



National House Project

Author: Samantha Edwards

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1. Executive Summary

The National House Project (NHP) is a targeted initiative designed to provide stable, supportive, and long-term housing solutions for vulnerable children and young people, particularly those transitioning out of care.

This business case proposes the implementation of a Local House Project (LHP) in Cheshire East, seeking approval for a total investment of **£351,827** that will become part of the on-going base budget. The project aims to deliver both significant financial net savings—estimated at between £95,270 and £294,472 (increasing to **£168,935** and **£368,637 from cohort 2**) per annum per cohort—and improved outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

Cheshire East currently faces significant challenges in supporting care leavers, including limited housing options, long waiting times, and high costs for supported accommodation. The transition from care to independent living is often marked by instability, social isolation, and poor outcomes in education, employment, and health. The LHP seeks to address these issues by providing a structured, community-based approach that equips young people with the skills, confidence, and support networks they need to thrive.

The proposed project is fully aligned with Cheshire East's improvement journey and the ILAC improvement plan, directly addressing key priorities identified by Ofsted and local strategic objectives. By implementing this project, the Council will fill a critical gap in housing and support for care leavers, ensuring that vulnerable young people have access to safe, sustainable accommodation and the wraparound support they need to thrive as they transition to adulthood.

This initiative also supports national policy aims to reduce youth homelessness and improve outcomes for care leavers, while delivering cost-effective and sustainable social care solutions for the local authority. Importantly, the Local House Project will expand the range of choices available to young people leaving care, complementing ongoing work to commission supported housing for 18- to 25-year-olds and strengthening Cheshire East's overall offer to care-experienced young people.

The project will be delivered through a dedicated team, working in partnership with local housing providers and care leaver ambassadors. A cross-departmental steering group will oversee implementation, ensuring alignment with the council's improvement plan and wider strategic objectives.

The proposed timeline includes establishing governance in January 2026, engaging housing providers, recruiting and training staff, and transitioning the first cohort of young people into their own homes from January 2027 onwards.

By investing in the Local House Project, Cheshire East can deliver a more effective, sustainable, and person-centred approach to supporting care leavers, achieving both immediate and long-term benefits for young people and the wider community.

2. Rationale

The National House Project (NHP) is an initiative that supports young people leaving care and aims to ensure that they live connected and fulfilled lives. Working in partnership with Local Authorities to establish Local House Projects (LHP) it sees young people transitioning into their own homes successfully and in a planned and joined up way.

As of October 2025, Cheshire East has **520** cared for children. In the current year to date, **137** young people have left care, with the largest proportion (40% or 55) exiting due to them reaching the age of 18.

In the last 12 months 34 Care Leavers have been rehoused with an average waiting time of 7-months, but some have waited only 2-months, and this is dependent on where someone wishes to live and their accommodation choices. Transitioning from the care system to independent living in Cheshire East presents numerous challenges for young people, often leading to adverse outcomes.

Housing Instability - Approximately one in three care leavers in England and Wales experience homelessness within the first two years of leaving care. Discrimination in the private rental sector exacerbates this issue, with landlords often unwilling to rent to individuals with a care background.

Mental Health Challenges – Care experienced young people are four times more likely to face mental health difficulties compared to their peers. Factors such as past trauma and the absence of a support network contribute to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness.¹ Placing increased demand on Council and Health services into adulthood.

Educational and Employment Barriers - Care leavers often struggle with lower educational attainment, limiting employment opportunities. Financial constraints and lack of guidance hinder access to higher education, resulting in many securing low-paying jobs without prospects for advancement.²

Financial Instability - Nearly a fifth of care leavers find it challenging to cope financially, compared to just 7% of their peers. Limited experience in managing finances increases the risk of debt and poverty³.

