

Central Bedfordshire Council

02 December 2025

Executive Committee

Allison House residential home and Sandye Place Academy site, Sandy

Report of:

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This report relates to a decision that is: *Key*

This report relates to a decision that is urgent/exempt from call-in: No

Purpose of this report

To present the outcome of the consultation about the future use of the Sandye Place Academy site and proposed re-provision of Allison House residential home, including any Community Asset Transfer requests received from the Community.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Executive is asked to:

1. Note the outcome of the consultation about the future use of the Sandye Place Academy site and proposed re-provision of Allison House residential home.
2. Approve the closure of Allison House residential home based on the matters set out in this report, its appendices and background papers.
3. To authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to determine the closure date for Allison House.

4. Delegate authority to the Director of Resources & Organisational Change, in consultation with the Executive Members for Assets Business & Housing, Executive Member for Finance & Highways, and the Director of Finance to enter into all appropriate legal documentation to construct a new care home in Sandy on the former Sandye Place Academy site, including all the building contract and ancillary documents, development agreement, and all contracts required to secure delivery and operation within the limits of the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
5. To authorise the disposal (market sale or internal appropriation) of Allison House once it is surplus and vacant.
6. Delegate authority to the Director of Resources & Organisational Change, in consultation with the Executive Members for Assets Business & Housing, Executive Member for Finance & Highways, and the Director of Finance, to approve the terms for the disposals and authorise the completion and execution of all related legal and contractual documentation.
7. Agree to defer the decision on disposing of the remainder of the site for six months to enable Sandy Town Council to develop their business case as detailed in para 25-31 of the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This item was considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny committee on the 4th November 2025.
2. The Committee Recommend to the Executive:
 - a. That Sandy Town Council be granted a further six months to develop their business case for the Community Asset Transfer of the former Sandye Place Academy site.
 - b. That investigations proceed on improving care home provision in Sandy by building a new care home on the former Sandye Place Academy site.

Executive Summary

3. Sandye Place Academy closed in the summer of 2019. The site had been let by the Council to the academy trust for education use and that lease was surrendered and possession of the site returned to the Council. Since then, the Council has made the site secure and safe at the cost of around £100k per year.
4. The site was not open to the public for general use when it was a school and has not generally been open for public use since its closure other than ad-hoc community events such as the Sandy Carnival and Coronation celebrations; and Sandy Youth club operates from a dedicated building on the site.
5. Part of the playing field has already been provided to St Swithun's School.
6. Although the site is not open for general use, it has historical features and open space and is a much cherished site for the local community. Through previous public consultations and discussions, there have been many suggestions put forward for its future use.

7. The Council is keen to ensure the site provides much needed facilities which will add value to the community and release the Council from the costs of securing the site. Due to the current financial challenges, any proposals for the former Sandye Place Academy site need to be delivered without further public expenditure.
8. The public were consulted via a formal consultation that took place for 12 weeks from the 16th of April to the 8th of July 2025. Alongside this, Sandy Town Council and community groups were invited to make an application for Community Asset Transfer to inform any Executive decision making.

Main body of the report

Public consultation

9. On the 1st of April 2025, the Executives approved the commencement of a public consultation on the future use of the former Sandye Place Academy site, and Allison House residential home.
10. The proposals considered:
 - Feedback and suggestions from the local community
 - Local need and demand for facilities
 - Public finances
 - Additional information requested at Executive 4th June 2024
11. The proposals consulted on were to:
 - a) Improve care home provision in Sandy by building a new care home on the site. This would have the potential to replace the capacity at Allison House Residential Home (“Allison House”), which is owned and run by the Council. It is anticipated that retaining a portion of the site to provide a modern care home will future proof supply of care home places to meet demand. If progressed, Allison House would subsequently close and become a surplus property.

The consultation explained the new care home could also include other community facilities that the public suggested the site could be used for such community space and café facilities open to the public to enjoy. This would support the public’s desire for the site to remain a focal point for the whole community of Sandy.
 - b) dispose of the remainder of the former Sandye Place Academy site. This will mitigate the ongoing revenue pressure.
12. The consultation explained that there are a number of ways a disposal could take place that can deliver different additional community benefits such as:
 - new or enhanced public open space, riverside walks, and a new bridge over the river joining up the Green Wheel allowing residents in Beeston Green to walk through to Sandy.
 - generating a capital receipt (income) which would help to fund the Council’s capital budget and mitigate the continued expenditure to keep the vacant site safe and secure.

