

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Cabinet	
MEETING	11 th September 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3633
TITLE:	B&NES Homes Programme - Englishcombe Lane Supported Housing Scheme	
WARD:	Moorlands	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM WITH EXEMPT APPENDIX		
List of attachments to this report:		
EXEMPT Appendix 1: Business Case Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 In 2024 the Council received planning permission for its proposed 16-unit specialist supported housing development on land to the rear of 89 – 123, Englishcombe Lane, Southdown.
- 1.2 The Council is now in a position to proceed with implementing the proposed development and this report seeks final authority and budget approval to do so.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to agree to;

- 2.1 To agree to implement the development, composed of 16 units of specialist supported housing, as approved in planning application reference number 24/01168/REG03, or its successors in function.
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Director of Capital & Housing Delivery to accept Homes England Grant, associated with the development, and other relevant significant delivery decisions

3 THE REPORT

Background

- 3.1 In April 2018 the Council submitted a planning application to develop 37 homes, including 14 affordable homes, on land to the rear of 89 – 123, Englishcombe Lane, Southdown, Bath. Planning committee approved the application subject to conditions including the completion of a s106 agreement. However, due to

concerns, principally around potential risk to the on-site ecology, it was decided not to pursue the application.

- 3.2 The site is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan and the Council has demonstrably high local housing need and a demanding housing delivery requirement. Doing nothing is therefore not a realistic option. As such officers were tasked with investigating whether a smaller scale alternative and ecologically acceptable development was feasible.
- 3.3 Having identified a lack of sufficiency in the local care and support market of supported living provision for people with complex needs, the decision was taken that pursuing a scheme which directly addressed that unmet need, provided the most impactful option, especially given the added benefit that this would reduce reliance on expensive out of area placements.
- 3.4 Officers worked with social care professionals and a specialist design team to create a scheme that offered the maximum practical benefit to the intended client group.

Scheme Benefits

- 3.5 The consented scheme delivers a low density, sensitive and small-scale scheme that uses the ecological value of the site as an asset and opportunity to create a peaceful housing environment for people with specialist housing needs. The scheme would be able to provide supported housing with care to around 16 tenants and is expected to provide the following headline benefits:
 - Creates an environment which is sensitive to the particular needs of the client group, thereby enabling people with learning disabilities and or autism to live as independently as possible in their own homes with the care and support then need on site.
 - Provides an opportunity to meet the bespoke needs of individuals especially those with sensory needs and requiring accessible accommodation. The site provides a peaceful and low stimulus environment which will suit many individuals with sensory needs.
 - Reduces the necessity for people to move out of area to access housing, care, and support, enabling people to remain in the district, close to family, community and friends and care teams.
 - Provides an opportunity for those: inappropriately housed in residential accommodation (often out of area) to return to the district if they wish; ability for clients to step down in more independent living; or those who are living in family or other inappropriate accommodation and ready to move into further independence.
 - Opportunity to integrate and test latest assistive technology.
 - Provides opportunity for revenue savings from the Councils Specialist Commissioning revenue budget. Revenue savings can be achieved in part by reducing reliance on costly out of area placements.

- The scheme would support some the Council's most complex individuals who are most at risk of being placed out of area. This will include some of those transitioning into adults from children's services.

Delivery Mechanism

3.6 Scheme delivery will be managed by B&NES and implemented via a two-stage procurement to include the build.

Operating Model

3.7 B&NES will own the completed scheme.

3.8 B&NES Homes will provide housing management services, including liaison with social care commissioners for the purposes of obtaining nominations for potential residents and dealing with any issues which may arise.

3.9 Adult Social Care will commission the care and support needed.

Timescales

3.10 The table below shows high level scheme timescales

Stage	Date
Invitation to Tender	September 2025
Contract Award	November 2025
Enabling Works to Site	February 2026
Start on Site	July 2026
Practical Completion	March 2028

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The delivery of specialist housing is supported by the following:

- Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 which allows Councils to develop land for the benefit or improvement of their area.
- Local Government Act 2000 (section 2) which allows Councils to act to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area.
- Localism Act 2011 (sections 1) which provides the local authority's general power of competence.
- The Council is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Local Authority Registered Provider of Social Housing.