Premature Transition - Over a third of care leavers feel they left the care system too early, often without adequate preparation. Delayed assignment of personal advisors and lack of awareness about available support contribute to feelings of unpreparedness.⁴

¹ National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) – Challenges Facing Care Leavers

<https://www.nyas.net/about-us/news/challenges-facing-care-leavers/>

² National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) – Challenges Facing Care Leavers

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³ Coram Voice – Life Satisfaction of Care Leavers

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/news/young-people-leaving-care-are-seven-times-more-likely-to-have-low-life-satisfaction-than-their-peers/>

⁴ UK Government – Care Leavers Feeling Unprepared

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/care-leavers-feel-they-left-care-too-early-ofsted-finds>

Social Isolation - Approximately 19% of care leavers report frequent loneliness, a rate higher than their non-care-experienced peers. The absence of family connections and difficulty in building new relationships contribute to this isolation.⁵

Low Life Satisfaction - Nearly one in four (23%) care leavers aged 16-25 report low life satisfaction, compared to just 3% of their peers. This disparity highlights the profound impact of the challenges faced during the transition from care.⁶

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive support systems, including stable housing options, accessible mental health services, educational and employment guidance, financial literacy programmes, and robust social networks to ensure care leavers can successfully transition to independent living.

Value of implementing the National House Project in Cheshire East

Improving Transition Planning and Support- Ofsted found that transition planning into adulthood for most care leavers is variable and not always robust, with some young people leaving care with uncertainty about their support. The NHP's structured programme, which includes early engagement, life skills development, and ongoing support, would provide a clear, planned pathway into independence—addressing the lack of proactive transition planning and ensuring care leavers are better prepared for adulthood.

Reducing Homelessness and Housing Instability- The report highlights that some care leavers are homeless or in unsuitable accommodation, and that sufficiency of suitable placements is a challenge. The NHP's focus on securing safe, sustainable housing and supporting young people into their own tenancies would directly reduce homelessness and provide the stability that Ofsted identified as lacking for some care leavers.

Enhancing Life Skills and Employment/Education Outcomes- Ofsted noted at our last inspection that many care leavers are not accessing employment, further education, or training, and are ill-prepared for adulthood. The NHP's emphasis on equipping young people with practical, social, and employment skills would help address these gaps, supporting care leavers to achieve better educational and employment outcomes.

Strengthening Relationships and Support Networks- The report found that not all care leavers have meaningful relationships with their personal advisers, and that pathway plans do not always capture young people's voices or ambitions. The NHP's community-based, peer-support approach would foster stronger relationships, provide ongoing mentoring, and ensure that care leavers' voices are central to their plans.

⁵ Coram Voice – Life Satisfaction of Care Leavers

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/news/young-people-leaving-care-are-seven-times-more-likely-to-have-low-life-satisfaction-than-their-peers/>

⁶ Coram Voice – Life Satisfaction of Care Leavers

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/news/young-people-leaving-care-are-seven-times-more-likely-to-have-low-life-satisfaction-than-their-peers/>

Providing a Dedicated Safe Space and Ongoing Engagement- Ofsted identified the lack of a dedicated safe space for care leavers to access support. The NHP model, with its regular group meetings and ongoing engagement, would fill this gap—offering a consistent, supportive environment where care leavers can access help, build community, and develop resilience.

Addressing Risks and Vulnerabilities- The inspection found that risk of harm is not always recognised or responded to effectively for care leavers, especially those over 21. The NHP’s structured support, regular contact, and focus on emotional wellbeing would help ensure that risks are identified and managed, and that vulnerable young people do not fall through the gaps.

The project emphasises a community approach, where young people work together to create homes they can live in for as long as they choose. This peer support system helps them build strong relationships and provides a stable foundation for their future. Overall, the Project would provide the right support for children in Cheshire East in line with our direction of travel.

3. Business Options

| No | Option | Summary description |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Do not implement the National House Project | No changes to the approach to support care leavers and to retain the existing models in place across Cheshire East |
| 2 | Adopt the National House Project across Cheshire East | Implement a local Cheshire East model for the National House Project |

Option 1 – Do not implement the National House Project

Choosing to do nothing would mean continuing with the current arrangements for care leavers in Cheshire East, relying on existing housing pathways and support mechanisms. While this approach avoids the need for upfront investment and organisational change, it fails to address the significant challenges faced by young people transitioning out of care.

