

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES)		Subject: FUNDING FOR AN ADAPTATION TO AN OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSE - AIRDRIE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 15 th May 2006	Ref: JD/DC/BC	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To seek approval for funding to assist in the provision of a major adaptation to a house in Airdrie owned by Mr and Mrs McC.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 sets out arrangements for home improvement and repairs grants. This is administered by the Housing and Property Services Department.
- 2.2 In some circumstances, the Social Work Department arranges for an assessment of need to be undertaken within the relevant legislation, which provides additional information to housing colleagues in informing the grant allocation process.

3 Proposals/Considerations

- 3.1 Mr and Mrs McC have been foster carers for over twenty years and have cared for approximately thirty children from this authority.
- 3.2 The family home is a former council house which the family has since purchased. It consists of a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom.
- 3.3 R (17) and S (16) were placed with the couple in July 1992. Mr and Mrs McC were approved as their permanent carers in May 1997 when attempts to rehabilitate the boys to their birth family failed.
- 3.4 S and R both show signs of emotional and behavioural difficulties. S is diagnosed as having Severe Attachment Disorder. Mr and Mrs McC anticipate caring for S and R well into their adulthood due to the nature of their difficulties. Sharing a bedroom exacerbates the difficulties and causes added stress in the family.
- 3.5 Mr and Mrs McC were approved as adoptive parents and A (7) was linked to them in May 2000 at the Adoption, Fostering and Family Placement Panel.

- 3.6 At the time of A's placement, it was noted that accommodation was limited. Consideration was given to moving house but this was considered as inappropriate due to the level of positive community support received by Mr and Mrs McC in the fostering task. As the boys have grown older, the need for space has become increasingly evident, and creates challenges for the family in managing routine and behaviour.
- 3.7 The needs of the children were assessed within the home improvement grant scheme by an Occupational Therapist from the Social Work Department in June 2004. Their needs were considered as high priority. The Occupational Therapist has recommended that the family require a two bedroom extension and a toilet/washroom. The Housing Department have responded with an offer of a home improvement grant.
- 3.8 Mr and Mrs McC's architect has prepared proposals, which provide for an extension comprising two bedrooms and a toilet/washroom. Competitive tenders have been obtained and the total cost including professional fees and VAT is estimated at £35,055.
- 3.9 North Lanarkshire Council Housing and Property Services notified Mr and Mrs McC of an award of £19,255 towards the total cost of the extension. Total costs are as follows.

Total eligible cost	£35,055.00
Improvement Grant	<u>£19,255.00</u>
Remaining costs	£15,800.00

- 3.11 Mr and Mrs McC are able to contribute £7,000, therefore £8,800 is requested to assist this family build an extension.

4 Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

- 4.1 Section 23 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 provides a legal framework for the provision of an assessment, services and support to children affected by disabilities and their families.
- 4.2 The provision of financial assistance will enable this family to build an extension and therefore alleviate the risk of family breakdown as a result of stress and overcrowding. This also will allow the family to remain in their family home and community where they derive a great deal of support.
- 4.3 The request for financial assistance was considered at the Adoption, Fostering and Family Placement panel on 1st March 2006 and the decision was to recommend committee approve this request.
- 4.4 The costs for this request will be met from the discretionary fostering budget.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Committee is asked to:

- i) approve the granting of financial assistance to Mr and Mrs McC to the sum of £8,800
- ii) note the contents of the report.



JIM DICKIE
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
17TH March 2006

**For further information on this report, please contact Susan Taylor, Manager, Children , Families and Justice (Tel: 01698 332032) or David Carver, Co-ordinator Looked After and Accommodated Children (Tel: 01698 332651).*