4.2 There are further statutory considerations in relation to the provision of welfare and support to clients with learning difficulties and/or autism, including:

- The Care Act 2014 (part 1) provides Local Authorities with a general duty to promote an individual's well-being.
- Children and Families Act 2014 (section 25) promoting integration and wellbeing

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The scheme Business Case is shown at Appendix 1.

5.2 The scheme will be funded by a combination of borrowing supported by net rent and service savings resulting from the scheme, Homes England Grant and S106 Commuted sums.

6 RISK

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 The key risks at this stage include:

Risk	Summary	Mitigation
Funding Delays	Delay in funding confirmation may impact programme timelines.	Programme planning includes parallel delivery options and ongoing engagement with funders.
Ground & Infrastructure Cost Uncertainty	High proportion of groundworks may lead to cost increases.	Ground investigations completed and planned; cost risks quantified with specialist contractor input.
Market Engagement Challenges	Technical complexity and pricing may reduce contractor interest.	Two-stage tendering informed by market testing and specialist procurement advice.
Ecological Sensitivities	Environmental concerns may affect public perception and support.	The scheme exceeds biodiversity requirements and includes ecological oversight during construction.
Retaining Wall Design Complexity	Design challenges may increase costs.	Contractor-led design approach with specialist input to manage risk.
Demand Risk	Potential for low demand leading to void costs.	Scheme co-designed with Adult Social Care to align with identified needs. Allowance for voids included within Business Plan.
Construction Traffic & Access Disruption	Safety and reputational risks from traffic and access issues.	Contractor to implement traffic management and community liaison plans.
Drainage	Risk of reputational harm if existing drainage issues are wrongly linked to the new development.	Proactive communication during construction to clarify planned infrastructure improvements on site. Drainage engineers to provide detailed and robust drainage calculations to support the design and enable effective mitigation strategies.

Construction Complexity	Technical and logistical challenges may cause delays or safety issues.	Contractor selection based on experience; risks managed through KPIs and contract terms.
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6.3 A Project Risk Register will be used to manage risks and this will be kept under review as the project progresses, under the supervision of the project manager and reported regularly.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis was undertaken for the proposed project using the 'Bath and North East Somerset Council and NHS B&NES: Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit Bath and North East Somerset Council and NHS B&NES: Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit'.

7.2 The assessment / analysis showed that there were no actual or potential negative or adverse impacts.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY

8.1 Housing is a key contributor to climate change. The homes in this scheme have been designed to meet net zero requirements, thus contributing to meeting the Council's Climate Emergency targets.

8.2 In addition, the scheme has been designed to overachieve in terms of biodiversity net gain produced by the development and will achieve Building with Nature full accreditation.

8.3 In order to maximise nature benefit, the scheme has been designed to achieve Building with Nature full accreditation.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 A number of other options were considered and dismissed as detailed below:

Option 1

Disposing of the site on the open market. This option was dismissed as the Council would lose control over the site, plus the Council has identified an unmet housing need which this site, within its ownership, could address. Option 2

- Do nothing. Not considered feasible given the site is allocated for residential development within the Council's adopted development plan and the Council has demonstrably high local housing need and a demanding housing delivery requirement.

Option 3

- Prior to arriving at the preferred option which went on to be the consented scheme, five options were considered for the site. These options varied in density but were all more sensitive to the site than the original scheme. The preferred option was selected on the basis of fitness for purpose and deliverability.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Extensive consultation and engagement was carried out in the lead up to the planning application being made. This took the form of dedicated letter drops, community meetings, a dedicated engagement 'open event' Ward Member engagements, a dedicated consultation website and specific points of contact being made available for residents to comment/ raise questions. The scheme was amended in light of feedback.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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