The current system is characterised by limited housing options, long waiting times for suitable accommodation, and a lack of coordinated support to develop the life skills necessary for independent living. As a result, care leavers remain at heightened risk of homelessness, social isolation, poor mental health, and financial instability.

Maintaining the status quo does not align with the council’s improvement plan or wider strategic objectives. The improvement plan specifically calls for enhanced outcomes for care leavers, including improved access to stable housing, better support for wellbeing, and increased opportunities for education and employment. By not implementing a Local House Project, the council would miss the opportunity to deliver a more holistic, preventative, and cost-effective solution that has been shown to improve outcomes in other local authorities.

Furthermore, the “do nothing” option would perpetuate high ongoing costs for supported accommodation and fail to realise the potential financial savings and cost avoidance identified in the business case. In summary, this option does not support the council’s ambition to provide the best possible start for care leavers and does not contribute to the delivery of its corporate priorities or statutory responsibilities.

Option 2- Adopt the National House Project across Cheshire East

The NHP model has demonstrated success nationally, supporting over 500 young people into their own tenancies since 2015. Peer evaluation in 2023 highlighted positive impacts on mental health and wellbeing, with 78% of participants reporting improvements, and 91% stating that the project was crucial to their sense of community and personal responsibility. The LHP will add choice to Cheshire East’s care leaver offer, helping to reduce homelessness, promote sustainable independent living, and develop broader life skills such as employment readiness and wellbeing.

4. Expected Benefits

The following benefits have been identified as part of the NHP project for delivery in Cheshire East. This includes a range of financial and non-financial benefits for the Project.

| Benefit | Measure | Baseline 24/25 | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Total |
|---|---|----------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Financial Benefits | Savings per annum | Not Applicable | - £308,148 | £368,637 | £368,637 | £378,637 | £378,637 | £602,620 | £1,789,020 |
| Improved Education, Employment and Training engagement | % of young people engaged in EET | 13% in 2023 | 13% | 15% | 15% | 16% | 19% | 19% | 19% |
| Independent Living Skills and reduced homelessness risk | % successfully maintaining tenancy post service | Not Applicable | N/A | 70% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% |
| Improved Wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers | % registered with GP, dentist Access to mental health support Self-reported wellbeing improvement | Not Applicable | N/A | 65% | 65% | 65% | 70% | 70% | 70% |

Calculating Financial Benefits on Cohorts of children in NHP

Potential savings will vary depending on the young person's initial placement type. The figures below illustrate the savings that could be achieved within the placements budget by transitioning young people into LHP properties six months after their 17th birthday, which aligns with month 18 of the project timeline.

Two projections of financial benefits have been calculated and Scenario B savings have been agreed to be put forward to profile the financial, benefits for the project.

The current make-up of placement types for which young people may join the LHP cohort aged 16 plus are:

| | 16-17 Cohort | Annual Average Cost Per Placement |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Internal Foster Care | 18 | £32,641 |
| External Foster Care | 20 | £54,720 |
| Independent Home | 13 | £401,711 |
| Supported Accommodation | 49 | £78,614 |

Scenario A – Assumption 1 young person from Independent Residential and 9 from Independent Fostering into House Project tenancies.

| SCENARIO A | 6 Months Cost Avoidance | Investment Cost | Net Impact |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Movement from Independent Residential to NHP | -£200,855 | £0 | -£200,855 |
| 9 Movement from independent Fostering to NHP | -£246,242 | £0 | -£246,242 |
| Initial Implementation Costs | £0 | £308,148 | £308,148 |
| Housing Provider and Living Costs | £0 | £43,679 | £43,679 |
| Scenario A–Net Placement Cost Avoidance | | | -£95,270 |

Scenario A results in net cost avoidance of £95,270 (increasing to £169,435 from cohort 2) per year.

