

8 December 2014**Agenda Item: 12****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****PROVISION OF FUNDING TO EXTEND A SPECIAL GUARDIAN'S HOME****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to provide funding of £24,625 to build an extension to the home of Mr and Mrs S, who are Special Guardians for two children placed with them by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Information and Advice

2. JS and his sister LG were removed from their parents and made subject to interim care orders in October 2013. They were placed by Nottinghamshire County Council with their maternal grandparents Mr and Mrs S, who live in a housing association property.
3. Mr and Mrs S also care for another grandchild who occupies the second bedroom in the property. As a result, the two children placed by Nottinghamshire Council have to share the box bedroom in which there is no room for a wardrobe or any other furniture, and the children have to keep their clothes elsewhere and use the bathroom for getting dressed. LG is particularly distressed by the fact she has no personal space, and has to share her bedroom with her younger brother.
4. It was agreed in court that the children should continue to reside with their grandparents for the rest of their childhood, and Special Guardianship Orders were granted in March 2014. This order was made on the basis that the Local Authority would make 'reasonable adaptations' to the family property in order to address the issue of overcrowding.

Other Options Considered

5. The family have been consulted about moving to a larger property; however they will not countenance this as the children are now settled in school and they have a strong attachment to the property which Mr and Mrs S have lived in for approximately 30 years.
6. The housing association does not have any four bedroomed properties in the vicinity.
7. A fourth bedroom needs to be created in the current property. An estimated £24,625 is required to build a small extension to the rear of the property to use as a dining space, thus freeing up the current dining room to use as a bedroom for Mr and Mrs S.

8. The County Council's Legal Services will draw up a grant funding agreement between the Council and the housing association should the funding be approved by Committee. This agreement will include a 'claw back' provision in order to protect the investment of the Council.

Other Options Considered

9. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. Legal services indicated very clearly when the Special Guardianship Orders were made in March 2014 that building work would be undertaken to create more space and this was written into the SGO support plan that has been filed with court.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. The cost of the extension will be funded from the 2015/16 Children's Social Care Special Guardianship budget.

Human Rights Implications

13. By undertaking the required building work the Local Authority is enhancing the rights of the children to a family life.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That approval is given to provide funding of £24,625 for the building of the proposed extension to the home of Mr and Mrs S. A grant funding agreement will be made between the Council and the housing association to ensure the investment is protected.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Children's Social Care

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Tom Hewis
Service Manager, Children with a Disability Service
T: 01623 433433
E. tom.hewis@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LM 25/11/14)

14. The Children and Young People's Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (SS 24/11/14)

15. The financial implications of this report are set out in paragraph 12 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0531