- providing new homes. Sandy has had low levels of housing growth and more people living centrally in Sandy will likely boost footfall to the High Street supporting local shops and businesses in turn.
- providing community access to the Mansion House and open green space.

13. These were just examples, and there may be other disposal options that would give other community benefits. The consultation asked the public for views on these options and invite comment on other options too to provide information to the Council's Executive.

The consultation process

14. The consultation ran from the 16th April 2025 to the 8th July 2025. Local residents were encouraged to comment by completing a short online survey. Paper copies of the consultation document were provided in Sandy Library and Sandy Town Council offices.

15. The consultation was supported by meetings with Allison House staff, residents and family members held at the residential home.

16. Two facilitated public engagement events also took place on the 30th April 2025 via Teams, and on the 14th June 2025 at Sandy Carnival (on the Sandye Place Academy site).

17. Promotion of the consultation took place via press release, e-bulletins and social media.

Consultation responses and feedback

18. A total of 866 responses were received for this consultation. The majority (729) stated they lived in Sandy, 95 lived elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire. This represents 6% of the population of Sandy (12,600 in 2021 census).

19. Four responses were received from residents of Allison House, four responses from staff at Allison House, 11 from relatives / representatives of someone living at Allison House.

20. Responses were received from Sandy Town Council, community / voluntary organisations, and local businesses.

21. The majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal for the re-provision of Allison House and community facilities

- 67% support the proposal to re-provide Allison House on the Sandye Place site
- 88% agree that community facilities should be provided alongside. A range of views were expressed about different types of community facilities.

22. The consultation explored options for the future of the remaining land, setting out options could be – but not restricted to:

- a) Lease or transfer to the community. This would require a valid expression of interest and business case.
- b) Other viable uses suggested by the community.
- c) A market sale. As the site is registered as an asset of community value, a community group would be given the opportunity to make a bid to buy it.

23. The consultation asked for views or comments on the options above, and 400 respondents provided comments, although comments relating to the future of the site were also received in response to the earlier questions about the Care Home re-provision.
24. The overall view throughout the consultation was that the site should be used for ‘the community’, and this view was replicated across residents and relatives of Allison House, community / voluntary organisations and residents.

Community Asset Transfer requests

25. A Community Asset Transfer request has been received from Sandy Town Council. See Appendix C, D and E.
26. The Transfer request is for the remainder of the site not being utilised for the Care Home re-provision, and, subject to legal advice, would see Sandy Town Council establish a community interest company or charity to deliver what is set out in their business case.
27. The business case states Sandy Town Council will:
- 1) Protect and enhance the existing green and blue infrastructure, ensuring the grounds remain open for community events such as the annual carnival, national celebrations, and informal recreation.
 - 2) Restore and re-purpose the Grade II listed buildings for income-generating uses, including weddings, business rentals, and events, possibility or consideration of housing the Town Council offices and public meeting rooms.
 - 3) Develop a multi-functional community hub with arts, culture, and to protect the existing youth provision at this location.
 - 4) Improve connectivity to the Town Centre and the Sandy Green Wheel.
 - 5) Generate sustainable income through venue hire and heritage tourism.
28. The business case has a phased approach:
- Phase 1:** Secure asset, conduct detailed surveys, and complete urgent repairs.
- Phase 2:** Open green space for public use, initiate low-cost community activities, and begin venue hire.
- Phase 3:** Implement capital works for full restoration, hub fit-out, and enhanced landscaping.
- Phase 4:** Integration with Greensand Country’s walking, cycling, and heritage trails to enhance site connectivity and tourism appeal.

29. The business plan is supported by a cost plan that does not yet have market verified / confirmed deliverable costs which the Town Council are seeking to obtain, along with carrying out further due diligence via site inspection and receipt of compliance information. For example, there are assumed costs for re-provision of the Youth Club and provision of a Café, however these are aspirational rather than firm proposals at this time. The cost plan also makes an allowance for demolition of the newer buildings which is not market tested; it also assumes an income from a market disposal on the boundary of the site to generate income to help fund the business case.
30. Phases 3 and 4 are subject to separate business cases that have not yet been developed.
31. The Community Asset Transfer request will be determined in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer Procedure (see background documents) and any legal implications as set out below. It is likely to be referred to Executive due to either the value of the site, or the duration of the transfer (or both).

