

REPORT OF TEAM MANAGER, MEMBERS AND CIVIC SERVICES

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of two decisions taken under the agreed urgency procedures since the last meeting of the Administration Committee or Urgency Sub-Committee.

Information and Advice

2. At its meeting on 13 July 2009, Administration Committee agreed an urgency procedure to enable approval by the Chief Executive, following the majority agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and the Deputy Leader of the Council. In order to maximise transparency, the Administration Urgency Sub-Committee was subsequently established on 21 October 2009 to deal with the vast majority of such urgent decisions. Although the existing urgency procedure has been retained, Members are keen that they are used only in very exceptional circumstances and that insufficient planning and preparation by officers is not adequate justification for using these powers.
3. Since the last meeting of the Committee the following decisions have been taken:

<u>Date of Approval</u>	<u>Decision taken</u>
27/09/2011	Approval for attendance of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sure Start Children's Centres in London on the morning of 12 October 2011 and overnight accommodation for the previous night
13/10/2011	Approval authorised for two social workers to travel to Turkey on 1 November 2011 and return on 5 November 2011, for four nights, including transfers to and from the airport and an overnight stay at Gatwick on 5 November 2011

Cabinet Member Attendance at Parliamentary Group

4. The Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sure Start Children's Centres, Annette Brooke, MP, invited the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services to give evidence at a session being convened by the Group to discuss the current position of Sure Start Children's Centres across England. The Group was seeking information on the

strategies of different local authorities for Sure Start commissioning, focussing on those authorities which have already committed to keeping all of their current Children's Centres open. Specifically the session to which Councillor Owen was invited explored the ways in which the relevant local authorities are managing the changes to Sure Start funding and the associated reduction in the overall financial resource for children and family services.

5. The session was arranged for a 9 am start on 12 October 2011 in the Houses of Parliament. In view of the location of the event and early start time, it was thought necessary for Councillor Owen to travel the day before and stay overnight. The total cost of rail travel and accommodation is estimated at £150.

Other Options Considered

6. In view of the circumstances described above, no other options were considered.

Reasons for Recommendation

7. The session at the All Party Parliamentary Group on 12 October 2011 was an important opportunity for Nottinghamshire County Council to contribute towards shaping future provision for children and families at a national level, and to network with other local authorities who have declared a similar commitment to keep their current Children's Centres provision open.

Care Assessment

8. The purpose of the visit to Turkey is to assess the suitability of a birth father in relation to the care of his one year old son. Care proceedings are ongoing in relation to the child and his siblings and permanency options for him need to be explored. There are no extended family members in the UK who can meet the child's needs.
9. The birth father has been contacted and indicated a wish to care for his son. The father originates from and is currently living in Marmaris in Turkey. An assessment is required within the current care proceedings in order to determine the care plan for this child. This needs to include exploration of the father's circumstances including his extended family members.
10. The Council was directed by the court on 13 October to undertake the assessment and file a report by 28 November. The nearest airport to the father does not have any flights after early November and alternative travel would be extremely difficult. In the circumstances approval was sought through the urgency procedures.
11. It is necessary for two social workers to undertake the assessment to ensure that all relevant information is gathered within the time frame, that extended family are explored and suitable checks are made with local statutory authorities including social care, police, health and education. The estimated cost of flights, transfers, and accommodation (half-board) is £1,300.

Other Options Considered

12. The option of waiting until this Committee meeting would have meant missing the window for travel to Turkey and potentially missing the court deadline.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

13. To progress care planning for the child and to meet court requirements.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service 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

15. The total cost of rail travel and accommodation for Councillor Owen to attend the Parliamentary Group on Sure Start Children's Centres is estimated at £150. The cost will be met from the Members Allowances Budget.

16. The estimated cost of flights, transfers, and accommodation (half-board) for the family assessment is £1,300. The cost will be met by the Children, Families and Cultural Services Department.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That the report be noted.

David Ellis

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Constitutional Comments

17. As this report is for noting only no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (NDR 18/10/11)

18. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report.

Background Papers

E-mail from Children's Service Manager, dated 13 October 2011.

E-mail from Majority Group Secretariat, dated 27 September 2011.