Scenario B – Assumption 2 Internal Foster Care, 2 Independent Foster Care, 2 Independent Residential and 4 Supported Accommodation

| SCENARIO B | 6 Months Cost Avoidance | Investment Cost | Net Impact |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 2 Movement from Independent Residential to NHP | -£401,711 | £0 | -£401,711 |
| 2 Movement from independent Fostering to NHP | -£54,720 | £0 | -£54,720 |
| 4 Movement from Supported Accommodation (Spot) to NHP | -£157,227 | £0 | -£157,227 |
| 2 Movement from Internal Fostering to NHP | -£32,641 | £0 | -£32,641 |
| Initial Implementation Costs | £0 | £308,148 | £308,148 |
| Housing Provider and Living Costs | £0 | £43,679 | £43,679 |
| Scenario B–Net Placement Cost Avoidance | | | -£294,472 |

Scenario B results in net cost avoidance of £294,472 (increasing to £368,638 from cohort 2) per year.

Savings associated with LHP are derived from supporting young people out of regulated placements and into LHP properties. The upfront costs are off set when young people move into their own properties which can be 9-12 months after they start the programme.

As LHP work with young people aged 16 and over, many from the cohort will be ready to move into properties around their 17th birthday. NHP have shared that on average young people transition into their own properties at 17.5. Therefore, we have used this in the scenarios above.

In Cheshire East we also know that we are supporting young people past their 18th birthday in supported accommodation, the average cost of this support is circa £99k per week for the current cohort, any LHP success in moving young people into their own tenancies at or before 18 avoids these costs too for that individual.

In addition to the financial benefits associated with implementing a Local House Project there are large benefits associated with the young people themselves

The proposal provided in the report offers a saving to the revenue budget; however this level of saving is subject to:- The combination of the ten young people current placement costs which are represented in the two scenarios. An assumed 100% occupancy, for six months of 10 young people may not be achieved. If this is reduced to 80%, 8 young people the savings offered reduce to £5,851 for scenario A and £165,213 for scenario B.

| National Housing Project - Payback Period/ Anticipated Saving | 10 Cohort Achieved Movement at Month 18 | | | 20% Cost Avoidance Unachievable | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Payback in 2 Years | Payback Period Months | Est Saving at 24 Months | Payback in 2 Years | Payback Period Months | Est Saving at 24 Months |
| Scenario A | YES | 23 | -£95,270 | YES | 22 | -£5,851 |
| Scenario B | YES | 22 | -£294,472 | YES | 21 | -£165,213 |

The level of staffing pay costs in the cohort 1 costs assume a full year salary costs. It is recommended that these 3 FTE are recruited on a permanent Cheshire East contract to reduce the risk of staff leaving due to temporary positions. There is a risk that staffing requirements may change once the programme is established, as it is assumed that 3 FTE are geared to supporting 10 young people.

The modelling assumes that there is no effects of inflation on costs and cost avoidance. the model assumes that new cohorts will take place in future years as a rolling programme and staff will be able to continue to support earlier year cohorts as they transition if required.

A longer lead in time of 18 months has been planned for the first cohort before moving into their own accommodation. As the programme will be more established in year 2 the second cohort will transition in 12 months. The budget saving suggested in the report is not included within the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) but is a new initiative connected to the 26T MTFS saving “New Accommodation with support for 16-25 Young People”.

The request is for forward investment to support the project of £351,827 to be added to the base budget.

5. Expected Dis-benefits

Based on national evaluation and the experience of other local authorities, there are no known significant disbenefits associated with the implementation of the National House Project. The model has been positively received in multiple regions, with evidence consistently demonstrating improved outcomes for care leavers and no reported adverse impacts on participants or stakeholders.

The approach is designed to be flexible and responsive to local needs, and ongoing evaluation has not identified any negative consequences for young people, the council, or partner organisations. As such, the project is considered a low-risk intervention with a strong track record of delivering positive results.

6. Timescales

Set out the milestones to deliver the recommended option. If a diagram has been produced to illustrate timeframes for delivering core activities, include it under this section. This can include a Gantt chart or similar timeline.

