

Record of Decisions

Developing Residential Children's Homes for Torbay

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 15 September 2026

Decision

1. That a procurement to select Ofsted registered and suitably experienced children's home providers be approved and that the Cabinet agreed to proceed on the basis of:
 - a) Lot 1 – a provider to work with Torbay Council to deliver two 2-bedded children's homes. The buildings would be purchased by the Council and leased to the provider, who would register and operate the home. The provider would partner with Torbay Council to select the most suitable properties and design the service to meet Torbay Council's needs; and
 - b) Lot 2 – A provider or provider(s) to deliver two 2-bedded children's homes, with the buildings sourced and the home operated by the provider.

For both Lots the Council will seek to involve children and young people in the procurement process and design of the homes following the procurement, to make sure the Council considers their views.

2. Both Lots would be block contracted for a period of 3+2 years to enable homes to be secured for Torbay children and to give the commissioned providers the opportunity to create high quality, stable local services, working in partnership with Torbay Council's social workers and support services.

Reason for the Decision

Torbay Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure there is a sufficient range of safe, stable and high-quality accommodation for children and young people in its care.

The development of local residential children's homes would provide opportunities for children and young people to remain closer to their families, friends, schools, health services and local support networks where this was in their best interests. The proposal would also support the Council's ambition to reduce reliance on unregistered placements, strengthen local sufficiency, improve outcomes for children and young people and assist in managing increasing residential placement costs.

Implementation

This decision may be implemented on 28 September 2026 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

Torbay Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people in its care receive the same opportunities as their peers and are able to achieve positive outcomes throughout their

lives. High-quality residential care forms an important part of the local placement offer for children whose needs cannot be met through fostering or other family-based arrangements.

The Council has been selected by the Department for Education to receive capital funding to support the development of local residential children's homes. The procurement seeks to secure four new children's homes providing a total of eight residential placements through two complementary models: Council-owned homes operated by specialist providers and provider-owned homes independently operated by registered providers.

The introduction of locally based homes is expected to improve placement stability, reduce the disruption associated with out-of-area placements, support stronger relationships with families and local services, and provide better opportunities for planning transitions into adulthood. The use of block contracts is expected to provide greater certainty of provision for Torbay children while enabling providers to invest in staff, services and long-term partnership working within Torbay.

At the meeting Councillor Bye proposed and Councillor Tyerman seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

The option of taking no action was considered and discounted as it would have continued the Council's reliance on an increasingly pressured external market, perpetuated the shortage of local residential placements and limited the Council's ability to meet its sufficiency duty and shape the local market to meet the needs of Torbay children and young people.

The option of developing Council-run children's homes was also considered. Whilst this would have provided direct control over service delivery, it was rejected because the Council no longer had experience of operating residential children's homes and recognised that specialist external providers possessed the expertise necessary to register, establish and manage such provision successfully.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

18 September 2026

Signed: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: _____