Neighborhood plan process

32. The Sandy Town Council Neighbourhood Plan is progressing through the formal consultation phase. The final draft of the Neighbourhood Development Plan was submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council as Local Planning Authority on 14 July 2025. Following this, Central Bedfordshire Council launched the Regulation 16 consultation on 15 August 2025, which ran until 26 September 2025. This stage provided residents and stakeholders with a final opportunity to comment on the plan—including key proposals such as the Sandye Place Masterplan—before it proceeds to independent examination. Once the examination is complete and if the plan is deemed sound, it will move to a public referendum, allowing the community to vote on its adoption.
33. In its Regulation 16 response to the Sandy Neighbourhood Plan, Central Bedfordshire Council as landowner reaffirmed its support for developing a new care home on part of the former Sandye Place site. However it raised concerns about the prescriptive nature of the plan's policies, that they could limit flexibility and hinder viable redevelopment. A willingness to collaborate with Sandy Town Council and local stakeholders was expressed, but that any future use of the site must be sustainable and benefit the local community whilst avoiding placing unrealistic pressures on the cost and deliverability of that development.
34. A link to Central Bedfordshire Councils (as landowner) Regulation 16 response can be found at in the background papers.

Options for consideration

To propose to the Executive to do nothing

35. Allison House is coming to the end of its useful life and experiencing the associated facilities management issues. These include replacement of high-cost elements e.g. boiler and roof, lifts frequently breaking down (with parts to fix becoming increasingly difficult to source) and more costly utilities compared to a modern design of home. Appropriate budget provision would need to be made for this.
36. Although there is not currently an undersupply of care home places in Ivel Valley, it is forecast that demand will start to exceed supply in the next two years.

37. Public funds will continue to be used to secure a vacant site and no benefits will be provided to the community. As an educational site, public access was restricted, however community events such as Sandy Carnival and Coronation celebrations have taken place on the site and it is assumed in this option would continue to; whilst remaining closed in general to protect against risk of illegal encampments.
38. The Council currently spends in the region of £100K of public money per annum on keeping the site safe and secure whilst it is vacant.
39. In addition, the Council is currently carrying out c£140K of capital investment to maintain the listed assets to protect them from deterioration.
40. It makes little financial sense to keep spending money on a site that is adding limited value to the community.

To propose the Executive improve care home provision in Sandy by building a new care home on the site

41. Residents of Allison House who responded to the consultation were supportive of the proposal. Relatives and representatives of those living at Allison House were most likely to discuss how the current site is not fit for purpose and members of staff at Allison House were most likely to discuss how the current site is not fit for purpose.
42. Community and voluntary organisations who responded to the consultation were most likely to be generally supportive of the proposal, Sandy Town Council were supportive of the re-provision of Allison House onto the brownfield site and residents of Sandy were most likely to be generally supportive of the proposal.
43. Building a new care home on the site will provide a modern care home that will future proof supply of care home places to meet demand. A new care home could also include other community facilities that the public suggested the site could be used for such community space and café facilities open to the public to enjoy. This would support the public's desire for the site to remain a focal point for the whole community of Sandy.

To propose the Executive grant a further six months to Sandy Town Council to develop their business case

44. The consultation report outlines that respondents felt strongly that the community should have access to the rest of the green space for recreation and community use.
45. The proposal from Sandy Town Council provides a range of community benefits that aligns with the consultation responses.
46. There are elements of the cost plan that require market testing, and the business case for the Mansion House and remaining buildings and site have not yet been developed.
47. Sandy Town Council also wish to seek legal advice on the governance model, whether a charitable trust or company.
48. An allowance of six months would enable the Town Council to refine these areas further to be presented back to a future meeting of the Executive.

To propose the Executive dispose of the Sandye Place Academy site on the open market

49. The majority of feedback from the consultation was against disposal on the market / new housing, however this is a deliverable way to meet the other community aspirations without committing additional Central Bedfordshire Council funding. It could enable enhanced public open space, riverside walks, a new bridge over the river to join up the green wheel, play equipment for children; and to protect the listed heritage assets.
50. Some consultation responses acknowledge some types / level of housing would assist in delivery, and the need to ensure proposals are viable and deliverable.
51. It should be noted there are significant protections in place for the site. It is in a conservation area and contains listed heritage assets. Any listed assets such as the Mansion House would need to be safeguarded as a heritage asset in the local community. Any future use would need to be sympathetic to these issues including the need to retain appropriate open space.
52. Should there be a market disposal any subsequent development of the site would be subject to planning and the planning application would require its own public consultation in the normal way. It would also address specific concerns such as highways planning raised in the consultation.
53. The planning process would ensure the community benefits were delivered and prescribe any timescales for doing so in any conditions.