A dedicated Project Steering Group will be established in January 2026 to provide strategic oversight and operational leadership for the Local House Project. This group will include representatives from key departments such as Children's Services, Commissioning, Finance, Virtual School, and Strategic Housing. The Steering Group will be responsible for driving the implementation plan, managing risks, ensuring alignment with corporate priorities, and reporting progress to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Engagement with local housing providers will commence in February 2026 to secure the necessary social rented properties for the project's first cohort. Early collaboration with Registered Providers is essential to ensure that suitable homes are identified and made available in line with the project's timeline. This engagement will build on existing relationships and ensure that the housing sector is fully involved in supporting care leavers' transition to independent living.

The recruitment process for the core delivery team will begin in December 2025 and continue through May 2026. The team will consist of a Project Lead and two Facilitators, whose permanent appointments are critical to the programme's success. Attracting the right talent will ensure that the project is delivered effectively and that young people receive consistent, high-quality support throughout their journey.

Once recruited, the core staff will undergo comprehensive training from May to July 2026. This will include workforce development, psychologically informed practice, and access to accredited training provided by the National House Project. The training will equip staff with the skills and knowledge required to deliver the programme's modules and provide tailored support to care leavers.

Recruitment of the first cohort of young people will take place between May and August 2026. The process will involve identifying suitable candidates, engaging with Care Leaver Ambassadors, and ensuring that the views and needs of young people are central to the selection process. The aim is to form a group of 10–12 care-experienced young people who are ready to benefit from the programme.

Between October 2026 and February 2027, the project will work closely with housing providers and the council’s housing team to match young people with appropriate properties. This phase will ensure that each participant has a clear pathway to their own tenancy, with properties allocated in accordance with the council’s Common Allocations Policy and the young people’s preferences.

The final milestone will see young people transitioning into their new homes between January and March 2027. This move will be carefully planned and supported, with ongoing engagement from the project team to ensure a smooth transition. Young people will continue to receive support as they settle into independent living, helping to secure positive long-term outcomes.

Children’s Programme Right Child , Right Home Project / PMO Key Timelines

| Workstream | Overarching Project Start and End Dates | Oct 25 | Nov 25 | Dec 25 | Jan 26 | Feb 26 | Mar 26 | Apr 26 | May 26 | Jun 26 | Jul 26 | Aug 26 | Sept - Dec 26 | Jan-Feb 27 | Mar 27 |
|-------------------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|------------|--------|
| National House Project | Project Governance Established | | | | 7/1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Housing Provider engagement | | | | 1/2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Recruitment of core staff | | | | | | | | 28/5 | | | | | | |
| | Training core staff | | | | | | | | | | | 28/7 | | | |
| | Recruit first cohort of Young People | | | | | | | | | | | | 31/8 | | |
| | Identify Housing Options | | | | | | | | | | | | | 28/2 | |
| | Young people transition into first homes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 31/3 |
| PMO Lifecycle | Gateway Reviews | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Feasibility | Gateway 1 | | 30/11 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Foundation | Gateway 2 | | | | 28/2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Delivery | Gateway 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | 22/12 | | |
| Closure | Gateway 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Apr 27 |

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7. Investment Appraisal

Implementing a Local House Project involves establishing a dedicated, permanent core delivery team within the Local Authority. This team typically consists of one full-time Project Lead (Grade 11) and two full-time Facilitators (Grade 7), ensuring the right expertise and continuity for Cheshire East.

