

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	31/07/2025
REPORT OF	Ann-Marie Matson – Director of Children’s Services
SUBJECT	Children’s Homes Update
STATUS	Open

1. CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Sufficient local provision of the best quality Children’s Homes within the borough directly aligns with the children in care Sufficiency Strategy and the Council’s priorities to:

- Enhance the experiences and outcomes of children who do need to come into care through access to sufficient local high-quality homes for children, enable access to local support networks to be accessible to children when they need it
- Recruit, retain and develop a skilled local workforce to be able to support children in care in the best possible way that build on the importance of relationships, knowledge and skills.
- Improving outcomes for children in our care through enabling more children to maintain their education settings within the borough and enable children to return to accessing education in the borough in local settings.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highlights the provision of children’s homes in North East Lincolnshire and updates on the creation of more provision within the borough to provide greater choice, enable more children to be matched with local placements, and reduce the Council’s reliance on externally commissioned children’s homes.

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

This update report was requested by the members of the scrutiny panel.

4. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

The Authority owns and manages 7 Children’s Homes providing placements for children in our care. This includes homes provided by the Council specifically for children in our care with disabilities. Of these 6 are judged by Ofsted to be ‘good’ and the other home is awaiting its annual inspection. This is a significant improvement on their previous judgements (at January 2024) when 4 of the 6 homes were judged to be ‘Requires Improvement’

The management of the homes has recently been reviewed and updated to ensure

a robust structure going forward for the homes to continue to build and develop. This will also provide the consistent capacity for the development of further homes in North East Lincolnshire.

There is consistent support in place for staff in Children's Homes through Young Minds Matter (Navigo) who attend team meetings to focus on understanding and meeting the needs of the children in the homes. A therapeutic training package was also commissioned through Changing Lives through Changing Minds for residential managers and staff. this was developed and delivered from October 2024

The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy identified a need to increase access to local children's homes, to enable the Authority to provide sufficient placements for children in our care who need the care and support of a

By enabling more of our children in care to live within North East Lincolnshire, we can reduce service pressures and associated costs in supporting and maintaining out of area placements.

To achieve this, the Council is in the process of purchasing 2 new children's homes with each one providing care for up to 3 children. One of these homes has now been granted planning permission and is progressing through the Ofsted application process. The other home is currently going through the planning process.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The existing homes in North East Lincolnshire provide caring, loving and nurturing environments where children feel safe and well cared for.

By enabling more of our children in our care to live in the borough through the creation of the additional homes, we will be enabling more children to feel a sense of belonging to their own communities, improving their self-esteem, sense of identity and life chances. This will enable the children to access the support of our local services, they can easily access the support of their Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officer with barriers of distance being removed.

The creation of the new homes means that more children in our care will have opportunities to access local children in our care support networks and build and maintain relationships with their families.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are minimal implications for this area other than through having more children living locally there will be reduced travel by their social workers, IROs and others to see the children.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

North East Lincolnshire Council children's homes deliver high quality care within their allocated budgets. The creation of the new homes is anticipated to create additional savings through reduced costs of externally commissioned provision.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications in this report

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The new homes will create further staffing requirements that will be in line with the existing homes staff roles and structures. The posts have been identified within the staffing structure and costs of the overall home provision with additional costs funded through reduced external placement costs.

10. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The wards specifically affected by the creation of the new homes are the Park and Wolds wards. The Councillors in these wards have been fully informed regarding the plans and development of the new homes.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

12. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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Ann-Marie Matson
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SERVICES