Table providing commentary of consultation feedback themes against disposal options

Consultation feedback theme	Market disposal	Community Asset Transfer	Comment
<p>Keeping open space / park land, walk ways, activities for young people, sports pitches</p>	<p>Yes. Funded by developer. Delivery controlled through the planning process, but could include new or enhanced public open space, riverside walks, play area and sports provision. Timescales set by planning process.</p>	<p>Yes. Funding to be sourced by Sandye Town Council / Charitable Trust / Company. Subject to separate business case. Timescales TBC.</p>	
<p>Swimming pool</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>The Council's Leisure Strategy does not identify that there is sufficient need or demand for a new swimming pool.</p>

Table providing commentary of consultation feedback themes against disposal options

Consultation feedback theme	Market disposal	Community Asset Transfer	Comment
Use of the site for housing	Yes – subject to planning could be c90 homes including conversion of Mansion House to residential.	Yes – c10 homes.	<p>There was lots of feedback around use of the site for housing. In the main, this was opposed to use for housing, however there were comments for and against affordable housing, sheltered housing, bungalows / elderly living. There were also concerns about the viability / funding for any community facilities, ensuring Sandy residents are not left with a cost burden, and that some disposal for housing would assist funding.</p> <p>Evidence shows that there is need for housing in Sandy, and housing growth is lower than elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire.</p>

Table providing commentary of consultation feedback themes against disposal options

Consultation feedback theme	Market disposal	Community Asset Transfer	Comment
Education use - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) facility or technical college.	No	No	£1.7M has been invested in new SEND classrooms, as well as sports and changing facilities at Sandy Secondary School. All education requirements were considered by the Secretary of State as part of the process to release the land from educational use. This decision was subject to its own statutory consultation, and the Secretary of State was satisfied there was no unmet educational need.
Provision of health services might be located on the site	No	No	The Council is not responsible for the provision of health services. The Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care Board has indicated it would be unlikely this would be their preferred model.
Moving the Fire Station.	No	No	The Council is not responsible for the provision of Fire Stations.
Provision of a Café.	Yes (as part of Care Home)	Yes (location TBC)	

Table providing commentary of consultation feedback themes against disposal options

Consultation feedback theme	Market disposal	Community Asset Transfer	Comment
Providing a day centre, sheltered housing or other similar provision.	No	No	There is adequate provision in the area. It is important to make best use of the existing facilities in support of the community, mindful that providers have delivered substantial investment in those facilities.
Provision of allotments.	No	No	Central Bedfordshire Council and Sandy Town Council are working on allotment provision on an alternative site and are currently discussing lease terms.
Provision of a community hub to provide adaptable meeting space alongside use for arts, theatre, a youth centre.	No (bookable community space would be provided within the care home; a modern efficient building with low running costs, avoiding expensive single use buildings that often sit unused)	Yes - Restoration and repurposing of Hangar Hall for events/community hub.	Additional multi - purpose accessible space would improve the local offer. There is 1 Village Hall in Sandy which is in need of repair and refurbishment for which S106 has been secured. Local art and theatre space is available in nearby Biggleswade.

Table providing commentary of consultation feedback themes against disposal options

Consultation feedback theme	Market disposal	Community Asset Transfer	Comment
<p>Protect the listed / heritage assets.</p>	<p>Yes – as residential use. Funded by developer. Timescales set by planning process.</p>	<p>Yes - for income-generating uses, including weddings, business rentals, and events, possibility or consideration of housing the Town Council offices and public meeting rooms Funding to be sourced by Sandye Town Council / Charitable Trust / Company. Subject to separate business case. Timescales TBC.</p>	<p>Any listed assets such as the Mansion House would need to be safeguarded as a heritage asset in the local community. Retaining the Mansion House in public ownership is a significant cost burden. Its layout is not to modern standards for ease of use. Use of the building as a community venue would need to be supported by a viable and deliverable business case, setting out there was sufficient need and demand, and to ensure there were arrangements in place to meet the costs of building works as well as maintaining and operating such a facility.</p>