The National House Project has estimated that key contributing elements will result in a first-year cost of approximately £308,148. This is projected to reduce to £277,662 in the second

and third years. Then slightly lower again in year 4 due to the reduction in NHP membership fees. This is the minimum cost to run an LHP. The cost of Ofsted registration is at £3,600.

| Project Costs | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Project Manager Commissioning (Grade 11 1.00 FTE) | £ 73,665 | | | |
| Project Lead (Grade 11 1.00 FTE) | £ 73,665 | £ 73,665 | £ 73,665 | £ 73,665 |
| Facilitators (Grade 7 2.00 FTE) | £ 92,318 | £ 92,318 | £ 92,318 | £ 92,318 |
| Expenses | £ 3,000 | £ 2,500 | £ 2,500 | £ 2,500 |
| Activities linked to NHP | £ 5,000 | £ 5,000 | £ 5,000 | £ 5,000 |
| NHP Membership Fee | £ 35,000 | £ 35,000 | £ 35,000 | £ 25,000 |
| Psychology Support | £ 11,900 | £ 11,900 | £ 11,900 | £ 11,900 |
| Ofsted | £ 3,600 | £ 3,600 | £ 3,600 | £ 3,600 |
| Living Allowance | £ - | £ 15,000 | £ 15,000 | £ 15,000 |
| Housing Provider Costs | £ - | £ 28,679 | £ 28,679 | £ 28,679 |
| Project Specific Office Costs | £ 10,000 | £ 10,000 | £ 10,000 | £ 10,000 |
| Total Project Costs Per Annum | £ 308,148 | £ 277,662 | £ 277,662 | £ 267,662 |

Each year, the team would recruit a cohort of 10 to 12 young people, offering them a structured pathway to independent living.

A key element of the LHP is securing 10 social rented properties through partnerships with local Registered Providers. These homes become available to the cohort once they have completed the programme, which generally takes 9 to 12 months. The work programme itself is delivered over 6 to 9 months (or up to 12 months in the first year to allow for initial setup), and covers essential life skills, employment readiness, and wellbeing modules.

Weekly group meetings are held at a base identified by the Local Authority—currently proposed to be linked to the development of a Care Leavers Hub in Crewe, or, in the interim, at the Lifestyle Centre in Crewe. Associated costs for these venues are factored into the project budget. After moving into their own tenancies, young people can continue to engage with the project for as long as they wish, ensuring ongoing support.

The Local Authority is required to register as a Supported Accommodation provider with Ofsted, a process for which it already has relevant experience from children’s homes registration. The registration cost is £3,600. If young people move into their tenancy before turning 18, the Local Authority acts as guarantor until the tenancy is formally transferred to the young person.

In Summary, the total costs and benefits approaches are set out in the table below. The project is expected to deliver £3.231m savings against costs of £1.442m leading to a net position of £1.789m.

| Financial Summary | Cohort 1 (18 months programme, 6 months savings) | Cohort 2 (12 months programme, 6 months savings) | Cohort 3 (12 months programme, 6 months savings) | Cohort 4 (12 months programme, 6 months savings) | Cohort 5 (12 months programme, 6 months savings) | Total |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| Total Financial Benefits (Gross) | (£ 646,299) | (£ 646,299) | (£ 646,299) | (£ 646,299) | (£ 646,299) | (£ 3,231,495) |
| Total Cost | £ 351,827 | £ 277,662 | £277,662 | £267,662 | £267,662 | £1,442,475 |
| Net Savings position | (£ 294,472) | (£368,637) | (£ 368,637) | (£378,637) | (£ 378,637) | (£ 1,789,020) |
| Payback | 22 months | 16 months | 16 months | 16 months | 16 months | |
| £ spent, received back | £1.84 | £2.33 | £2.33 | £2.41 | £2.41 | |

8. Major Risks

Recruitment and retention of staff to support National House Project

There is a risk that the project may face challenges in recruiting and retaining the skilled staff required to deliver the National House Project. Delays or gaps in staffing could impact the project's ability to launch on time and provide consistent support to care leavers. To mitigate this, the project team will ensure that recruitment processes are initiated early and that roles are made attractive to suitable candidates, including additional advertisement (costed at £500), with a focus on timely appointments and ongoing support for staff retention.

Availability of suitable housing stock for care leavers

Securing enough appropriate housing for care leavers is a key risk, as limited availability could delay young people's transition to independent living. The project team will work proactively with local housing providers to review current housing opportunities and establish a pipeline of suitable homes in line with the Housing policies. Early engagement and ongoing collaboration with housing partners will help ensure that accommodation needs are met in line with project milestones.

