

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 9 September 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3562
TITLE:	New Special Residential and Day School	
WARD:	Keynsham North	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Risk Register – Charlton House		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The future use of Charlton House, Keynsham as a new special school with residential and day placements for pupils with highly complex needs in the area of autism with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

- 2.1 Decide if Charlton House, Keynsham can be re-purposed into a small residential and day school for young people aged 11-17 with complex special education needs.
- 2.2 Fully approve £6.1m High Needs Provision Capital Grant funding to remodel Charlton House to accommodate the young people at the new special school. High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA) grant funding is allocated to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

3 THE REPORT

3.1 Rationale

The rationale for opening this new provision is to provide for one of B&NES most vulnerable cohorts of young people. The provision will cater for the needs of young people

aged 11-17 whose needs cannot be met within any existing local provision. All will have an Education, Health and Care Plan and a high level of need that has meant they have been placed in specialist provision around the country. These young people have been supported mainly in residential schools or children's homes with education attached all of which are out of county provisions as there are currently no residential provisions in B&NES. This means that the young people are not given the chance to be part of their local community, accessing education, social interactions, employment opportunities etc. Life outcomes for these young people will be much improved with an offer of local education with a residential element for those in care.

By opening our own provision and commissioning a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to run it there will be the opportunity to keep placement costs at a much lower rate than currently being charged by the independent sector and therefore bringing in savings for the DfE Safety Valve Programme.

In the complex pathway review family feedback was that families report feeling anxious about their child's future (particularly around residential college/supported living options).

There will also be a reduction in transport costs as journeys will be much shorter and shared within minibuses

3.2 The Site - Charlton House

The proposal is to convert Charlton House in Keynsham (previously an adult care home) to a small residential and day special school. The school would accommodate 12 residential places and an additional 18 day places, totalling 30 placements. The provision will cater for young people aged 11 -17 with complex special educational needs in the area of autism with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Charlton House is attached to Hawthorn Court in Keynsham. Hawthorn Court is an adult care home providing extra care housing for older people. Charlton House is no longer used as a care home and is currently empty. Hawthorn Court will continue to provide housing for older people.

The required remodelling, adaptations and refurbishment of Charlton House to enable the building to be repurposed and used as a residential and day special school has been investigated and a feasibility study carried out. The feasibility study indicates that the building could be converted with costs estimated at £6.1m. The project would use BB104 Government Area Guidelines for SEND and Alternative Provision, ensuring the creation of appropriate categories of space for both indoor and outdoor areas.

The capital project will include works to ensure that Charlton House and Hawthorn Court have separate access, security and landscaping to outside areas.

3.3 Running the Provision

Currently Education (SEND) and Education Commissioning has worked with the DfE to prepare a specification for the running of the school. The proposal is that this will be published both by B&NES and the DfE requesting that Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) complete a full application to run the education side of the provision. Following receipt of the completed proposals these will be shortlisted against a matrix and then interviews offered to the successful MATs. Once a MAT has been commissioned to run the school the expectation is that they will run a tender process to appoint carers for the residential

provision. This will be done in conjunction with Education Commissioning and Children's Social Care.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 This provision is required in order to deliver savings in relation to the Safety Valve.
- 4.2 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs (SEND). The Council's priorities are set out in the SEND Education Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2024 in relation to increasing the local provision for children and young people with SEND. The council are committed to delivering local education SEND placement sufficiency and reduce unsustainable costs driven by out of county placements and travel.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 Capital

The £6.1m cost of delivering the adaptations needed to Charlton House to convert the building into suitable accommodation for a special school with residential will be covered by the HNPCA grant.

B&NES were given the opportunity to bid for additional funds through the Safety Valve project and were successful in securing £4m capital funding for a new residential school. In addition, as part of the bid application B&NES also committed £2m of existing HNPCA grant to the project. The feasibility study estimates that the total cost will be £6.1m; there is identified budget sufficient to cover the costs of this project.

5.2 Revenue

The running costs of the building will be handed over to the MAT commissioned to run the school. The expectation being that they will be funded on the special school rates of £10k per pupil with the additional top up funding from the banding system which will be at the highest level of band 6 or in some cases at the bespoke level of Band 7.

The costs for the residential element will be charged to social care to be determined with the MAT, SEND, CSC and the care providers appointed.

The project will reduce the overspend in the DSG and increase the local offer, preventing expensive out-of-county placements. The average cost of an out-of-county day placement at an Independent Special school currently stands at £96k. The cost of residential SEND placements currently stand at £318k (average placement costs with a mix of 38 & 52wks). This project will result in estimated savings to the Council of £2,171,075 (education and transport) and £2,043,859 (residential) per annum. The transport saving applied to education savings is based on a journey of around 30 miles each way at an approximate cost of £15k for day placements and £3,000 for 38 week residential placements.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

- 6.2 Key risks are identified as:

- 6.2.1 Should Charlton House project not go ahead – failure to identify other options to locate the special school.
- 6.2.2 The Council not fulfilling part of the agreement conditions in the Safety Valve plan.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 The heating to Charlton House is provided by a newly installed Air Source Heat Pump System which replaced gas-fired boilers. The building has roof mounted PV panels
- 8.2 By remodelling an existing building there will be minimal ecological impact.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Other options would be to look for an alternative site, this would:
- Delay the opening of the school – implications for the Safety Valve savings.
 - May have project cost implications.
 - Would mean that Charlton House will stand empty.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 A full public consultation was held on the closure of the care home with the remit of opening the school. Adult Social Care lead the consultation process. The following is the link to the outcome of the consultation:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s80420/E3513%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Community%20Resource%20Centres%20Consultation%20Report.pdf>

- 10.2 Prior to a planning application being submitted an open event will be held at Charlton House where plans and proposals will be shared with neighbours, stakeholders, councillors, etc. The feedback from this open event will be included in the full planning application. There will be a full consultation at the planning stage of the development as per the usual planning process.
- 10.3 A market event is planned for 1st October for any Academy Trusts that are interested in submitting bids to run the new school.
- 10.4 Once detailed plans are available, we will run a further consultation event with the community local to Charlton House to allow them to comment on the proposed new Special Residential and Day School.

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Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	