Reason/s for decision

54. Allison House is coming to the end of its useful life and experiencing the associated facilities management issues. These include replacement of high-cost elements e.g. boiler and roof, lifts frequently breaking down (with parts to fix becoming increasingly difficult to source) and more costly utilities compared to a modern design of home. Appropriate budget provision would need to be made for this.
55. Although there is not currently an undersupply of care home places in Ivel Valley, it is forecast that demand will start to exceed supply in the next two years.
56. Building a new care home on the site will provide a modern care home that will future proof supply of care home places to meet demand. A new care home could also include other community facilities that the public suggested the site could be used for such community space and café facilities open to the public to enjoy. This would support the public's desire for the site to remain a focal point for the whole community of Sandy.
57. Public funds are being used to secure a vacant site with limited benefit provided to the community. The Council currently spends in the region of £100K of public money per annum on keeping the site safe and secure whilst it is vacant.
58. The proposal from Sandy Town Council provides a range of community benefits that aligns with the consultation responses. There are elements of the cost plan that require market testing, and the business case for the Mansion House and remaining buildings and site have not yet been developed. Sandy Town Council also wish to seek legal advice on the governance model, whether a charitable trust or company.
59. An allowance of six months would enable the Town Council to refine these areas further for them to be presented to a future meeting of the Executive.

Council priorities

60. These proposals support the Council's core aim to enable the right care, at the right time, in the right place for those in need of support, providing a modern care home that will future proof supply of care home places to meet demand.
61. They support ensuring that environmental, sustainability and climate resilience impact will be at the heart of all decision-making, providing opportunity to build a new care home to the latest building regulations.
62. Disposal of the remainder of the site can enable delivery of a range of benefits across the Council priorities.

Legal Implications

63. The Care Act 2014 confers on the Council a legal duty to meet the needs of people with eligible care and support needs who are ordinarily resident or present but are of no settled residence in its area, either by commissioning services from independent organisation or by providing the service directly. The Council's Direct Services form part of this provision.

64. Under the Care Act 2014 the Council must also provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will reduce the needs for care and support of adults in its area. Therefore, it will need to be alive to the level of demand for a residential care home such as Allison House and how a new facility might cater to the care needs of service users.
65. Where a Council is contemplating the creation of a new residential home to provide care and support services, it will need to make sure that the premises are suitable for this purpose and that services are able to be provided there in compliance with the standards in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
66. Where a Council is contemplating changes to care and support services, it has a public law duty to consult with those who would be affected and there is clear guidance and precedent about how consultation should be conducted and the part they would play in future decision-making.
67. Case law sets out a number of principles for the conduct of consultation. These are:
 68. a. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage
 69. b. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
 70. c. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 71. d. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.
72. The Council has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998) to ensure that its actions are not incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (The Convention). The Council will therefore need to consider whether the proposed changes are likely to breach any of the service user's rights under the Convention. If the decision is likely to breach a qualified right within the Convention, the Council will need to explore any particular facts and determine if such a breach is proportionate in a means of achieving a legitimate aim.
73. A decision which potentially interferes with a human right does not necessarily mean that it will be incompatible with the Human Rights Act 1998. Public bodies also need to consider other general interests of the community. Some interference with rights can, therefore, be implemented where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to achieve a legitimate aim. Provided the interference of such a right has a legitimate aim, and the restriction itself does not go any further than necessary to protect this aim, then it is likely that it will be compatible with the HRA 1998. In this way the HRA 1998 recognises that there are certain situations where a public body is allowed to restrict individual rights in the best interests of the wider community.
74. The Equality Act 2010 also imposes a 'Public Sector Equality Duty' on Councils to consider how they may positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, requiring equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and delivery of services and to be kept under review. This duty should be considered with information gathered during the consultation process and from the Equality Impact Assessment.
75. The Equality Act 2010 also imposes a general duty on public bodies to make reasonable adjustments. This has been considered during the consultation process

with the principles set out above to allow consultees the ability to fairly engage with the process.