Assumptions on cost avoidance and inflation

The financial case for the project is based on certain assumptions about cost avoidance and inflation. If these assumptions prove inaccurate, the anticipated savings may not be fully realised. To address this, the cross-functional project group will closely monitor financial performance, regularly review assumptions, and adjust plans as necessary to ensure that care leavers are supported into the right housing options and that savings targets remain achievable.

Timescales are not realised across the project timeline due to lack of capacity

There is a risk that the project may not meet its planned timescales if there is insufficient capacity across the council and partner organisations. Strategic Housing for example being a critical stakeholder in engaging the social housing sector. Delays could affect the delivery of key milestones and the overall success of the project. To mitigate this, the project will be delivered cross-functionally, with clear roles and responsibilities assigned through working

groups and the project board, ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to keep the project on track.

| Risk | Type | Mitigating Actions | Likelihood | Impact | Risk Score |
|---|-----------|---|------------|--------|------------|
| Recruitment and retention of staff to support National House Project | Resources | Project team to ensure staff are recruited to timescales to get project up and running | 3 | 4 | 12 |
| Availability of suitable housing stock for care leavers | Resources | Project team to work with local housing providers to review existing housing opportunities and establish a pipeline for homes for care leavers. | 3 | 4 | 12 |
| Assumptions on cost avoidance and inflation. | Finance | Work between the cross functional group will support local care leavers and support those young people to access the right housing options supporting savings in the project. | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| Timescales are not realised across the project timeline due to lack of capacity | Resources | Work across the Council and with partners will be identified to deliver the project cross functionally through the working groups and project board. | 3 | 4 | 12 |

9. Stakeholders and Engagement

Engagement with care leavers (via Care Leaver Ambassadors):

Care leavers will be actively engaged throughout the project via the Care Leaver Ambassadors group. Their insights and lived experience will help shape the design and delivery of the Local House Project, ensuring that the offer is responsive to the real needs and aspirations of young people transitioning from care. Their involvement will also support recruitment to the first cohort and ongoing evaluation of the project’s effectiveness.

Engagement with housing sector and social housing providers:

The project will work closely with local housing providers and registered social landlords to secure suitable properties for care leavers. Early and ongoing engagement will ensure that the right types of accommodation are available when needed, and that housing partners are fully involved in supporting the transition to independent living in line with Housing Policies. This collaboration is essential for the timely allocation of homes and for building sustainable pathways for young people.

Cross-departmental steering group (Children’s Services, Housing, Commissioning, Finance, Virtual School):

A cross-departmental steering group will oversee the implementation and governance of the project. This group will bring together expertise from Children’s Services, Strategic Housing, Commissioning, Finance, and the Virtual School to coordinate resources, manage risks, and ensure that the project aligns with strategic priorities. The steering group will monitor progress, resolve issues, and provide leadership to drive successful delivery.

| Groups | Stakeholder Activity | Approaches / Needs | Activities Required |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Care Leavers | Engagement with Care Leavers through ambassadors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings and engagement with Care Leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement through trusted professionals with care leavers on our future offer. Engagement with wider families on care leaver offer |
| Housing Providers and Housing Sector | Engage with suitable support for Housing options for Care Leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific support and reviews around housing options for Care Leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement on suitable and future offer for support for care leavers. |
| Virtual School | Suitable engagement on suitability of care leaver offers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join professional cross working group on educational input for care leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and direct support to future offer for care leavers. |
| Social Work Teams | Staff Engagement Activities on supported accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement sessions on how models may change practice for care leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Leaver needs input and support future offer development as part of National House Project. |
| Commissioning | Engagement on future shape of offer and relationship with housing commission and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement on how model impacts commission for Housing services for Care Leavers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning input into National House Project model |
| Finance | Provide support to financial modelling and affordability/benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Project Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance engagement on savings and financial activity |

10. Conclusion and Approval

The Business Case recommends Option B to implement the National House Project.