabinet report (attached as Appendix 2) which formed the basis of the original decision made.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 There are no direct legal considerations arising from this covering report. The procedure for dealing with the call-in and options available to the Community & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee have been set out in Appendix 3 of the report with the legal considerations relating to the called-in decision having been detailed in the Cabinet report (attached as Appendix 2 of this report) which formed the basis of the original decision made.

7.0 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 There are no direct Equality, Diversity & Inclusion considerations arising from this covering report.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental considerations arising from this covering report.

9.0 Communication Considerations

9.1 There are no direct communication considerations arising from this covering report.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman
Corporate Director of Governance