76. Disposal of Land

77. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may dispose of its land as it chooses but, except in the case of a short tenancy, the consent of the Secretary of State is required if it is intended to dispose of land at less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained.
78. To ensure the Council complies with its 'Section 123 duties', the normal approach would be for the property to be exposed to the open market and appropriate valuation, legal and other advice obtained on the results of that marketing exercise. It is possible to fulfil the Section 123 duty without going to the open market but, regardless of the process, appropriate advice will be taken before any offer is accepted to ensure it represents the best consideration reasonably obtainable as required by Section 123. Insofar as any part of the site may be disposed of for development, the expectation is that this would be fully marketed in order to comply with this obligation.
79. Insofar as the Council may wish to take account of factors other than monetary consideration in agreeing a disposal of land, this is permissible up to a cash limit of £2M in value where the other factors taken into account by the Council contribute to the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the Council's area (or part of it). The Council would need to clearly identify the relevant factors and their impact on any consideration agreed for a disposal quantified in the Council's valuation advice.
80. Insofar as part (or parts) of the site may be the subject of a community asset transfer, the expectation would be that the actual transfer would be for less consideration than an open market sale. Accordingly, appropriate advice will need to be taken on values involved and the Council will need to assess and balance the financial side of the transaction with the community benefits that it delivers.
81. Pathfinder Legal Services or suitable external lawyers procured with Pathfinders legal services assistance will be instructed to deal with the legal documentation relating to any disposal providing advice throughout, including advice on any disposal at an undervalue /best value, the contract drafting to ensure the transaction proceeds as envisaged and in accordance with the heads of terms agreed.
82. Community Asset Transfers are not without risk. Whilst the transfer of (in this case) listed buildings may serve, in the immediate term, to reduce the Council's liabilities, it will be important that a proper assessment of both the governance and business plan proposals developed by Sandy Town Council or any other transferee is undertaken to ensure that the overall project stands the best chance of success. The Council will want to ensure, as far as possible, that the future protection of the listed buildings is in safe hands. The terms of transfer may also need to contain restrictions on future user to ensure that the objectives of the transfer are protected in future.

Subsidy Control Act 2022

3. In considering any disposal of land at undervalue or support to a community interest company or charity, the Council will need to assess whether such arrangements constitute a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with the Act, including consideration of whether the proposed transfer meets the criteria for lawful subsidy, qualifies for an exemption, or requires notification and publication

Care Home Operation Model

4. Should the new care home be operated by an external provider, legal and procurement advice will be sought to determine the appropriate service delivery model and whether a competitive procurement is required under the Procurement Act 2023.

Financial and Risk Implications

83. Provision has been made within the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Care Home 4 (Sandy) of £18.5M gross, £16.4M net from 2025/26 to 2028/29. Further budget provision has been made to build to PassivHaus standard.
84. Monitoring and management of costs in relation to these proposals would be undertaken using the Council's normal procedures and reported to Members as part of the Council's normal budget monitoring activities.
85. The revenue and capital costs associated with the remainder of the site would be mitigated by either a market disposal or a community asset transfer. The MTFP makes budget provision to prepare sites for sale called Enhancements for Disposals, of £750K in 2025/26 and each subsequent year.

Equalities and Fairness Implications

86. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity and have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
87. The duty requires public authorities to demonstrate that they are making financial decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and the rights of different members of their community.
88. A Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been completed as part of the development process, and it is available as Appendix F.
89. The EQIA did identify the impact of moving people from Allison House but there is recognition that each resident would have a social work assessment during the transition to ensure their needs are met at the new home or other placements, and that residents and families would be kept informed at every stage.
90. Members should read and consider the EQIA before coming to a decision on the recommendations in this report.

Biodiversity and Sustainability Implications

91. Allison House was constructed several decades ago and subsequently does not meet the sustainability standards that an equivalent care home built to modern standards that satisfy current planning and building regulations would achieve.
92. A key part of the Council's care home re-provision programme is to maintain a local offer of care home places. This is important in reducing the need for additional transport usage by residents, staff and visiting relatives living locally.

93. If the decision is to close Allison House, a replacement care home would be built to minimise energy use and consider design and construction options that strike the balance supportive of the Council's sustainability objectives, affordability and viability. This would require planning permission and be subject to planning policy with respect to sustainability standards and biodiversity net gain.

Other Corporate Implications

Human Resources

78. The proposed decommissioning of the existing care home and opening of a new facility, may give rise to a number of HR considerations and potential implications under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended) (TUPE).

