

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**PEOPLE
CABINET MEMBER**

FIELDSIDE CHILDREN'S HOME – SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To declare the children's home at Epworth surplus to the requirements of Children and Young People's Service.
- 1.2 The key points of the report are as follows:
- No children currently reside at the home
 - Closure supports the implementation of the reshaping of the Children's Home provision
 - Ofsted have approved closure of the home

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A review of children's home provision has been undertaken. Cabinet member for Adult and Children's Services approved implementation of the recommendations (minute 70). The recommendations included closure of the Fieldside home and the building of a new Children's Campus.
- 2.2 The Fieldside home was vacated by the last resident in March. Ofsted have now approved closure of the home.
- 2.3 There was a forced entry and vandalism to the building following vacation. The building has now been boarded up to prevent further damage.
- 2.4 There is no alternative use of the building within Children and Young People's Service.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The options are as follows:

- 3.1 Option 1. Declare the home surplus to requirements.
- 3.2 Option 2. Retain the building and find an alternative use within Children and Young People's Services.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option 1. The following applies to option one.

4.1.1 Declaring the building as surplus to requirements will free up a building and site for which the holding service has no use.

4.1.2 Infrastructure Services will then explore the options for the building. The future use will be reported to the Asset Management, Culture and Housing Cabinet Member through the Transactions Schedule.

4.1.3 If the home is sold any capital receipt realised may support the Children and Young People's Service priorities set within the capital programme.

4.1.4 The building revenue savings outlined in the review of children's homes recommendations will be realised.

4.2 Option 2. The following applies to option two.

4.2.1 There is no apparent alternative use for the building within Children and Young People's Service.

4.2.2 The vacant building has already suffered vandalism/forced entry. Boarded up, empty buildings are often a matter of public concern and detract from neighbouring properties.

4.2.3 The revenue savings outlined in the review of children's homes included savings relating to building maintenance and running costs at the home.

4.3 Option 1 is the favoured option.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY,IT)

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The vacant building has already incurred additional cost for boarding up. If the building is left vacant then there may be costs for grounds maintenance.

5.1.2 Normally the period of exemption for council tax is 6 months from the date the home is vacated. After this period the council will be liable for full payment of council tax.

5.1.3 The council will be liable for the standing charges relating to utilities.

5.2 Staffing

Recommendations of the review have been approved by the Cabinet Member (see background papers).

5.3 Property and IT

Option 1 releases the property. Infrastructure Services will then explore the options for the property.

Option 2 retains the property as a liability for Children & Young People's Service.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

None.

6.2 Environmental

The building condition is likely to degenerate if left vacant and quickly deteriorate over time.

6.3 Diversity

None

6.4 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder

The buildings may become a target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour if left vacant.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves Option 1 and declares the building as surplus to the requirements of the service with immediate effect.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

- Cabinet Member Paper – Review of Children's Homes and Post 16 Accommodation Support Services