79. At this stage, detailed staffing implications will need to be assessed; however, it is anticipated that:

- a. Existing employees directly affected by the decommissioning of the current care home may be subject to transfer under TUPE to the new service provider depending on the final service delivery model and legal structure adopted.
- b. The Council will ensure compliance with all statutory consultation requirements, including engagement with recognised trade unions and affected staff at the earliest opportunity.
- c. Appropriate due diligence will be undertaken to identify which roles, functions, and employment liabilities would transfer, and to determine whether any redundancies or changes to terms and conditions may arise as a result of the proposed changes.
- d. The Council's HR policies and procedures, will be applied to manage any workforce transition, ensuring fair treatment of staff and minimisation of disruption to service delivery.
- e. Any employees not transferring under TUPE will be managed in accordance with established redeployment and redundancy procedures.

80. A full HR impact assessment will be completed once the preferred service delivery option and implementation timetable are confirmed. Legal advice will be sought as necessary to ensure that the Council's statutory obligations are fully met.

Procurement

81. The Delivery of the proposed care-home re-provision and any enabling works on the Sandye Place site should be progressed through the Council's established construction procurement routes to secure best value, market resilience and appropriate risk transfer.

82. The Council currently operates a multi-supplier construction framework, designed to accommodate projects of varying scale and complexity through a structured suite of lots. This internal framework should serve as the default procurement route for the Sandye Place programme. It is noted that the existing framework is due to expire in March 2026. A successor framework is in development, aligned with the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023, to ensure continuity and compliance with the new legislative requirements. Where appropriate, the Council retains the flexibility to pursue alternative procurement routes outside the framework, including the Open Procedure or the Competitive Flexible Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023. These options may be considered where they offer strategic advantage ensuring the principles of transparency, fairness, and proportionality.

83. Key procurement imperatives are:

- a. selecting the correct lot and delivery model (design & build, traditional, or hybrid) to control cost and lifecycle risk;
- b. embedding sustainability and social-value requirements (including PassivHaus standards where specified) into tender documentation and contract KPIs;
- c. robust market testing and early contractor engagement to protect the MTFP budget against inflation and supply-chain risk;
- d. ensuring independent, auditable evaluation and appointment processes to avoid conflicts of interest and to maintain transparency;
- e. allocating clear contract management responsibilities (commercial, technical and social-value monitoring) post-award.
- f. Publishing relevant notices on the Central Digital Platform as required under the Procurement Act.

84. In respect of the future operation of the care home, the proposed service delivery model also need to consider—whether managed directly by the Council or by an external provider through procurement. Where external providers are engaged to deliver care home services, the Council will ensure that the procurement complies with the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023, where applicable.

85. Should the site proceed to disposal or community asset transfer, the appointment of qualified valuers or agents will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement Rules and relevant procurement legislation (PCR 2015 or Procurement Act 23).

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94. Should the decision be made to close Allison House then there would be a number of consequent actions that would need to be undertaken once the residents have moved out and the home closed. These include:

- a. Decommissioning the building and making it secure.
- b. Arranging for ongoing management of the site.

c. Disposal (market sale or internal appropriation).

Conclusion and next steps

95. Allison House is coming to the end of its useful life and experiencing the associated facilities management issues. Although there is not currently an undersupply of care home places in Ivel Valley, it is forecast that demand will start to exceed supply in the next two years. The Council's proposal to close Allison House and build a new Care Home on the former Sandye Place Academy site was supported by the public consultation outcome.

96. The overall view throughout the consultation was the site should be used for 'the community'. The proposal from Sandy Town Council provides a range of community benefits that aligns with the consultation responses. There are elements of the cost plan that require market testing, and the business case for the Mansion House and remaining buildings and site have not yet been developed.

97. Should this paper be approved, the next steps are as set out in the recommendations.

Appendices

Appendix A: [Sandye Place Academy site and Allison House re-provision consultation results.](#)

Appendix C: [Sandy Town Council Community Asset Transfer business case.](#)

Appendix D: [Sandy Town Council Community Asset Transfer costings.](#)

Appendix E: [Sandy Town Council master plan.](#)

Appendix F: [Equalities Impact Assessment for Allison House](#)

Background Papers

The following background papers are available on the Council's website:

- **Appendix B:** April 1st Executive report – Sandye Place Academy and Allison House residential home, Sandy [7.1 Sandye Place Academy and Allison House residential home Sandy.pdf](#)
- **Appendix G:** [Central Bedfordshire Council \(as landowner\) response to Regulation 16 consultation on Sandy neighbourhood plan.](#)
- Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Asset Transfer procedure is detailed at [Stronger Communities | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

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